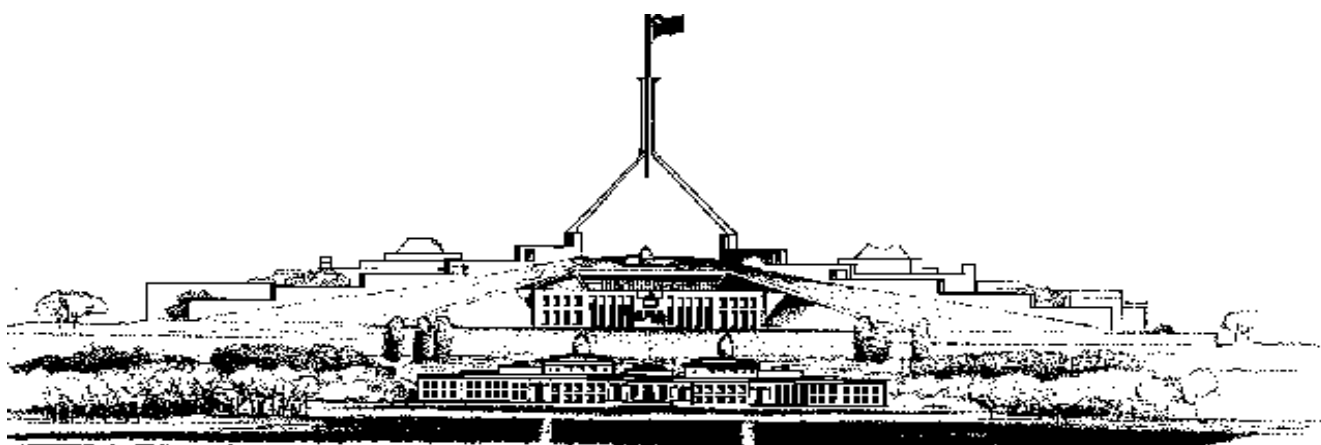




COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



House of Representatives

Official Hansard

No. 16, 2017

Thursday, 26 October 2017

FORTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—FOURTH PERIOD

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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SITTING DAYS—2017

Month	Date
February	7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 27 28
March	1, 2, 20, 21, 22, 23, 27, 28, 29, 30
May	9, 10, 11, 22, 23, 24, 25, 29, 30, 31
June	1, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22
August	8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17
September	4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14
October	16, 17, 18, 19, 23, 24, 25, 26
November	27, 28, 29, 30
December	4, 5, 6, 7

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**FORTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—FOURTH 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 Mark Maclean Coulton MP

Second Deputy Speaker—Mr Robert George Mitchell MP

Members of the Speaker's Panel—

Hon. Sharon Leah Bird MP, Mr Scott Andrew Buchholz MP, Ms Sharon Catherine Claydon MP, Mr Steven Georganas MP, Mr Ian Reginald Goodenough MP, Mr Andrew William Hastie MP, Mr Kevin John Hogan MP, Mr Luke Ronald Howarth MP, Mr Stephen James Irons MP, Ms Melissa Lee Price 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. Malcolm Bligh Turnbull MP

Deputy Leader—Hon. Julie Isabel Bishop 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. Barnaby Thomas Gerard Joyce MP

Deputy Leader—Senator the Hon Fiona Nash

Chief Whip—Hon. Damian Kevin Drum MP

Deputy Whip—Ms Michelle Leanne Landry 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	LP
Bird, Hon. Sharon Leah	Cunningham, NSW	ALP
Bishop, Hon. Julie Isabel	Curtin, WA	LP
Bowen, Hon. Christopher Eyles	McMahon, NSW	ALP
Broad, Mr Andrew John	Mallee, VIC	NATS
Broadbent, Mr Russell Evan	McMillan, VIC	LP
Brodthmann, Ms Gai Marie	Canberra, ACT	ALP
Buchholz, Mr 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, Mr 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, Mr 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
Feeney, Hon. David	Batman, VIC	ALP
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

Members of the House of Representatives

Members	Division	Party
Georganas, Mr Steven	Hindmarsh, SA	ALP
Giles, Mr Andrew James	Scullin, VIC	ALP
Gillespie, Hon. Dr David Arthur	Lyne, NSW	NATS
Goodenough, Mr Ian Reginald	Moore, WA	LP
Gosling, Mr Luke John	Solomon, NT	ALP
Hammond, Mr Timothy Jerome	Perth, WA	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, Ms 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, Mr 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	AUS
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, Ms Michelle Leanne	Capricornia, QLD	NATS
Laundy, Hon. Craig Arthur Samuel	Reid, NSW	LP
Leigh, Hon. Dr Andrew Keith	Fraser, ACT	ALP
Leeser, Mr Julian Martin	Berowra, NSW	LP
Ley, Hon. Sussan Penelope	Farrer, NSW	LP
Littleproud, Mr 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
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, Ms 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	NXT
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
Turnbull, Hon. Malcolm Bligh	Wentworth, NSW	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; AUS—Katter's Australia Party;
IND—Independent; LNP—Liberal National Party; LP—Liberal Party of Australia;
NATS—The Nationals; NXT—Nick Xenophon Team

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

TURNBULL MINISTRY

Title	Minister
Prime Minister	Hon. Malcolm Turnbull MP
Minister for Indigenous Affairs	Senator the Hon. Nigel Scullion
Minister for Women	Senator the Hon. Michaelia Cash
<i>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service</i>	<i>Senator the Hon. Michaelia Cash</i>
<i>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Counter-Terrorism</i>	<i>Hon. Michael Keenan MP</i>
<i>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Cabinet</i>	<i>Senator the Hon. Scott Ryan</i>
<i>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Cyber Security</i>	<i>Hon. Dan Tehan MP</i>
<i>Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister</i>	<i>Senator the Hon. James McGrath</i>
<i>Assistant Minister for Cities and Digital Transformation</i>	<i>Hon. Angus Taylor MP</i>
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources	Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources</i>	<i>Senator the Hon. Anne Ruston</i>
<i>Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister</i>	<i>Hon. Luke Hartsuyker MP</i>
Minister for Foreign Affairs	Hon. Julie Bishop MP
Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment	Hon. Steve Ciobo MP
Minister for International Development and the Pacific	Senator the Hon. Concetta Fierravanti-Wells
<i>Assistant Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment</i>	<i>Hon. Keith Pitt MP</i>
Attorney-General (Vice-President of the Executive Council) (Leader of the Government in the Senate)	Senator the Hon. George Brandis QC
Minister for Justice	Hon. Michael Keenan MP
Treasurer	Hon. Scott Morrison MP
Minister for Revenue and Financial Services	Hon. Kelly O'Dwyer MP
Minister for Small Business	Hon. Michael McCormack MP
<i>Assistant Minister to the Treasurer</i>	<i>Hon. Michael Sukkar MP</i>
Minister for Finance (Deputy Leader of Government in the Senate)	Senator the Hon. Mathias Cormann
Special Minister of State	Senator the Hon. Scott Ryan
Minister for Regional Development	Senator the Hon. Fiona Nash
Minister for Local Government and Territories	Senator the Hon. Fiona Nash
Minister for Infrastructure and Transport (Deputy Leader of the House)	Hon. Darren Chester MP
Minister for Urban Infrastructure	Hon. Paul Fletcher MP
Minister for Defence	Senator the Hon. Marise Payne
Minister for Defence Industry (Leader of the House)	Hon. Christopher Pyne MP
Minister for Veterans' Affairs	Hon. Dan Tehan MP
<i>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC</i>	<i>Hon. Dan Tehan MP</i>
Minister for Defence Personnel	Hon. Dan Tehan MP
Minister for Immigration and Border Protection	Hon. Peter Dutton MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Immigration and Border Protection</i>	<i>Hon. Alex Hawke MP</i>
Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science	Senator the Hon. Arthur Sinodinos AO
Acting Minister for Resources and Northern Australia	Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science</i>	<i>Hon. Craig Laundy MP</i>

Title	Minister
Minister for Health	Hon. Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Sport	Hon. Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Aged Care	Hon. Ken Wyatt AM MP
Minister for Indigenous Health	Hon. Ken Wyatt AM MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Health</i>	<i>Hon. Dr David Gillespie MP</i>
Minister for Communications	Senator the Hon. Mitch Fifield
Minister for the Arts	Senator the Hon. Mitch Fifield
(Manager of Government Business in the Senate)	
Minister for Regional Communications	Senator the Hon. Fiona Nash
Minister for Employment	Senator the Hon. Michaelia Cash
Minister for Social Services	Hon. Christian Porter MP
Minister for Human Services	Hon. Alan Tudge MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Social Services and Disability Services</i>	<i>Hon. Jane Prentice MP</i>
<i>Assistant Minister for Social Services and Multicultural Affairs</i>	<i>Senator the Hon. Zed Seselja</i>
Minister for Education and Training	Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham
<i>Assistant Minister for Vocational Education and Skills</i>	<i>Hon. Karen Andrews MP</i>
Minister for the Environment and Energy	Hon. Josh Frydenberg 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
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Indigenous Affairs and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders</i>	<i>Senator Patrick Dodson</i>
<i>Shadow Cabinet Secretary</i>	<i>Senator the Hon. Jacinta Collins</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Preventing Family Violence</i>	<i>Terri Butler MP</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	Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP
Shadow Minister for Women	Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Schools</i>	<i>Andrew Giles MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Universities</i>	<i>Terri Butler MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Equality</i>	<i>Terri Butler MP</i>
Leader of the Opposition in the Senate	Senator the Hon. Penny Wong
Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs	Senator the Hon. Penny Wong
<i>Shadow Minister for International Development and the Pacific</i>	<i>Senator Claire Moore</i>
Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate	Senator the Hon. Don Farrell
Shadow Special Minister of State	Senator the Hon. Don Farrell
<i>Shadow Minister for Sport</i>	<i>Senator the Hon. Don Farrell</i>
Shadow Treasurer	Hon. Chris Bowen MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Treasurer</i>	<i>Hon. Dr Andrew Leigh MP</i>
<i>Shadow Minister for Competition and Productivity</i>	<i>Hon. Dr Andrew Leigh MP</i>
<i>Shadow Minister for Charities and Not-for-Profits</i>	<i>Hon. Dr Andrew Leigh MP</i>
<i>Shadow Minister for the Digital Economy</i>	<i>Ed Husic MP</i>
<i>Shadow Minister for Consumer Affairs</i>	<i>Tim Hammond MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Treasury</i>	<i>Hon. Matt Thistlethwaite 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
<i>Manager of Opposition Business (House)</i>	<i>Hon. Tony Burke MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Australia</i>	<i>Senator the Hon. Jacinta Collins</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Australia</i>	<i>Julie Owens MP</i>
Shadow Minister for Families and Social Services	Hon. Jenny Macklin MP
<i>Shadow Minister for Housing and Homelessness</i>	<i>Senator the Hon. Doug Cameron</i>
<i>Shadow Minister for Human Services</i>	<i>Hon. Linda Burney MP</i>
<i>Shadow Minister for Disability and Carers</i>	<i>Senator Carol Brown</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Families and Communities</i>	<i>Senator Louise Pratt</i>
Shadow Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development	Hon. Anthony Albanese MP
Shadow Minister for Tourism	Hon. Anthony Albanese MP
<i>Shadow Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government</i>	<i>Stephen Jones MP</i>
<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>

Title	Shadow Minister
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
Shadow Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations	Hon. Brendan O'Connor MP
Shadow Minister for Employment Services, Workforce Participation and Future of Work	Ed Husic 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</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</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 Early Childhood Education and Development⁽¹⁾	Hon. Kate Ellis MP
Shadow Minister for TAFE and Vocational Education	Hon. Kate Ellis MP
Shadow Minister for Skills and Apprenticeships	Senator the Hon. Doug Cameron
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Early Childhood</i>	<i>Senator the Hon. Jacinta Collins</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	Tim Hammond 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 Small Business and Financial Services⁽²⁾	Senator Katy Gallagher
Manager of Opposition Business in the Senate	Senator Katy Gallagher
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Small Business</i>	<i>Julie Owens MP</i>
Shadow Minister for Communications	Hon. Michelle Rowland MP
Shadow Minister for Regional Communications	Stephen Jones MP
Shadow Minister for Ageing and Mental Health⁽³⁾	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>

Each box represents a portfolio except for ⁽¹⁾ which is in the Education portfolio, ⁽²⁾ which is in Treasury portfolio and ⁽³⁾ which is in the Health portfolio. **Shadow Cabinet Ministers are shown in bold type.**

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Thursday, 26 October 2017

The SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Smith) took the chair at 09:30, made an acknowledgement of country and read prayers.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler) (09:31): Mr Speaker, I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: Does the member for Grayndler claim to have been misrepresented?

Mr ALBANESE: Yes, on multiple occasions.

The SPEAKER: Please proceed.

Mr ALBANESE: Senator Cash, before the Senate estimates yesterday, made statements about me that were untrue, that she now knows were untrue and acknowledges are untrue. She said the following, 'My understanding was that Mr Albanese said that I was tipping off the press gallery personally; that was what was put to me'. On other occasion she told the Senate: 'Several outrageous slurs were made against me today—for example, that I was personally phoning the media gallery. If Anthony Albanese would like to apologise for that statement then he can.' On a third occasion, Senator Cash, in response to questions from Senator Cameron, said: 'I had a question time briefing with the Prime Minister and that is it. That is the only conversation I have had with him where I assured him that the statement made by Anthony Albanese that I had been personally phoning the media was 100 per cent incorrect.'

Mr Speaker, those statements simply are incorrect. On FIVEaa yesterday, in the Two Tribes segment that I do with the member for Sturt each Wednesday morning, I said, 'We know that Senator Cash's office was ringing around media organisations yesterday afternoon, telling them that this was going to occur.' On other occasion I said, 'People directly got calls from Michaelia Cash's media office.' What I said yesterday was absolutely correct. I also note that the member for Sturt said on FIVEaa yesterday, 'I don't accept that it's true.' I'm sure he now accepts it's true, just as he should accept that Senator Cash should resign for misleading the Senate on multiple occasions.

MOTIONS

Gambling

Mr WILKIE (Denison) (09:33): I seek leave to move the following motion:

That this House:

(1) notes that:

(a) a fifth Crown Casino whistleblower has now made allegations consistent with earlier whistleblowers about serious misconduct at the Casino;

(b) one of the allegations is that one or more machines manufactured by Xcite were illegally tampered with, to reduce the payout to gamblers, through the removal of the "gamble button", a feature which allows users to bet on their winnings, and that the relevant button was replaced by a blank plastic cap;

(c) this modification is inconsistent with the regulator's approval of this type of machine and is therefore illegal;

(d) to verify the veracity of these latest allegations, one of the Member for Denison's staff visited the Casino at approximately 10 pm on Sunday, 22 October and confirmed this machine was operating on the floor of the Casino on the river side, near the membership office, but when that member of staff revisited the Casino on Wednesday, 25 October at approximately 4 pm the machine had been replaced by a different machine and the first machine was nowhere to be found;

(e) the illegal machine disappeared after the Member for Denison raised allegations concerning Crown Casino in the Parliament, which is clear evidence of someone covering up criminal activity; and

(f) there is a record of this episode which will be forwarded to police and the Victorian gambling regulator as soon as possible;

(2) further notes, that it is reasonable to assume that the misconduct in question is not unique to Crown Casino and extends to the poker machine industry broadly; and

(3) calls on the Government, and the Opposition, to immediately support a parliamentary inquiry into the casino industry so that those who allege misconduct, and representatives of the industry, can have their say in an open and transparent way and so that the community, including the 17 million who visit Crown Casino annually, can be witness to this.

Mr Pyne: The government won't be giving leave for the motion to be moved, but we won't shut down the suspension motion if the member for Denison wishes to move it as a suspension.

Mr WILKIE: Then I move:

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent the Member for Denison from moving the following motion immediately—That this House:

(1) notes that:

(a) a fifth Crown Casino whistleblower has now made allegations consistent with earlier whistleblowers about serious misconduct at the Casino;

(b) one of the allegations is that one or more machines manufactured by Xcite were illegally tampered with, to reduce the payout to gamblers, through the removal of the "gamble button", a feature which allows users to bet on their winnings, and that the relevant button was replaced by a blank plastic cap;

(c) this modification is inconsistent with the regulator's approval of this type of machine and is therefore illegal;

(d) to verify the veracity of these latest allegations, one of the Member for Denison's staff visited the Casino at approximately 10 pm on Sunday, 22 October and confirmed this machine was operating on the floor of the Casino on the river side, near the membership office, but when that member of staff revisited the Casino on Wednesday, 25 October at approximately 4 pm the machine had been replaced by a different machine and the first machine was nowhere to be found;

(e) the illegal machine disappeared after the Member for Denison raised allegations concerning Crown Casino in the Parliament, which is clear evidence of someone covering up criminal activity; and

(f) there is a record of this episode which will be forwarded to police and the Victorian gambling regulator as soon as possible;

(2) further notes, that it is reasonable to assume that the misconduct in question is not unique to Crown Casino and extends to the poker machine industry broadly; and

(3) calls on the Government, and the Opposition, to immediately support a parliamentary inquiry into the casino industry so that those who allege misconduct, and representatives of the industry, can have their say in an open and transparent way and so that the community, including the 17 million who visit Crown Casino annually, can be witness to this.

There is a pressing need to suspend standing orders and for the parliament to deal with what I will now call the Crown Casino scandal. No longer are we talking about untested allegations by anonymous whistleblowers. Now we have a credible witness, a senior member of my staff, who went to the casino on two occasions at my direction. On the first occasion he saw an illegal machine in operation on the floor of the casino. It was a machine where a button had been removed and a function had been removed from that machine with the sole intent of increasing the revenue from that machine and decreasing the payout to poker machine gamblers. When he went back to the casino several days later, the machine had been removed and was nowhere to be found. So not only do we now have a credible witness—not hearsay; this is a man I will stand by and stand behind; I will vouch for what he tells me—who is a witness in recent days to an illegal poker machine on the floor of Crown Casino, but we also have a credible witness to a criminal cover-up with the removal of that machine as a direct result, obviously, of the allegations I've been airing in the parliament last week and this week.

All of a sudden all of the whistleblowers—five have now approached me—and all of their allegations, so far untested, are now to be seen in a different light, because at least one of those allegations, the one allegation I could easily check, we did check and it was found to be true. So I now am shifting from saying these are allegations which need to be explored, to saying quite clearly and unambiguously at least some of those allegations are correct and Crown Casino is guilty of criminal behaviour.

So far the response in this place has been, 'It's all someone else's problem.' Well, it's not someone else's problem. It is our business. One of the allegations is of money laundering. That is a serious criminal offence. We can only speculate at the purpose of that money laundering. Is it to do with drug running? Is it to do with terrorism? Who knows what it's to do with? That should concern us.

One of the allegations is about the competence of the Victorian regulator, another reason for federal intervention. It comes back to the point that, when it comes to poker machine regulation in this country, we simply cannot trust the state and territory governments to regulate it effectively. And no wonder, because they are deeply conflicted. The state and territory governments receive about one-quarter of the money that's lost on the poker machines in this country. There's over \$10 billion a year lost, and about one-quarter of that goes to the state and territory governments. They can't be trusted on the one hand to enjoy that revenue and want to see more of it, and on the other hand to ensure the industry is run well and the welfare of members of the community is protected.

There is a pressing need for this parliament to act, and the way we can act is to establish a parliamentary inquiry. This is the ideal way, the perfect way, to let those who have made allegations, and others, and representatives of the industry who will want to defend their industry, to come out of the shadows, to stand in the open in front of members of the parliament, in front of the media, in front of the community and say what they have to say and to say it in a safe environment, because those witnesses will have the protection of the parliament.

I've now had dealings with five separate whistleblowers about Crown Casino, and some of them are scared. People say, 'Why don't they just go to the police?' Put yourself in their shoes. Making allegations against one of this country's biggest and richest and most powerful corporations—of course they're scared for their safety! We know the sorts of allegations that

also circulate about the rough and tumble that you'll see in some parts of the gambling industry in this country. No wonder people are scared. They're worried for their safety. They're worried for the safety of their families. They're worried for their job prospects in the future. There are any number of reasons why they don't want their identity to be known, but they come to people like us to do stuff like this, because the justice system, the police, the regulators, the state and territory governments are not doing their jobs well enough.

So far the call for an inquiry has fallen on deaf ears. Both the government and the opposition are refusing to weigh into this. I don't doubt there are some really good people in this place, some really good people in the government and some really good people in the opposition: people who care about the community and don't like the current shape of the gambling industry in this country. But, systemically, you're all compromised because the major parties receive millions of dollars in donations from the gambling industry. Crown Casino alone in the last five years has paid three-quarters of a million dollars to the major parties in political donations. And what a great return on that investment Crown has so far gotten from the government and the opposition, both of which are running a hundred miles from the call for a parliamentary inquiry. You know, \$750,000 buys a lot of influence in this place, and so far it has bought a refusal to have a parliamentary inquiry.

As of today, it's no longer hearsay; it's no longer untested allegation; it's no longer anonymous whistleblowers. It's me standing here saying that I have a senior member of staff who walked into Crown Casino within the last week and saw an illegal machine on the floor of the casino—a criminal act by Crown Casino. That same member of staff went back several days later and the machine was gone and was nowhere to be found. In the motion, I've even identified where the machine was originally sited. The cover-up of a crime is a crime.

The time has come for the government and the opposition to show that they have not been bought by the gambling industry, that they haven't been bought by Crown Casino. Today is the day for them to stand up and show the community that they are their own men and women and that they haven't been bought off—bribed, in effect—by the poker machine industry and by Crown. I again call on the government and the opposition—the good people among you—to say to your leaders that now is the time for a parliamentary inquiry and that it's not good enough to leave an investigation to the police and the regulator. Let's have a proper inquiry. Let's shine some sunlight on this. Let's get to the bottom of it.

The SPEAKER: Is the motion seconded?

Mr BANDT (Melbourne) (09:46): I second the motion. The Greens demand a full inquiry into these scandalous allegations at Crown and will not rest until we get one. If ever there was a case for this parliament to say, 'We're going to put aside the business that we're otherwise dealing with to deal with a matter of national urgency,' it is this. We don't currently have a national anticorruption watchdog like some states have. We don't have a national ICAC, so we can't ask such a body to look into it. We should have one, but we don't, because Labor and Liberal won't support the establishment of one. We can't trust the state governments, because the state governments are the biggest gambling addicts of all. They're the ones who profit from the misery of people whose lives are broken as a result of gambling. They profit from it and they're in cosy with the casino operators, so we can't trust them to look at it. And, critically, in this case it's alleged that the state regulators have turned a blind eye or have been involved in it. So that is a classic case of where the federal government needs to step in,

where there are allegations not only of wrongdoing at a casino but of wrongdoing involving the regulators themselves.

So we need to step in and have an inquiry, and a full inquiry, where people can front up and give their evidence under parliamentary privilege. You have to have guts to be a whistleblower in this country. If you stand up, you worry that you might face repercussions. Whistleblowers have come forward. They've come forward to the member for Denison and made some very, very serious allegations. We should drop everything to take those allegations seriously, because they involve breaches of federal law, they involve state regulators not doing their job and they involve Crown Casino committing a crime. Those are the allegations.

We've asked for a full parliamentary inquiry to be established and we haven't got one. Why? It is because the only thing spinning faster than the poker machines is the revolving door between this place and the casino industry. There are members of this parliament who probably can't wait to get out of their job so they can go and take up a cushy job somewhere else, as previous MPs who have gone and got a job lobbying for the casino industry have done in the past. They are continuing to profit from people's lives being broken and made a misery. So, when former members of this place front up on behalf of big business and say, 'No, we'd like you not to have an inquiry,' lo and behold, that's what happens. And when the casinos make big donations to the Labor and Liberal parties, the old parties, they expect a return. Well, today the casinos have hit the jackpot. They're getting payday. They're getting the return on their donations, because the old parties in the parliament are in collusion, steadfastly refusing to investigate these allegations.

Think about some of the things that this parliament has decided to inquire into before and the fact that the government are prepared to spend tens if not hundreds of millions of dollars on a royal commission into unions or into previous government schemes—the insulation schemes, for example. They're prepared to spend money on that. They're prepared to spend money on that for political purposes and political outcomes, but when it comes to something the public genuinely cares about—casinos and the gambling industry, who make their money out of breaking people's lives—people want action. But, sadly, time and time again we see big money dictating what happens in this place. This parliament should act in the public interest, not in the interests of a few private donors.

This parliament has been captured by the big end of town. If the government wants to show that it's serious about transparency and the Labor opposition thinks that transparency is important, now's your chance. Now's your chance, Labor and Liberal parties, to show that honesty is more important than money. Support this motion. Support the establishment of a full inquiry. Let's shine a light on what is happening in casinos, because these allegations are getting stronger and stronger, the evidence is mounting up and we need to shine some sunlight.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the motion be agreed to.

A division having been called and the bells having been rung—

The SPEAKER: The question is that the motion moved by the member for Denison be agreed to. As there are fewer than five members on the side for the ayes in this division, I

declare the question negatived in accordance with standing order 127. The names of those members who are in the minority will be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

Question negatived, Mr Bandt, Ms McGowan, Ms Sharkie and Mr Wilkie voting aye.

BILLS

Commonwealth Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Bill 2017

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum to this bill, and to the Commonwealth Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2017, presented by **Mr Porter**.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Minister for Social Services) (09:58): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill will establish legislation for a Commonwealth Redress Scheme, which we'll call simply 'the scheme', for survivors of institutional child sexual abuse. With this bill the government introduces a best-practice, simple and supportive redress scheme.

Children placed in the trust of our society's institutions were some of the most vulnerable members in our community and the fact that must be confronted is that many children were sexually abused by the very people charged with their care and protection. No child should ever experience what we now know occurred. That is why it is time for all institutions and all governments to take responsibility for what has happened.

The establishment of the scheme is an acknowledgement by the Commonwealth government that sexual abuse suffered by children in institutional settings; operated by a number of governments state, territory and federal and by a number of non-government institutions was wrong, a shocking betrayal of trust; and simply should never have happened.

The Redress Scheme in this bill is designed to recognise the suffering survivors have experienced, to unequivocally accept that these events occurred and to ensure that each institution that has been responsible for abuse in their institutional settings must take responsibility for that abuse.

The Commonwealth government acknowledged the need to provide public recognition of the suffering experienced by survivors and investigate the inadequate responses provided by institutions through the establishment of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The royal commission's *Redress and civil litigation report* recommended the establishment of a national redress scheme for survivors of institutional child sexual abuse. All governments and individual institutions were directed to make amends and take responsibility for the shameful acts inflicted on children while in their care. Critically, the royal commission determined that the payment of redress must align with institutional responsibility for the harms that were suffered and so redress should occur on what has become known as a responsible entity basis.

The royal commission identified more than 4,000 institutions where sexual abuse took place. More than 2,000 survivors reported sexual abuse in a Catholic institution, 500 survivors

reported abuse in Anglican institutions and more than 250 reported abuse in institutions run by the Salvation Army. In total, the royal commission estimated that almost 40,000 survivors were sexually abused in institutions run by non-government bodies such as those run by churches and charities and 20,000 survivors were sexually abused in state and territory government run institutions. More than 6,500 people who gave private evidence said more than one person had abused them.

These estimates are, very sadly, merely a window into the scale and breadth of historical institutional child sexual abuse in Australia. It is vitally important to survivors that responsible governments and responsible institutions participate in this scheme and provide redress on a nationally consistent basis for survivors.

The royal commission has heard evidence of thousands of Australians who when vulnerable children were subject to the most horrendous sexual abuse in institutions throughout Australia. The psychological, physical and emotional injuries inflicted on these children were inevitably severe and are capable of long-lasting destabilising effects on survivors for the rest of their lives. In spite of the severity of the damage done, many survivors have not sought or have not obtained any kind of acknowledgement or redress for the harm suffered.

There is evidence that some survivors take years, even decades, to disclose their experience of child sexual abuse. It may also take years or decades for survivors to identify a connection between the abuse they suffered as a child and its impact on them as an adult. By the time many survivors feel ready to seek acknowledgment and compensation from a responsible institution, the natural passage of time is an enemy to traditional mechanisms operating effectively to hear and find the existence of common-law damages, and in many instances this traditional compensatory process is simply not feasible for survivors or may simply no longer be available.

The long-term impacts of child sexual abuse can leave many survivors much less able to confront institutions directly and they remain at great risk of retraumatisation. For some, the legality of traditional compensatory processes 'triggers' the memories to an extent that abuse becomes relived.

The sexual abuse we know was inflicted on children by the very institutions that were charged with their care and protection means that the acts, and the often inadequate responses of both primarily responsible institutions and governments, were shameful. This is why redress is so badly needed.

The establishment of a Commonwealth Redress Scheme demonstrates critical national leadership by acknowledging the wrongs of the past and providing a just response to survivors. It is also an important step towards healing and ensuring governments and institutions take the appropriate steps to safeguard against these heinous, criminal acts being repeated in the future. This bill responds to the royal commission's redress recommendations and the Commonwealth government's commitment to establish the foundation for a nationally consistent Redress Scheme.

All responsible institutions and each state and territory and the Commonwealth government should be ashamed of what occurred on their watch and I urge all of them to join with the Commonwealth's best-practice approach to delivering redress that is set out in this legislation;

to survivors that redress must be given in as fair and timely a manner as possible. The Commonwealth Redress Scheme will create a consistent approach, based on the essential and critical principle that 'the responsible entity pays'. If an institution bears real responsibility for the harm, that institution must rightly pay the costs of providing redress for that harm. Matching responsibility with redress is the critical condition for creating a better Australia where these types of outrages are far less likely to occur. No institution should expect another to pay for its often shameful conduct.

Detailed negotiations with states and non-government institutions are continuing in order to ensure maximum coverage for survivors across Australia. By establishing this Redress Scheme, the Commonwealth is ensuring that its own survivors will be able to access redress from 1 July 2018.

The scheme will provide survivors with three elements of redress, comprising:

1. a monetary payment of up to \$150,000 as a tangible means of recognising the wrong that survivors have suffered;
2. access to counselling or psychological services of their choice throughout their lives; and
3. a direct personal response from the institutions responsible, where that is sought by the survivor.

The scheme will adopt a survivor focused and trauma informed approach; access to redress will be simple and support will be available throughout the application and acceptance process.

Survivors will not pay income tax on monetary payments they receive through the scheme and payments will not be directly garnished to recover any outstanding debts that may exist to the Commonwealth. Neither will payments be considered income for the purposes of determining social security and veterans' entitlement payments.

The scheme is not intended to supplant or detract from the enduring and important criminal law or common law avenues to seek justice. It is intended, however, to provide a survivor with a means to access a sense of and process in justice, through monetary redress and through restorative supports. It is intended in this sense to be faster, simpler and less distressing for survivors and provide governments and institutions with the means to deliver justice to their survivors.

In developing this legislation, we consulted with, and listened to, a broad range of stakeholders on the development of the scheme and this bill. The bill aligns with the views of the independent advisory council on redress (including many survivor groups), jurisdictions and non-government institutions.

Overview of the scheme

Under this bill, redress will be available for survivors of child sexual abuse that occurred in Commonwealth institutional settings. It will also provide redress to survivors abused in the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory when these jurisdictions opt in or if they are ultimately compelled to do so by the Commonwealth.

The scheme will be established in 2018 and will run for 10 years, with all applications to be finalised by 30 June 2028, however the scheme can be extended if there is a cogent need to do so.

From March 2018, a dedicated telephone helpline and website will be available to provide information on a preliminary basis about the scheme. These services will also connect survivors with specialist community based support services including legal, financial and other social supports.

From 1 July 2018, the scheme will commence accepting applications from survivors of institutional child sexual abuse for which the Commonwealth and other participating governments and institutions are responsible.

Eligibility

For a person to be eligible for redress they must have suffered sexual abuse where a participating institution is responsible and where it occurred when the person was a child before the scheme's commencement on 1 July 2018.

While a person must have suffered sexual abuse to be eligible, the scheme will also acknowledge related non-sexual abuse, for example physical abuse. Sexual abuse, of course, rarely occurs in isolation and it is important to deal with the whole of the survivor's experience as it pertains to the requisite sexual abuse.

A person may only make one application for redress, so if they have suffered more than one instance of abuse, applications should disclose all instances in their application. This means that once a decision has been made on an application, a person will not be able to make additional applications to the scheme. This, again, is to ensure the speed and simplicity of the scheme and that the totality of the applicant's experience can be properly considered.

While there are no applicant age restrictions, applicants must be living. Families will not be able to lodge an application on behalf of a deceased relative. However, if a survivor dies after lodging a complete and eligible application, their estate will receive the redress payment due to the survivor.

For an application to the scheme to be approved and an offer of redress to be made, the operator must make a determination that there is a reasonable likelihood that the survivor is eligible. Reasonable likelihood is a lower evidentiary threshold than a balance of probabilities test which is generally applied in civil legal processes.

To be entitled to redress, a person must accept their offer and, in doing so, release the participating institution deemed responsible from civil liability in relation to abuse within the scope of the scheme.

Monetary payment

The amount of the monetary payment will be determined by looking carefully and closely at all of the circumstances of each person and applying consistent criteria. The maximum amount of redress payable under the scheme will be \$150,000.

Access to counselling or psychological services

Eligible survivors will be provided with access to counselling or psychological services in addition to the assistance already provided by the Commonwealth through Medicare. Consistent with the royal commission's recommendations, the scheme will provide survivors with flexibility to access the counselling or psychological services of their own choice. This will empower survivors to make decisions about their own counselling needs and will support them to maintain existing therapeutic relationships.

Direct personal response

Survivors will also have the opportunity to receive a direct personal response from the participating institutions responsible for the abuse. A direct personal response is a statement of acknowledgement, regret and apology and will be delivered to survivors by the relevant participating institution after the survivor has accepted the offer of redress.

The response may be delivered through a range of mechanisms including face-to-face meetings with an appropriate representative of the institution or through written engagement with the survivor. The participating institution will be required to make quite clear what they are willing to offer by way of a direct personal response to survivors and what that process will involve.

The direct personal response will give the survivor the chance to be directly acknowledged and to tell their personal story of what they experienced and the way in which it has impacted upon them. Through this process, a participating institution can develop a shared understanding, a critical understanding, of what happened to the survivor and the harm that was caused, which will enable the institution to consider what else it may need to do to prevent such abuses and harm occurring in the future.

Deed of release

Before survivors receive redress, the survivor will accept their offer by signing an acceptance document in the form of a deed of release. Accepting an offer of redress has the effect of releasing the responsible participating institutions from any further liability for instances of sexual abuse and related non-sexual abuse of the person the subject of the redress payment.

This means that the survivor by a transparent agreement will, upon accepting the offer of redress, undertake not to bring or continue any civil claim against the responsible participating institution or institutions in relation to the specific abuse.

Ensuring the availability of redress for survivors is dependent on the extent to which states and territory governments and non-government institutions decide to join the scheme. The deed of release is perhaps the most important feature in terms of encouraging those critical institutions to opt in to the scheme and thus it is a mechanism by which we can ensure greater coverage for survivors as without it institutions may be exposed to paying compensation through civil litigation in addition to providing redress under the scheme and so might decline to opt in to the scheme.

The release will never preclude any criminal liabilities of the institution or alleged perpetrator, nor provide release in relation to any other abuse outside the scope of the scheme.

A survivor may have previously signed a deed of release for money received in relation to institutional child sexual abuse. Importantly, the rules of the scheme will contain, as a foundational principle for entry, that institutions will need to waive reliance on a prior deed of release signed by a survivor.

Any relevant prior payments made by participating institutions in relation to the abuse within the scope of the scheme will be subtracted from the redress payment. In essence, survivors who have received a previous payment related to circumstances the subject of the present redress application would receive an effective 'top-up' to the previously received payment up to the total redress amount determined under the scheme. If a survivor's monetary

payment is reduced to nil as a result of past redress payments, the assurance is that they will still be entitled to access counselling or psychological services or receive the direct personal response available under the scheme.

Responsibility for abuse

The scheme is based on the critical principle of 'responsible entity pays', which was a key recommendation of the royal commission. A participating responsible institution will be expected to pay for redress for their survivors, along with a proportionate share of the administrative costs. This is the best way to ensure fairness and justice for survivors and prevent the prevalence of the conditions of immorality derived from irresponsibility that gave rise to these terrible events in the first instance.

For a participating institution to be responsible, the abuse must have occurred in circumstances where the institution was primarily or equally responsible for the abuser having contact with the person who is the survivor. In making this determination, the following criteria will be considered:

- whether the abuse occurred on the premises of the institution, where activities of the institution took place, or in connection with the activities of the institution;
- whether the alleged abuser was an official of the participating institution when the abuse occurred; and
- whether the participating institution was responsible for the care of the survivor when the abuse occurred.

A participating institution is primarily responsible for an alleged abuser having contact with a survivor if the institution is solely, substantially or primarily responsible for that contact, even if there are other institutions that, in a minor or tangential way, might also have responsibility for that contact. In such cases, the institution will be required to pay the full amount of redress, that is the institution will pay the full 100 per cent share of redress even if some other institution might have been responsible in a minor or tangential way.

A participating institution will be considered equally responsible where they are equally responsible with one or more other institutions for a child having contact with an alleged abuser. In these cases the responsibility for funding redress will be shared equally and each responsible institution will be required to pay an equal 50 per cent share of redress.

This structure is designed as the best means of achieving a simple, clear, non-legal scheme which avoids all the complexities associated with exhaustive allocations of divided responsibility that causes great cost and time to be expended in civil litigation. The Commonwealth Redress Scheme rules will further define the extent of institutional responsibility as cases are assessed under the scheme. This will allow the scheme to deal with any unanticipated issues that might arise over the 10-year life of the scheme.

With respect to the issue of funder of last resort, in cases where a government is considered equally responsible, they—the government—may be determined to be the funder of last resort. This will occur when the other equally responsible participating non-government institution:

- does not exist and does not have a meaningful and substantive connection with an 'umbrella' or 'subsuming' modern organisation; or

- the responsible institution does exist but is unable to pay redress because they have been deemed insolvent.

Where a funder of last resort arrangement is determined to exist, the government that shares the responsibility will pay the full amount of redress by paying the equal share of redress the participating non-government institution would have otherwise paid.

The scheme will provide for the development of agreed categories of cases where responsible governments will share responsibility with an institution and will be a potential funder of last resort. If a case falls into an agreed category, the relevant government will automatically be determined to be equally responsible and therefore liable for redress.

Where a case does not fall into a specified category, other factors will be considered, including: who was responsible for the care of the child; the employment of the abuser; and the placement of the child in the institution at the time of the abuse such that an obligation on the institution could be inferred.

With respect to the issue of shared financial obligation, in cases where there are multiple instances of child sexual abuse which occurred across multiple institutions, the scheme operator will decide which was the responsible institution in each case. Each responsible institution will contribute a share of the redress for the survivor. The redress contribution will be apportioned in accordance with the severity of each instance of abuse.

With respect to information use, disclosure and mandatory reporting, the bill includes provisions for the use and disclosure of information under the scheme. This will ensure all aspects of the scheme's ability to share and gather information is underpinned by law. Information sharing protocols have been balanced against the need for the scheme to have appropriate transparency and flexibility, with survivors' rights to privacy.

Information received by the scheme will be confidential and will not be able to be further disclosed or used for an unspecified purpose. Participating institutions will also be restricted in the ways that they can use protected information provided to them from the scheme operator. Misuse or unauthorised disclosure of scheme information may constitute an offence under legislation and would carry with it a penalty of imprisonment for two years or 120 penalty units, or both.

In keeping with mandatory reporting obligations, referrals to law enforcement authorities will not require the consent of the survivor or participating institutions and 'blind' reporting will occur (that is, where the individual survivor is de-identified).

With respect to independent decision makers, the Secretary of the Department of Social Services is the formal operator of the scheme. The bill will allow the scheme's operator to delegate decision-making responsibilities to appropriately qualified, independent assessors, who will be known as independent decision-makers. These independent decision-makers will be supported in their decision-making by recommendations from the dedicated redress recommendation team that will be located within the Department of Human Services.

The rules

With respect to the rules, the bill will include a provision to make legislative instruments known as the Commonwealth Redress Scheme Rules. The rules will set out additional requirements necessary for the implementation of the scheme and may cover matters such as:

eligibility requirements or exemptions; determining the amount of payments for an eligible person under the scheme; and the form and manner of the direct personal response.

Before closing, there have been innumerable individuals who have contributed to the construction and the advice in preparing the principles for this bill, including those who sat on our independent advisory council. I'd like to personally thank them for their enormous assistance, input and forbearance through a difficult process. I'd like also to make some special mention of the member for Swan, who himself as a child endured some of the worst that these institutions had to offer. His insight, advice and assistance to me as a minister and his ability to act as a conduit with the survivors for whom this bill purely exists has been something for which I personally will be indebted to him for a long time.

Summary

In summary, the Commonwealth is showing national leadership by introducing a redress scheme that is flexible and as non-legal and as informal as the circumstances will allow. The scheme paves the way for all governments and institutions across Australia to take responsibility and provide long-awaited redress to survivors who suffered sexual abuse as children while in their care and protection. It is of course now time to acknowledge these shameful wrongs and finally provide survivors with the recognition they deserve. For these and other reasons, I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler) (10:21): I wish to make a personal explanation.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Rob Mitchell): Does the member claim to have been misrepresented?

Mr ALBANESE: I do. This morning on Sky News, Minister Porter was interviewed by Kieran Gilbert. The interview said:

Kieran Gilbert: It was emerged earlier in the day. Mr Albanese made the assertion, then reports emerged. Surely amid the speculation that there was a tip-off there would have been questions asked.

Minister Porter: Well, Mr Albanese's assertion was that the minister herself had called the media, which—

Kieran Gilbert: Was not far off.

Minister Porter: Well, that is a very serious assertion itself.

Kieran Gilber: It wasn't far off. It was from her office.

Minister Porter: It was very far off. It was absolutely wrong.

Earlier this morning I tabled my comments from the FIVEaa program yesterday in a debate with Christopher Pyne in the Two Tribes segment. I think it's now accepted that I absolutely said that it was the minister's staff who had briefed the media. We now know that that is a fact. Minister Porter contacted me and apologised for his error. I accept his apology and note that that is a mature way in which members should deal with each other. I'm yet to receive an apology from Minister Cash.

BILLS**Commonwealth Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse
(Consequential Amendments) Bill 2017****First Reading**

Bill presented by **Mr Porter**.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Minister for Social Services) (10:24): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This is the companion bill to the Commonwealth Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Bill 2017, which will establish a redress scheme for survivors of institutional child sexual abuse. The establishment of the scheme is an acknowledgment by the government that child sexual abuse suffered by children in Commonwealth institutional settings was wrong and should never have occurred.

This companion bill provides consequential amendments to Commonwealth legislation in light of the scheme. For example, amendments to the Social Security Act 1991 and Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986 will ensure the payments are not income tested and will not reduce the income support payments of survivors who receive payments under the scheme. The payments will also be quarantined from the divisible property of a bankrupt to ensure that the survivor has the full benefit of their payment.

This companion bill provides consequential amendments to Commonwealth legislation in light of the scheme. For example, amendments to the Social Security Act 1991 and Veteran's Entitlements Act 1986 will ensure the payments are not income tested and will not reduce the income support payments of survivors who receive payments under the scheme. The payments will also be quarantined from the divisible property of a bankrupt to ensure the survivor has the full benefit of their payment.

It is the case that this companion bill will also remove external review mechanisms, and allow disclosure of spent, quashed and pardoned convictions to the scheme. These amendments are essential to implement and maintain the integrity of the scheme. It will ensure the scheme remains survivor focused and trauma informed by being a non-legalistic process for survivors who have already suffered so much. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Fair Work Laws Amendment (Proper Use of Worker Benefits) Bill 2017**Report from Federation Chamber**

Bill returned from Federation Chamber with an unresolved question; certified copy of the bill and schedule of the unresolved question presented.

Ordered that this bill be considered immediately.

Proposed amendment—

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 calls on the Government to:

(1) abandon its support of the decision of the Fair Work Commission to cut penalty rates because it will mean nearly 700,000 Australians will have their take home pay cut by up to \$77 a week; and

(2) legislate to prevent the decision from taking effect to stop Australians from having their penalty rates cut"—

Unresolved question—

That the amendment be agreed to.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

The House divided. [10:31]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes68

Noes73

Majority.....5

AYES

Albanese, AN
Bandt, AP
Bowen, CE
Burke, AS
Butler, TM
Chalmers, JE
Chesters, LM
Claydon, SC
Conroy, PM
Dick, MD
Feeney, D
Georganas, S
Gosling, LJ
Hayes, CP
Husar, E
Jones, SP
Keay, JT
Keogh, MJ
King, CF
Lamb, S
Macklin, JL
McBride, EM
Mitchell, RG
O'Connor, BPJ
O'Toole, C
Perrett, GD (teller)
Rishworth, AL
Ryan, JC (teller)
Shorten, WR
Stanley, AM
Swanson, MJ
Thistlethwaite, MJ
Watts, TG
Wilson, JH

Aly, A
Bird, SL
Brodthmann, G
Butler, MC
Byrne, AM
Champion, ND
Clare, JD
Collins, JM
Danby, M
Elliot, MJ
Freeland, MR
Giles, AJ
Hart, RA
Hill, JC
Husic, EN
Katter, RC
Kelly, MJ
Khalil, P
King, MMH
Leigh, AK
Marles, RD
Mitchell, BK
Neumann, SK
O'Neil, CE
Owens, JA
Plibersek, TJ
Rowland, MA
Sharkie, RCC
Snowdon, WE
Swan, WM
Templeman, SR
Vamvakinou, M
Wilkie, AD
Zappia, A

NOES

Abbott, AJ
Andrews, KJ
Banks, J
Broad, AJ
Buchholz, S
Christensen, GR
Coulton, M
Drum, DK (teller)
Evans, TM
Fletcher, PW
Frydenberg, JA
Gillespie, DA
Hartsuyker, L
Hawke, AG
Hogan, KJ
Hunt, GA
Joyce, BT
Kelly, C
Landry, ML
Leeser, J
Littleproud, D
McCormack, MF
McVeigh, JJ
Morton, B
O'Brien, T
O'Dwyer, KM
Pitt, KJ
Prentice, J
Pyne, CM
Robert, SR
Sukkar, MS
Tehan, DT
Turnbull, MB
Wallace, AB
Wilson, RJ
Wood, JP
Zimmerman, T

Alexander, JG
Andrews, KL
Bishop, JI
Broadbent, RE
Chester, D
Coleman, DB
Crewther, CJ
Dutton, PC
Falinski, J
Flint, NJ
Gee, AR
Goodenough, IR
Hastie, AW
Henderson, SM
Howarth, LR
Irons, SJ
Keenan, M
Laming, A
Laundy, C
Ley, SP
Marino, NB
McGowan, C
Morrison, SJ
O'Brien, LS
O'Dowd, KD
Pasin, A
Porter, CC
Price, ML
Ramsey, RE (teller)
Sudmalis, AE
Taylor, AJ
Tudge, AE
Van Manen, AJ
Wicks, LE
Wilson, TR
Wyatt, KG

Question negatived.

Original question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Ms O'DWYER (Higgins—Minister for Revenue and Financial Services) (10:36): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

COMMITTEES

Public Accounts and Audit Committee

Report

Ms BRODTMANN (Canberra) (10:37): On behalf of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit, I present the committee's report entitled *Report 468: Defence major projects report (2015-16): inquiry based on Auditor-General's report 40 (2016-17)*.

Report made a parliamentary paper in accordance with standing order 39(e).

Ms BRODTMANN: by leave—Every year the Department of Defence and the Australian National Audit Office work together to produce a consolidated review of selected major Defence acquisition projects, with the resulting report called the Major Projects Report, or the MPR as it has come to be known. The MPR is then reviewed by the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit.

The 2015-16 MPR has a total approved budget of approximately \$63.7 billion, covering nearly 58 per cent of the budget within the Approved Major Capital Investment Program.

The MPR reviews risks, challenges and complexities facing major projects in general, as well as the status of the selected major projects in terms of cost, schedule and forecast capability.

This review of the MPR by the JCPAA also included consideration of ANAO audit report 11 (2016-2017) on the Army's armed reconnaissance helicopter—known more widely as the Tiger helicopter.

The ANAO found that the Tiger helicopter fleet has not yet delivered the original capability expected by the Australian government, and continues to experience higher-than-expected costs.

The Chief of Army declared final operational capability, or FOC, for the Tiger project in April 2016. The declaration was seven years later than planned, and was accompanied by nine operational caveats.

At the time of audit, the Tiger project had 60 capability deficiencies deemed by the Department of Defence to be critical.

The committee examined the ANAO's finding that the Department of Defence had not prepared the Tiger project data summary sheets 'on the basis of the guidelines', and that the project maturity score of the Tiger project did not 'accurately or completely represent the project's maturity' at the time of review.

The committee gave particular attention to the significance of the Auditor-General's qualified audit finding. Accordingly, the committee agreed to continue to monitor the Tiger project and related issues in future MPRs.

Previous committees have taken an interest in transparency across the project life cycle for projects reported in the MPR, and the committee has pledged to continue to maintain and enhance transparency where possible.

The committee also examined capability performance reporting and analysis, and noted the ANAO's demonstration that application of different analysis methodologies could yield vastly different results. The committee recommended that Defence review its procedures for the

development of expected capability estimates and report back to the committee on the outcomes of the review within six months and with a progress report within three months.

Project maturity scores were another area of interest to the committee. Project maturity scores are designed to provide 'quantification, in a simple and communicable manner, of the relative maturity of capital investment projects as they progress through the capability development and acquisition life cycle'. In 2016 the committee recommended Defence make improvements in project maturity scores, and this year the committee has reiterated that recommendation, calling on Defence and the ANAO to commence discussions on updating project maturity scores. The committee has outlined a series of deadlines to progress these discussions.

The committee is pleased to note the downward trend of time lost over the course of projects, otherwise known as 'schedule slippage', but notes that projects should be properly classified at commencement to ensure that expectations around project delivery are realistic.

The committee also noted differing methodologies used by Defence to calculate cost per flying hour between the MPR and the audit into the Tiger helicopters project, recommending that Defence devise a single methodology, one single methodology, to enable clear comparisons to be made between documents or projects. The Department of Defence should provide this information to the committee prior to the first sitting week of 2018.

Progress has been made in improving transparency in the reporting of Defence major project expenditure over the years since the MPR was instituted, and incremental improvements occur year upon year thanks to the professionalism of the ANAO and Defence of Defence. In concluding, I would also like to extend my thanks to all members of the committee for their deliberations during this inquiry, and also to the secretariat.

I commend the report to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Publications Committee

Report

Mr CHRISTENSEN (Dawson) (10:42): I present the report from the Publications Committee. I ask leave of the House to move that the report be agreed to.

Leave granted.

Mr CHRISTENSEN: I move:

That the report be agreed to.

Question agreed to.

BILLS

Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Omnibus) Bill 2017

Second Reading

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Ms LAMB (Longman) (10:43): Yesterday I was celebrating the visit from the shadow minister for defence, Richard Marles, when he visited Remembrance House in Burpengary to

talk to a group of returned service men and women. Remembrance House is quite literally a house. It's actually a home, a place for veterans to live and adjust to civilian life. It's a great initiative. We're very fortunate to have one in Burpengary; it's one of two in the country. The other sits in the member for Herbert's electorate up in Townsville. At this meeting with the honourable member, the shadow minister for defence, Richard Marles, we were resoundingly told of how difficult it can be for veterans to find decent, secure work that matches their needs. And, as a strong advocate for the veteran community, I heard this loud and clear, and I have been taking action since.

I hold the position of the chair of Labor's Australian Jobs Taskforce, a caucus committee listening to people around the country involved in the job market: people in work who are looking for more work; people who are actually looking for any work at all; businesses; industry leaders; job service providers; and councils and state governments, of course. It's an initiative of the Labor Party to help shape policy that will move Australia forward. As I said earlier, listening to people is the only real way to formulate strong policy, particularly in this space of employment. So recently I have been holding a number of conversations with those in the space of employment for veterans, as part of this task force, and we've heard some very interesting things. We've been told in these conversations what the barriers are to people finding work and what support our veterans need in finding work, and of course we have been asking them what the solutions are to finding that work and helping them with that support. It's always good to get their views and their recommendations.

In the years that the Abbott and Turnbull governments have been in power, too little has been done for the veterans of Australia—in particular, too little has been done to help them find decent and secure work upon returning to civilian life. I'd have to say that, until Labor gets into power at the next election, I'm more than happy to lend a hand and support any changes that support veterans, no matter how small those steps are.

I'd now like to turn to schedule 4 of this bill. These changes are by no means sweeping reforms—the department has already been able to facilitate these employer initiative payments; this bill just legislates them—although, again, we'll welcome anything that helps our veterans. While strengthening the legislative foundation of payments is of course a good thing, it's not groundbreaking reform. What we really need, though, is this government to take a stronger, more considered and deliberate approach, making sure that meaningful policy enacts positive change for our veterans.

I also support changes in schedule 5 of this bill, which amends the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004, as well as the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 for Defence related claims. This schedule will facilitate information-sharing between the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission and the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation, with respect to certain service related compensation claims. The way that the system currently works is that, if someone's discharged for medical reasons, they have to undergo a medical. Then they have to go to the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation to organise payments. When they go there, they have to organise for another medical assessment. And then, if they go to the Department of Veterans' Affairs, they have to go through another. These amendments in schedule 5 of the bill go to making sure that the complicated and lengthy claims process for people seeking assistance from the department is smoothed and is easier for them. Enabling that sharing of information between the

departments will assist the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation in making speedier superannuation benefits assessments and, in turn, assist the department in recognising a person's entitlement to incapacity payments. It's one of the issues with the current process. I've heard time after time that it's lengthy and it's complicated; for vulnerable people, it's additional stress that they just do not need. So of course I support schedule 5. As long as proper safeguards to protect veterans' privacy are in place, Labor and I are always supportive to changes to improve this process. So I'm happy and pleased to support this bill. I'm happy to support procedural processes that smooth the way forward and cut red tape for our veterans.

Ms MADELEINE KING (Brand) (10:49): Before I speak on the Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Omnibus) Bill 2017, I would like to briefly associate myself with and support the comments of the Minister for Veterans' Affairs and those of the shadow minister for veterans' affairs, the member for Kingston, earlier this week in relation to the government's response to the recent Senate committee report on the inquiry into suicide by veterans and ex-service personnel, *The constant battle: suicide by veterans*.

It's a good thing that the government has accepted all the recommendations of the report, and Labor looks forward to continuing discussions with the government on the implementation of the recommendations. As someone who has a significant defence community—hosting, as Rockingham does, the largest naval base in Australia—veterans' concerns are of particular importance to me, and I welcome this action to address the tragic issue of suicide among the ex-service personnel and veteran community.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the member for Kingston on her elevation to the Labor shadow cabinet. The member for Kingston and her office have been invaluable to me as an incoming member of parliament in the seat of Brand by assisting my office in the many and varied questions and issues that are raised by veterans and ex-service personnel and their families that live in my community. So I'd like to congratulate and thank the member for Kingston.

I'd like to speak in support of the Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Omnibus) Bill 2017 and its amendments, that look to improve the operation of veterans' affairs legislation. The implementation of amendments that will clarify, improve or streamline the operation of the law as it applies to veterans' affairs and processes within the Department of Veterans' Affairs is a good move. My electorate of Brand, as I've said, is home to the Royal Australian Navy's largest base, HMAS *Stirling*, located just off the coast of Rockingham. Commissioned in 1978, HMAS *Stirling* now hosts 12 fleet units, including the RAN's Anzac class frigates, with Collins class submarines also stationed here. HMAS *Stirling* is home to more than 2,300 service personnel. HMAS *Stirling* and Garden Island, on which the base is, have changed a great deal since I was a young girl growing up just around the corner in Shoalwater Bay.

With many past and present servicewomen and men making the communities across Brand their permanent homes, this bill has the potential to improve the lives of many people in my electorate. This bill was referred to the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade for consideration and, given the number of schedules and the potential impact they will have on how veterans engage with the department, this referral was supported by Labor. We on this side supported this referral so that the legislation could be thoroughly examined and so that proposed changes would not leave veterans any worse off once enacted. I'm happy to support those proposed changes that will benefit the former

servicewomen and men and their families who live in my electorate, and, of course, those across the country.

I'd like to turn to the amendments and what they'll mean for people affected. This bill deals with a number of different elements within the Veterans' Affairs legislation in its eight schedules. Schedule 1 amendments look to align the provisions of the Veterans' Entitlements Act under which the Veterans' Review Board operates and those similar provisions of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. This work to align these similar provisions will modernise the board's operation by ensuring the board provides a mechanism of review that is accessible, fair, economical, informal and quick; proportionate to the importance and nature of the matter; and promotes trust and confidence in the board's decision-making. The Veterans' Review Board provides independent merits reviews of decisions about pensions and allowances under the Veterans' Entitlements Act. This includes disability pensions, as well as rehabilitation, compensation and other benefits under the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act.

Appearing before the board when dealing with matters relating to pension decisions, compensation issues and rehab issues can be a highly emotional and daunting experience for many veterans. The RSL, in its submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, made the point of stating that many veterans who lodge a claim:

... are often dealing with emotions associated with the loss of their military career, their inability or reduced ability to provide for their family, difficulty in obtaining employment post-service if they are injured or ill and strained relationships with family

Appearing before the board is not an easy or straightforward action for many. This should be recognised as we consider this bill.

Schedule 1 amendments also impose an ongoing obligation on both the claimant and on the Department of Veterans' Affairs during the period until the board has determined the matter, to lodge with the board a copy of any document that is in their possession relevant to the review that has not been lodged previously. The amendments provide the board with the power to vary or revoke a decision made under the alternative dispute resolution process, with the consent of the parties and where the board is satisfied that it is within its powers and otherwise appropriate to do so. It also requires the Repatriation Commission or any person representing the commission in a review to use their best endeavours to assist the board in fulfilling their legislated objectives. These are all positive measures.

However, it was proposed that section 6 of schedule 1 would give the Principal Member of the Veterans' Review Board the ability to dismiss an application for review should they be satisfied that the application, among other things, is misconceived, has no reasonable prospect of success or is otherwise an abuse of process. Stakeholders raised concern about this with the committee, and we on this side had concerns about this provision. The Veterans' Review Board is a less adversarial process than the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. Veterans are not represented by lawyers before the board. Appearing before the board gives veterans a chance to have their say. It is their chance to be heard when otherwise they might not be. By taking this chance away from veterans, the government would fundamentally change how veterans engage with the board and how veterans perceive the board. I've been told by a senior advocate who appears before the Veterans' Review Board that most associations who represent veterans at the board would not support this change. People who work in this area,

the volunteers who work to assist vets and their families were very concerned that, while a principal member is usually quite reasonable, there was a risk in introducing this change. There was a risk that a person could wrongly interpret documentation, leading to a veteran missing out on their right of review. For these reasons, advocates supported the process that is currently in place, as it is one where further advice can be sought and, in the process, can be used to further review a decision of the board.

The proposed change to section 6 of schedule 1 had the potential to deny veterans the opportunity to be heard. We have heard, again through the committee process, that the principal member would have been presented with the circumstances to use this power to dismiss an application for review only three times in the last seven years. Time and experience have shown that the process of review by veterans to the board is not one being misused by veterans, and legislating against veterans having an opportunity to be heard is not an action that I would support. There seems to be little point in doing so. It seems this section would deliver very little while, at the same time, causing unnecessary upset and anxiety in the ex-service personnel community. The Kwinana, Rockingham and Port Kennedy RSL sub-branches in my electorate of Brand would also prefer this section be removed from this bill. We understand that the government, following the Labor opposition's urging, is now moving an amendment to remove this section. We welcome this change, as no doubt will advocates as well, as it recognises the unique nature of the Veterans' Review Board. I am very pleased to see the removal of this section.

Amendments in schedule 2, however, will work to benefit veterans by simplifying and streamlining processes. The current time it takes to appoint staff to the Specialist Medical Review Council—three months or longer—will be addressed. The long delay can affect the council's ability to do its very important job. The council's an independent body where vets who have issues with the decisions of the Repatriation Medical Authority regarding the content of a statement of principles can go for review. The statement of principles' content is in respect of the particular kind of injury or disease or death suffered by the veteran, and this amendment will assist in more timely decisions being made for veterans—and that is a good thing.

Other streamlining measures will enable the Specialist Medical Review Council to adopt electronic lodgement of requests for reviews. That means a hard copy will no longer be required, and so requests for review will not have to be lodged at a Department of Veterans' Affairs office. This measure is broadly supported. Mind you, in particular parts of my electorate, we do have a lot of difficulty getting internet coverage, and the NBN's a long way away, so some veterans living in communities in Baldivis will still have to go to the Department of Veterans' Affairs office because the infrastructure is not in place for them to be able to use this modern provision of electronic lodgement.

In regard to the electronic lodgement provision, the community has commented it should not be used to the detriment of veterans when submitting claims, appeals or reconsiderations. No doubt, for those who can undertake electronic lodgement, it'll be beneficial for those people in a single-claim situation, but there may be complications if a complex issue is involved. I understand such complications can arise around understanding statements of principles and with the different standards of proof required in different situations. It is important that people who choose to use, or are able to use, this new electronic lodgement

method do so knowing they can still seek advice from an advocate should they need it; but, for those who do not require additional support and advice, this amendment in introducing a new, more efficient electronic lodgement of request for review does have the potential to benefit veterans who are, indeed, able to access the internet at all.

Other amendments in this bill will allow for the provision of financial assistance to people attending a Specialist Medical Review Council hearing to make an oral submission. This measure will see individuals, as well as representatives of organisations and any necessary attendants accompanying them, being able to receive financial assistance to attend a hearing to make an oral submission. We've received positive feedback on this measure. I've been told it will ensure a better process as it ensures the hearing is as informed as possible of the reasons for the applicant pursuing the review. I'm told there is a chance that the panel might not have all the relevant information before them when making their decision. I'm also told that hard copies of complex claims are not circulated in their entirety and that documents, once lodged, have, sadly, become lost or misplaced. Making it financially possible for a veteran or their representative to attend a hearing and make such an oral submission will help alleviate the stress when these things happen, and this is a positive step.

Another good step in the bill is a measure that would give the minister the power to make arrangements with foreign governments to cover the provision of benefits and the payment of benefits. With this bill, in schedule 3, the minister can enter into agreements in relation to reciprocal arrangements with Veterans' Affairs matters. This amendment will broaden the countries with which Australia can enter agreements beyond the Commonwealth. Veterans' reps in my electorate are supportive of this measure as it is beneficial to veterans who no longer live in Australia. At the moment, only payments payable under the Veterans' Entitlements Act are covered by existing agreements. This bill will now cover allied veterans and Defence Force members with the type of service equivalent to that covered by the VEA. The means that the agreements will relate to payments and treatment provided by the Repatriation Commission or the MRCC. We are supportive of this measure that will extend agreements so that veterans are covered, regardless of the legislative framework.

We hear from veterans and advocates about the lengthy and complicated claims process that people can face when seeking assistance. Labor supports the changes that will assist people in this process to make their lives easier, bearing in mind the need to ensure adequate safeguards are in place to protect veterans' privacy. One way this bill will do this is by addressing the doubling and sometimes the tripling of the requirement for veterans to undergo medicals when they engage in the system. The situation at the moment is that a veteran who was medically discharged needs to undergo a medical and then, when they go to the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation to organise their payments, they undergo another medical, and this may be followed by a third medical when they go to the Department of Veterans' Affairs for assistance. The amendments in this bill will enable information to be shared between the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation and the Department of Veterans' Affairs. This will enable the CSC to access relevant claims information held by the department. Information would include relevant medical and rehab information which would assist the CSC to make quicker superannuation benefit assessments. This will, in turn, assist the department in determining a person's entitlement to incapacity payments. The upside of

such sharing would be a more timely outcome for veterans at a vulnerable and stressful time in their lives.

Schedule 7 looks to eliminate the unnecessary delays in administrative issues that are caused when certain veterans' affairs portfolio legislative instruments need to be amended to incorporate changes in non-disallowable instruments. Each individual instrument will no longer need to be lodged in parliament. One such example is when a new rehabilitation appliance becomes available. Availability of the new equipment is delayed, as a legislative instrument that incorporates the document under which the applicant may be provided the equipment needs to be amended to refer to the policy document's changed date. Eliminating such delays would have a real and beneficial impact on veterans' lives and should be supported.

Labor supports the measures in this bill which go to streamlining and improving the law as it improves the processes that affect veterans' lives. With the amendments the government is planning on moving, we on this side of the House offer our support of the legislation. Once again, I congratulate the Minister for Veterans' Affairs on his work and that of his department in this regard, and also the shadow minister for veterans' affairs, the member for Kingston, and her office for all of their work in this portfolio.

Mr DICK (Oxley) (11:04): I rise to support the Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Omnibus) Bill 2017. In doing so, I want to recognise the great work on both sides of the chamber. It is a true demonstration of the commitment that I think this whole House has to veterans in our community. Listening to my colleague and friend the member for Brand, I know her deep connection to the ADF through her family and also through her work as a local MP. I echo the sentiments she finished her comments with today about service and recognising the good work of the minister and the shadow minister.

I want to spend a little time highlighting the fact that the bill before the House is a clear demonstration that when good ideas are put forward and when simplification is delivered, both sides of the parliament can work together. In the last two weeks, I've probably spoken in the House of Representatives and Federation Chamber more than I have done since I was elected. I've spoken about a range of issues, on a range of portfolio allocations and on a number of local issues, but I have particularly taken time to read and understand this bill because I know it demonstrates to the wider Australian community that when both sides of politics work together and when both sides of the House of Representatives can join forces we can make a huge difference. Contrast that with some of the unfortunately divisive debates and divisions we've seen through the week. This bill before the House today gives a clear indication and a clear pathway forward for dealing with complicated issues surrounding veterans in our community.

I want to acknowledge the member for Herbert, who is in the House today, and her powerful speech on this bill yesterday and her strong advocacy as a representative of a large number of serving ADF and personnel in Townsville. Listening to the member for Herbert and talking to her about the advocacy she does when she's in the community in her electorate, I know how important it is that government gets it right.

Listening to the minister's second reading speech and also to the ministerial statement which was delivered to the House back in August, I know there are around 291,000 Australians that the Department of Veterans' Affairs supports. Just over half of these people

are veterans or currently serving members of the ADF, around 48 per cent are women, around 82,000 are widows or widowers, and around 2½ thousand are children of veterans. Today, more than 203,000 of DVA's clients are 65 years old or older, while about 23,000 are under the age of 40. They represent every aspect of service, they represent every walk of life and they are across the whole of our nation, in every corner of our cities and towns.

In my electorate of Oxley, I'm very proud to be able to work alongside the RSL and veterans' organisations. I know every single member of the House works hard to advocate the interests of these people and, more importantly, the services that our serving and former serving men and women need in order to participate and to make sure their lives are honoured, and also to assist the transitions that many people go through as they leave the ADF. In the past 12 months, over 1,400 members of the ADF have separated from the forces for reasons not of their choosing. Ten years ago, just over 740 members separated involuntarily. How we help these men and women, how we provide for their transition and how we look at support for people when they are in the broader community is critical to the work that we do as members of parliament and also as community leaders.

We know that the Veterans' Review Board plays an important role in the merits review of decisions by the Department of Veterans' Affairs. As the shadow minister, the member for Kingston, indicated, Labor is supportive of the changes proposed in this bill which clarify, improve and streamline the operation of the law and processes within the department.

One of the first things I did when I was elected to this place was to invite the shadow minister to my electorate to meet with veterans and to meet with the local RSLs in my community. It was very clear from that initial meeting that government has a critical role to play in the ongoing support of veterans. I had been to a number of services over the years. I had met with a number of groups in my former role as a Brisbane city councillor, but it was being elected to this place and understanding and listening to the trauma and the difficulties that former members of the ADF and their families—particularly their families—suffer and go through.

As the son of a World War II veteran who served in the Navy as a signalman, I could always listen to my father talk about his experiences. That was a time when perhaps, following from when he left the Navy, often issues weren't discussed. Often there were times when men and women who served in the armed forces simply said: 'Well, that was wartime. We'll leave that behind. You don't need to talk about that. Get on with your life.'

Luckily, those times have changed. Today's amendments broadly set out a goal and an achievement to make sure that veterans who need support, who perhaps have served and are dealing with complicated issues, have accessibility improved. This bill today is not just about making it fairer; it's about making it more economical and informal and having a quick turnaround for a whole range of services. It promotes public trust and confidence in the decisions that we need to make and that the board needs to make. It's important that the process is as easy as possible for veterans to have a fair hearing on the merits of the decisions made.

There are a number of elements to the bill. It's divided into eight schedules. A number of speakers have gone through those schedules in detail, as did the minister and the shadow minister. I'm going to focus on one or two today. I know the veterans in my community and those who have come to my office seeking assistance have reflected a concern that the current

system causes unworkable administrative issues and, sadly, unnecessary delays. We know from listening to the debate and following this closely, as I have, that the shadow minister has conveyed some of these concerns to the government.

After section 155(8), the bill inserts a proposed new subsection (8A), which gives the power to the principal member to dismiss an application for review if it is frivolous or vexatious, has no reasonable prospect of success or is otherwise an abuse of process. As the shadow minister said in her statement, we thank the government for removing this proposed subsection. As the member for Brand indicated, we did share the concerns conveyed by the veterans community and the RSL, who indicated a strong view on behalf of veterans that this proposed subsection should be removed, so we welcome this change. It reflects the unique nature of the Veterans' Review Board.

One of the other great opportunities I've had, apart from meeting and working closely with veterans in my community, was to be able to go onto the ground and visit our troops and our serving personnel when I visited the Middle East through the ADF Parliamentary Program. I was able and privileged to spend time with members of the Defence Force serving in the Middle East. We were able to visit the bases in the Middle East, to visit Afghanistan and to spend time in Kabul. This enabled me as a representative to see very clearly, firsthand, what our men and women go through on a daily basis. You can read about it, you can turn on the television, or you can log on and sometimes view what's happening, but, when you are able to visit a country at war and you see the dangers, the sacrifices and the sheer hard work that our men and women go through every single day, it puts a brand-new perspective on things. That experience left me with a greater respect for the Defence Force and the incredible sacrifices they make.

Currently, there are around 1,700 ADF personnel deployed to the Middle East region. Our Defence Force personnel remain active in advising, assisting and training Iraqi security forces and training and advising the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces in Afghanistan. I was privileged to be able to go and meet them and have a greater and deeper understanding of just what the ADF are doing to assist the men and women serving in the military there to lead, hopefully, to peace and recognition in that region. Our troops are not only doing an incredible job representing our country but, as I said, are working side by side with the local forces to train and equip the Afghan army. Above all, it was amazing. I was honoured to see the professionalism and commitment of our serving personnel on display 24/7.

I know that our troops are the best in the world and incredibly dedicated to serving our country. But I also know that in my own local community there are many ADF families that are separated from their loved ones. I cannot imagine the trauma, difficulties and fears those family members go through from day to day not knowing due to operational issues where their family members are and whether they are safe. The reputation of the ADF and their families and peacekeepers extends beyond our borders and to accompanying nations who also have personnel serving in the region.

From my own experience on the ground, from working with our veterans groups, I understand how critical and important it is to streamline medical and treatment processes for veterans. As I said in my earlier remarks, I have hosted round tables with the shadow minister. This week we saw the elevation to the shadow cabinet of the member for Kingston as our spokesperson for veterans' affairs. That's a very clear and powerful demonstration of

strong leadership by an alternative government and by Bill Shorten, the Leader of the Opposition. We are sending a clear message, when it comes to veterans, that there is strong bipartisan support. The minister and the shadow minister worked closely in cooperation. I was incredibly pleased to see Labor taking a positive step to include the issues of veterans in the shadow cabinet. That sends a message to the wider community that we not only take their issues seriously but, if we are privileged to serve the nation as a future Shorten Labor government, we will have a veterans' affairs minister sitting at the table making the major decisions—as it should be.

I acknowledge all the work of members of parliament in this place. We are very privileged to have on my side of the chamber the member for Solomon, Luke Gosling OAM, and the member for Eden-Monaro, Mike Kelly OAM, who have demonstrated their commitment to public service in this place and also in the Australian Defence Force. I know from talking to the members for Solomon and Eden-Monaro the difficulties veterans go through when they leave the force, the difficulties for their families. We heard this week the ministerial statement on suicide within the ADF, and I was so pleased to see both sides of politics joining forces to acknowledge the rates of suicide are too high and, more importantly, that there is a plan going forward and more work to be done.

I thank the minister and the shadow minister for their efforts in working constructively together on this piece of legislation. I look forward to voting for this to see improvements for our ADF personnel. But the job is not finished. As a member of parliament, I will continue to advocate and represent to make sure the interests of our serving ADF men and women are looked after now and in the future.

Ms BUTLER (Griffith) (11:18): This is a very important bill and, as the member for Oxley has just told the House, it is a great example of bipartisanship and collaboration between the minister and the shadow minister. I pay tribute to the shadow minister. She's been an excellent shadow minister for veterans' affairs and her diligence has seen the elevation of the Veterans' Affairs portfolio to the shadow cabinet, which I think emphasises the significance of the portfolio from the perspective of the opposition.

Labor is supportive of changes in this bill which will clarify, improve or streamline the operation of the law and processes within the Department of Veterans' Affairs. This bill is an omnibus bill. It contains eight schedules which deal with a variety of elements in the legislation. It's fair to say that through the interventions of the shadow minister, amendments will be proposed that will significantly improve the operation of this bill in the interests of veterans and ex-service personnel.

I do want to talk a little about the importance of veterans and veterans' support, including in my own community. I also want to touch on, as the member for Oxley did, the recent ministerial statement in respect of suicide amongst veterans and ex-service personnel, to emphasise the importance of continuing to respond to suicide within that community and to provide support. I'm really fortunate as a member of parliament to have had, for the entire time I have been a member, constant and regular engagement with ADSO to talk about veterans' issues. The local representatives of ADSO were one of the first groups to contact me after I was elected at a by-election in February 2014, seeking to set up regularly scheduled meetings, which we did set up. I want to thank them for the work they have done and continue to do around the country, not just in my electorate, actually helping members of parliament to

understand the issues that are unique to and that face the community of veterans and ex-service personnel. I particularly wanted to thank, from ADSO, Ted Chitham and Ross Clelland. They have been quite tenacious and unrelenting in seeking to raise with me several issues that are relevant to the lives of veterans and ex-service personnel. I know they will have seen and noted the work that's been done in respect of suicide in the community, for example.

I also wanted to thank the late Peter Snowdon, who was one of the first of the ADSO representatives to visit me. It was very sad to lose Peter from our community, and the veterans' community lost a very good advocate when Peter passed. I want to acknowledge his work as an advocate for veterans' interests and as somebody who would come to my office and talk to me about these really difficult issues. Occasionally, he would send an email directly to me raising any number of issues. We often disagreed, but he was always so positive about it, so willing to engage in a spirited debate and discussion, and such a great supporter of ADSO's continued engagements with members of parliament. I do miss him and I'm very sorry for the community's loss of Peter.

I'm also fortunate to have in the electorate of Griffith the Greenslopes Private Hospital, which is a veterans' hospital and has been a veterans' hospital since it was established. Greenslopes Private Hospital staff are well known in the community for the work they do with veterans. Their very beautifully put together Anzac Day service, which is a service at dawn that is so well attended by the local community, gets hundreds and hundreds of people. They have an amazing Catafalque party from the local Anglican church grammar school, a beautiful choir from Somerville House that perform every year exceptionally well, and very, very senior representations from the local community and the veterans' community. It's not just the work they do in commemoration and acknowledgment; it's the work they also do in the real issues facing veterans today, and I'm speaking particularly about the work that that foundation does to support post-traumatic stress disorder research.

The Greenslopes Private Hospital also auspices the Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation, which is doing a lot of work in relation to PTSD, including a study in relation to Vietnam veterans which I have referred to in this chamber before. The study found that one in three Australian veterans from the Vietnam War developed PTSD, and that participants with PTSD had four times the chance of having had a heart attack in the past; two times the risk of stomach ulcers; more than triple the risk of acting out their dreams while asleep; almost twice the tendency for restless legs; and increased daytime fatigue and sleepiness, as well as two times the risk of suffering sleep apnoea; double the chance of reflux; a greater tendency to report constipation, diarrhoea and irritable bowel syndrome; and lower levels of good cholesterol, which contributes to an increased risk of heart disease. The ramifications of developing PTSD are physical and psychological, and it is very important that organisations like the Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation continue their work of providing an evidence base about what can be done for veterans who have developed PTSD as a consequence of their service.

I also want to mention the work that is being done by the many RSL sub-branches—and you couldn't talk about the work that's being done for veterans without doing so—in my electorate of Griffith. Being an inner suburbs seat in Brisbane, we're fortunate that we have a range of organisations that provide support for veterans, and we have a range of RSL sub-

branches. I couldn't possibly do all of them justice in the short time left to me, but I did want to mention a couple of the RSL sub-branches that I've visited recently.

The first is the Holland Park sub-branch. Every sub-branch is special, but this one is special in a particular way. It's a very naval sub-branch of the RSL. It's led by Sonja and Alan Hellier, who are well known in RSL circles in Queensland. They are both excellent people. Someone said to me the other day, 'What Sonja Hellier doesn't know about welfare for veterans could fit on a postage stamp,' and I think that's pretty accurate. She is a wealth of knowledge for the local community in relation to veterans and welfare. The two of them, together with the committee for that RSL, do so much great work to bring the community together and bring the RSL membership together, and I really want to acknowledge them. I went to the sub-branch's lunch recently. We heard from a really interesting speaker who'd came to military service quite late in his life—not that late, but not as a young person. That's the sort of thing they do. They bring people together; they bring diverse viewpoints together. And, of course, I also always see them every year at the commemoration of the *Voyager* disaster at St Mary's at Kangaroo Point, which is a very moving service. So I want to acknowledge them both for the work that they do in our community.

Another sub-branch that I've visited recently is the Norman Park RSL sub-branch. Again, it's very special. It's a sub-branch focused on nashos. They have a really great, active sub-branch with, again, excellent commemorations on Anzac Day and, of course, Remembrance Day, which is forthcoming. The nashos came up with a really lovely idea, which was to seek to obtain from the Australian War Memorial a sapling of a Lone Pine and have that planted right behind the memorial at Norman Park. It's a beautiful memorial, so I was very pleased to donate the sapling from the Australian War Memorial. Recently, I met with the leadership of the sub-branch, Brian and Margaret Besgrove, and also with Ken Cork, who'd been the motivating instigator of the Lone Pine project, for a small ceremony in relation to the planting of that Lone Pine.

I do encourage other RSL sub-branches to have a look at what the Australian War Memorial can do in terms of providing Lone Pine saplings. Obviously, for my own electorate, I'd be very, very pleased to assist those who don't have them to obtain Lone Pine trees. It is a really beautiful acknowledgment, particularly as we are commemorating the Centenary of Anzac over these few years in the current period. The nashos sub-branch at Norman Park is a really beautiful sub-branch. So much work is being done there for the welfare of veterans and ex-service personnel. I went to one of their recent lunches as well where we had a really great turnout and a great opportunity to talk about some of the issues of concern to veterans, and a few other issues as well, of course.

In acknowledging the importance of responding to the needs of veterans and ex-service personnel, I did want to mention those organisations. As I say, they are certainly not the only RSL sub-branches in my electorate. There are many of them, and each one of them is unique. Each of them has a specific interest or focus. I went to the Greek RSL sub-branch a little while ago now for a commemoration in Brisbane city. It was a beautiful commemoration for the Greek community as well. I'd better stop because I can't possibly list every single RSL sub-branch in the electorate in this one speech, but I do acknowledge them all for the work that they do.

Like the member for Oxley, I have had family members who have had active service in World War I and World War II, and I do think it is important, whenever we talk about veterans' affairs in this place, to stop and acknowledge what that really means: what active service has meant, what involvement in peacekeeping operations has meant and what it has meant to be a member of the Defence Force, for all ex-service personnel—people who volunteered to make great sacrifices for the country. We owe them a great debt of gratitude, and that willingness, the voluntary nature of it and the sacrifices made, whether in active service or not, ought to be acknowledged at every opportunity when veterans' affairs matters are being considered in this parliament, and I do so now.

I also wanted to touch on, as I said, the bipartisanship around suicide prevention for veterans and ex-service personnel. The minister did make a statement and there was bipartisan support for that. There's a recent Australian government response to a Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee report in relation to suicide by veterans. It's very pleasing to see that the government has accepted the recommendations of that report and has signalled an intention to undertake a range of measures with a view to preventing suicide amongst veterans and ex-service personnel. All of us in this House of Representatives will have heard from local veterans of the loss of friends that they have suffered as a consequence of suicide. All of us will have attended events, like the event that was held here at parliament in recent months, to commemorate suicide amongst veterans.

So it is incredibly important of course that the minister—having published a response to the committee's report, accepting the recommendations that have been made—now vigorously seek to implement all of those recommendations which he has accepted. We know that, in order to get things done in this place, you need vigorous application to the cause. You need constant follow-up. I'm quite confident that the minister and the shadow minister will continue to pursue, with vigour, measures that will improve our response to suicide amongst veterans and ex-service personnel and that that will improve suicide prevention amongst that community as well. It's a very important bipartisan approach that needs to be taken in relation to those issues.

I did want to say just a couple of things about the bill. As I said at the outset, it is an omnibus bill. There have been a couple of particular amendments to the bill that have been inspired by the concerns raised by the Labor opposition, including in respect of the Veterans' Review Board's ability to dismiss an application for review, which caused some concern in the ex-service community. I'm very pleased that the shadow minister was able to lead negotiations for amendments that will deal with some of the concerns that have been raised. I'm also very pleased that this is such a wide-ranging bill that will have such bipartisan support in moves to improve the lives of the veterans and ex-service community. Accordingly, Labor is supportive of the changes which streamline or improve the operation of the law, as far as it does improve processes for veterans, and, in light of the amendments that the government is planning to make, we'll support the bill. *(Time expired)*

Dr MIKE KELLY (Eden-Monaro) (11:33): It is a great pleasure to speak on the Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Omnibus) Bill 2017 in the context of the bipartisanship that has been demonstrated on this issue. I think the most enjoyable experience that I've had in this parliament has been working on security matters on the intelligence and security committee and on issues to do with veterans with members of the coalition. In particular, I think the

Minister for Veterans' Affairs has really had his heart in his portfolio. I still would continue to advocate for, though, and support the suggestions by Neil James and the Australia Defence Association that the minister has got too much on his plate, that there should be more people in the portfolio and that the minister should be able to concentrate on the personnel and veterans' issues, and obviously the cybersecurity issues that are also in his space really need greater focus and concentration by support from another person in the portfolio.

The minister's doing a very fine job, despite those limitations. In particular, I really welcome his support for the bipartisan work of the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee in relation to veteran suicide. That was one of the issues, apart from family experience with that subject, that led me to work with the member for Berowra in establishing a parliamentary friendship group on the prevention of suicide. I'd like to thank the Minister for Health, who is at the table, for his support, and the shadow minister. They have been avid participants and have kept extremely open minds about the types of issues that have been raised in that forum, which have direct relevance to suicide issues for veterans, as well.

We'll be together again in Beersheba in a few days time, celebrating the victory at Beersheba and commemorating the service and sacrifice of our men in the field in that battle 100 years ago on 31 October. It is particularly poignant for me, as there were members of my own family in the light horse. They, both of my grandfathers, were back again in the Second World War. They were looked after by the Jewish community in the area while they were fighting in the Middle East, particularly in Syria and Lebanon. They went on to suffer great traumas, one as a prisoner of the Japanese on the Burma-Thai railway and the other with severe injuries he suffered in New Guinea. I learn a lot from the family experiences that I've been exposed to as to some of the worst aspects of the traumas that veterans have had to go through.

Every generation of our family has served in the army, going back to the Crimean War, the Indian mutiny, the Afghan War, the first and second world wars, my own service and my father's service—even uncles and aunts. So it is something that I have a lot of understanding of, from the personal experience that's been passed on to me. Since I've entered parliament that has been greatly expanded by the fact that I represent nearly 3,000 veterans in Eden-Monaro, who have an average age of about 66 now. Some of the stories from them have been quite tragic. One of them involved a veteran who had been a prisoner of the Japanese. His wife endured tremendous hardship for 40 years after he returned home after the Second World War, with his terrible nightmares and his resorting to self-medication with alcohol. She endured great hardships. He'd wake up in the middle of the night, strangling her, thinking she was a Japanese soldier. It came to a point where she just couldn't take that any more. Her life was at risk. She was advised that she needed to move out of the household, which she did. Her husband passed away but she wasn't entitled to war widows support, which she desperately needed. We tried to get her some ex gratia payments to support her. Unfortunately, she went into hospital for a hip replacement operation and contracted septicaemia and died in hospital. We were never able to achieve that for her, but her case highlights another aspect we need to look at in these processes.

The veterans in my community have raised so many issues with me about the whole issue around process: the point-of-entry experience and trying to get around the complexity of

making a claim, with the adversarial aspects of it. We need to have a benefit-of-the-doubt approach to these things. They have raised all these issues with me, but as I was sitting here a couple of minutes ago, waiting to speak in this debate, I received an email from a veteran which really sums it up. I'll just read that letter to me. It's from Tony Cullinan, who says:

Dear Mike,

I am a member of your constituency living in Bega.

I have a lot of service injuries and they are getting progressively worse. I am in varying degrees of pain a lot of the time.

I own a small business and get by, but it's pretty tight.

I have a lot of depression and anxiety around my injuries.

I've been sitting here for the last hour waiting to be linked into a directions hearing with the VRB—the Veterans' Review Board—

which was supposed to take place at 10. I called at ¼ passed 10 and a lady was surprised and said she would get back to me. I've heard nothing and I am sitting hear waiting.

There are no advocacy services in Bega and I have been hooked into Woden – but it's a long way and they don't really know what's going on for me. I really feel overwhelmed by all of this.

Respectfully,

Tony Cullinan

That pretty much sums up the experience of the veterans who have approached me. I am obviously very pleased to see an attempt to address these issues, with this legislation in particular.

On the concern that we raised about the principal member process, I'm really delighted the government's picked that up. It really continued to embed in this process the adversarial issue and denied members the ability to have their day in court and be heard, genuinely and openly, so I'm delighted that section has been removed.

Also, I'm really delighted with the aspects that we've been dealing with recently and are promoting in terms of employer incentive scheme payments. That transition process is such a difficult one for all ex-members. You come from a completely different cultural environment—a completely different family-like environment within Defence—and you move into the general community and perhaps bring with you some mental baggage which you know nobody around you understands. And you speak a completely different language, in many cases. I've experienced a lot of this myself. We needed to address more aggressively the issue of that transition, so I'm pleased to see that's happening and that the government's implementing some measures.

In my own region, I'd like to highlight two things that I'm really pleased with. One is Remount, a Yass based organisation that works with veterans. They have broken important ground. They take Remount members and employees and they do great work in dealing with ex-military members who are suffering from stress related injuries through their service, such as PTSD, by getting them to work with horses and having that experience. We know that a lot of association with animals and pets has been a great way to help our veterans deal with their issues, so I really want to salute Remount. They are sponsored by Lockheed Martin. I'm very pleased that we're seeing some of the defence industry companies helping us and getting

involved now with these issues, knowing that they really do owe their own input into these processes of dealing with our veterans. Well done, Remount at Yass and Lockheed Martin.

I was at the Snowy Hydro the other day and talked to Gabrielle Curtin. She raised with me a program that they have where they have transitioning services for men and women and get them into employment. It's great to see them taking that active role. It is another great example of what the Snowy Hydro has done for our country. There are so many ways. They're taking that responsibility.

It's part of the general culture in our region to support our service veterans. It has the highest voluntary participation rate in the country. You will see a lot of effort in the community to try to assist veterans and honour them. Just the other day, we had the opening of a lovely rock memorial in Bega to the Lucas family. It was an experience that has not been replicated anywhere in the world, as far as we know: there were 10 boys in the Lucas family and nine of them joined up and went to World War II. It was a tremendous sacrifice by that family. Some did not come home from their service. The unique history in our region is something that we celebrate and honour.

Another example is the Union Jack memorial that you pass on the way to Tumbarumba. It's not a memorial to the flag, the Union Jack. There used to be a town called Union Jack and, during the First World War, every male of military service age was killed in the First World War. Their names are listed on that memorial. The town was effectively destroyed by a war 12,000 kilometres away because the surviving family members had to move away. It's very special for our region and I appreciate the measures that are being taken to render more federal government support.

There are a couple of issues. I say this in the spirit of highlighting problems we still need to address and where I think we're going down the wrong track. There were previous proposals to eliminate the Department of Veterans' Affairs and move it into Human Services. It was raised in an ACCI paper that my predecessor published when he was head of ACCI. Some work was being done on that when the coalition came to government. We're seeing it actually playing out in relation to Veterans' Access Networks. The Veterans' Access Network here in the ACT was shut down. It served a lot of veterans from across the border. The services have been shifted into the nearby Centrelink office on Bowes Street.

We're of course well aware of the problems we've had with Centrelink: the attempts to automate services, the delays and problems. We just had a story appear—I think it was yesterday—about the delays that have left recipients unable to pay for rent or food and about complaints having jumped to more than 50,000 in the past financial year alone. It seems that this is an attempt to remove the 'human' from Human Services, and it's causing so much stress and anxiety.

My electorate offices have been absolutely inundated with these issues emerging from Centrelink. We've basically become an adjunct to that office. We've had people in great stages of stress and anxiety who in fact have been suicidal, and my office workers have been doing such a wonderful job relieving that stress and anxiety by basically getting in and doing what Centrelink should have been doing for them and working with points of contact.

It gives me great concern when we're attempting to shut down our vans, shut down the human contact that veterans, in particular in rural and regional areas, really need. You really

need a human to go to and talk to and lean on. The isolation that's already there in rural and regional areas can greatly exacerbate the problems these veterans suffer from. To shut down these vans is really the wrong way to go, and I ask the minister to get that one on his agenda too. It's just not right to try and push this into Human Services and Centrelink. These veterans really resent that as well. They do feel that the special nature of their service and their issues warrants them being dealt with in a unique way, and it's an insult to their service and to them to push them into this. But, as I said, it comes back to that broader issue that we're experiencing at the moment with Centrelink in general.

I think that issue needs to be addressed for the general community as well. They're losing jobs in those Centrelink offices in our region too, and it's part of the grievance that's going on out there in rural and regional Australia—particularly rural and regional New South Wales—at the moment. I was handing out at the Gundagai booth at Gundagai High School a couple of weeks ago for the by-election there. There was a 43 per cent swing against the government in that booth. It's just been a perfect storm of issues that they're concerned about: removal of services from their communities, loss of jobs associated with that and forced mergers. They feel that they're under siege from governments at state and federal levels and they're turning to other parties, which is a trend that is not to be encouraged when you think of who some of those other parties might be. So it's incumbent on all of us, the government and the opposition, to listen to what's going on out there in rural and regional areas and to understand that it's pointless complaining about phenomena like shooters parties, One Nation or whatever without understanding there is a set of grievances that underpin that which have to be addressed.

Those grievances are at the moment greatly affecting my veterans, who we're representing in this debate today. On their behalf and for their interests I would urge the government to back away from what's going on with Centrelink: certain attempts to cut pensions and support in energy supplements and the like, which affect the veterans as well, and attempts to cut back on educational support for war orphans and war widows in some previous budgets. I'm glad to see we've moved away from that, but there's more work to be done, and the government will have our full support in broaching those issues.

I'm looking forward to maybe having further discussions on this with the minister when we're in Beersheba in the coming days. I urge Australians to look back at that service, at that history and at that battle, because it's not well known amongst a lot of Australians. I really take this opportunity to commemorate that service. (*Time expired*)

Ms HUSAR (Lindsay) (11:49): It's always important to rise and stand in support of our veterans and always good to follow the member for Eden-Monaro, who is a proud veteran himself. The Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Omnibus) Bill 2017, which seeks to clarify, improve and streamline the operation of law for veterans and their entitlements, is incredibly important. Labor, obviously, supports any measures undertaken to support veterans and ensure they are no worse off with the changes to the legislation.

We all know that to be a member of the Australian Defence Force is to dedicate your life and your service to the care and defence of our country—it is incredibly important work that they do. Like everyone in this place, I'm incredibly grateful and thankful for their work. I did see this firsthand on my recent deployment to the Middle East. Our defence personnel have a rich and defining place in shaping our identity and our culture. Mateship, a fair go, courage

and sacrifice are all of the hallmarks of these very, very special people. Those that have served deserve our uttermost respect and admiration, but, most importantly, they deserve our support upon their return. As they return to civilian life, we owe them and their families the best possible services and care. Young women and young men returning from conflict require the stability, security, support and opportunity to get back on their feet.

From the First World War, when 300,000 Australians departed our shores—the war where the Anzac legacy would be born on the shores of Gallipoli and where Australia's involvement in battles such as Fromelles and Pozieres and the Battle of the Somme would see the Australian spirit, our courage and our mateship shine through—nearly 17,000 of our serving personnel, sadly, did not return home. But our debt of gratitude to returning veterans was forged through these battles as they fought to keep Australia safe and for our way of life. To this day, the veterans who return have seen their mates make the ultimate sacrifice. They have stood on the front line to defend our nation. We absolutely owe it to our veterans to provide them with the best support and care, and the wellbeing of veterans and their families is absolutely paramount. Their issues must be dealt with compassionately and correctly the first time around and not be put through administrative processes, which is currently the case. There are currently just under 60,000 Australians serving in our defence forces and an estimated 329,000 living veterans. The Department of Veterans' Affairs supports approximately 291,000 people, with 203,000 being over the age of 65 and 23,000 under the age of 40, and we will certainly see that number of young veterans increase with our ongoing involvement in the Middle East region.

In my electorate, there are just under 1,000 veterans, as recorded at 17 June this year, receiving assistance through the department, and this includes any current or former serving members eligible for compensation, income support or health treatment under the main veterans' entitlement legislation. This figure excludes ex-service personnel who are ineligible for or who have not sought assistance from the department. Five hundred and seven of these veterans are receiving a disability pension and, in addition, there are 311 war widow pensioners. So the electorate of Lindsay does have a significant need to support our veterans, and I'm pleased that, by and large, my community does support our veterans.

From the representations that I receive and the discussions I have had in my community and on my visit to Afghanistan last year, those serving and veterans need support to transition back home. Some veterans find it very difficult to blend in with our communities and are often affected by physical health issues, deterioration of mental health, lack of financial support and difficulties finding meaningful employment when they return. The Department of Veterans' Affairs is aware that on any given night across Australia over 3,000 veterans are homeless, affected by their selfless service to our nation. Our veterans have been through enough. They have done everything for their country that we have asked of them and more. To give them the run-around and the third degree to have their matters processed is simply unacceptable.

The legislation seeks to modernise and improve the operations of the Veterans' Review Board, which can only be a good thing for veterans. The legislation seeks to provide a mechanism of review that is accessible, fair, just, economical, informal and quick. It is proportionate to the importance and complexity of the matter and promotes public trust and confidence in the decision-making of the board. The removal of bureaucratic barriers and red

tape benefits veterans to ensure their claims are heard in a timely and low-cost manner. No veteran deserves an unfair hearing, and we need to maintain an effective mechanism for review.

But veterans are right to be concerned about privacy, given this government's less than stellar track record and blunders when dealing with IT and data security. I've seen firsthand the difficult and stressful work of defence personnel, and that's why I believe their transition to civilian life should be much, much more secure. They are well trained; they are highly skilled and well organised. They are great assets to all types of businesses and the community at large, but they struggle to find employment and to readjust to life at home, far away, thankfully, from distant war zones and constantly being on edge to protect our nation. This is why it's important to help and act when it's required. Many of these veterans with positive attributes on the table have to readjust. They have to deal with their memories and actions of serving the nation. We need to assure them that we will provide a strong and positive safety net.

I had the opportunity, as I said earlier, to spend time with troops, visiting four bases during my tour of Afghanistan as part of the ADF Parliamentary Program in July. This commendable initiative provides an opportunity to engage very, very closely with members of the ADF and experience the challenges and rewards of service life. The program also offers a chance to see firsthand the diverse capabilities of our Defence Force in action.

When I was there, above all, our troops wanted to know that their contribution is, firstly, supported and, more importantly, highly valued. Having performed in and participated in some of the drills that we put our men and women through and having performed some of the work they do, in a very, very minor capacity, I've got to say it is incredibly nerve-racking. It is intense. It drives up even some of the most dormant feelings of anxiety. A war zone is not a pleasant place to be. Being one of the most protected persons in that war zone, as I was, was comforting, but I'm not the one out there risking my life.

It is incredibly important that we support them. It is our duty to absolutely recognise them. Our serving men and women had a couple of thoughts for me to bring back, and on my return I was pleased to present those to the Minister for Defence.

I am committed to ensuring that our service men and women are supported not only during their service but back into civilian life. Last week I also had the privilege of attending a dinner at the Royal Military College Duntroon as part of our program, where I got to engage some more with Aaron Bell, who was in my office as part of the exchange program. Certainly, I got to benefit from having his knowledge and experience with the Defence Force. With the memories of my trip to Afghanistan in mind, it has been a great opportunity to share experiences and insights into a very different world to what we imagine. During my visit to the Middle East, the troops told me of their longing for and personal attachment to their home back here and the difficulties in maintaining relationships back in this country. You can't talk to your family about what you've seen and what you've done over there, because there are insecure phone networks. The time zones are different, so you often are working at a time when your family might not be at home for you to speak to them. They might be at school when it is time for you have the opportunity to call them. There is a big gap for our serving men and women who are in the Middle East right now.

Their selfless sacrifice ensures our personal safety here in this country. Our veterans talk about the amount of money that is put into training them to build weapons, to shoot and to care for their soldiers and their personnel while they're in the battlefield. Everywhere I went, across all four bases, there was a huge and heightened sense of anxiety. The topic of discussion about veterans' affairs upon their return to Australia was absolutely the No. 1 issue. So, while they're out there serving and doing their bit for the country, making sure that we are safe and protected and that our way of life continues, our men and women in the Middle East are worried about what's going to happen on their return. I just think that is incredibly unfair. It's certainly not a concern that we should be taking lightly. I think that they've been through enough. The trauma they have experienced can lead to them having issues on return, including suicide, mental health issues and post-traumatic stress once they have returned home.

I have family members who were on the HMAS *Voyager* when it was struck. The things that I witnessed as a small child and a teenager that my uncle went through were quite horrendous, including him not being able to be in a room of an evening with no lights on and not being able to sleep in a dead silent, quiet space. Some noise always had to be going on because of the trauma associated with that accident that he was involved in. Potentially, the way in which that was handled upon their rescue and the way in which their contribution was seen were certainly not helpful to his recovery.

Between 2001 and 2015, 325 veterans took their own lives. It is an absolute national tragedy when anybody suicides, but in particular, when men and women through their service for this country see no other option than to take their own lives, that is an absolute national tragedy. When men and women who have served our nation, upon their return, suffer such deep mental and emotional pain that they take their own lives, we absolutely need to be doing more. We need to find ways to support them and to try to stop this from happening.

The representations from veterans that I receive in my office are about dealing with the department and accessing services and support back home. I know and support our local organisations and services in Lindsay that provide critical support and assistance to current Defence personnel, veterans and their families. I thank them for the service that they provide in our community.

I want to place on record my thanks to Legacy, which cares for around 80,000 veterans whose dependants range in age from less than 12 months to 109 years. Groups such as Legacy provide valued support to families during really difficult times. The Penrith RSL sub-Branch has 715 members. Penrith owes a great deal of gratitude to the Penrith RSL sub-Branch and its president, Mick McConnell. The sub-branch's good work includes: welfare for veterans; a drop-in centre opening in November—I'm looking forward to being part of that; a welfare officer helping veterans with their claims; and supporting over 400 war widows. The Penrith RSL sub-Branch finds more and more younger vets are seeking help who have higher rates of mental health issues. The older vets were, in many cases, treated poorly when they returned from Vietnam and other areas of conflict, so they are determined as a cohort not to let this happen to our younger returning vets.

The Penrith sub-branch is involved with the RAAF at Richmond and Glenbrook bases, and with the Orchard Hills Army and Navy cadets. The women's auxiliary, which is supported by the Penrith RSL sub-Branch, with Colleen Towle as the president, was formed in 1916 and

continues now. Their job originally in World War I was to send comfort parcels to Penrith soldiers serving on the Western Front. The parcels consisted of items that we would look to send now but were probably different then—woollen socks, soap, cakes and other items that would be missed by our soldiers who were serving overseas at the time. We might have slight changes to the care packs, but they're still being sent. For many decades, the sub-branch has provided significant pension, welfare and hospital visits for members and members of other sub-branches. Now they hold annual Easter, Mother's Day and Father's Day raffles and other fundraising activities like their biannual gala auction, attending Anzac services, selling Anzac badges, attending the conference for the Central Council of RSL Women's Auxiliaries and also attending other auxiliary functions.

We also have the Penrith and Lower Blue Mountains War Widows' Guild providing a range of services to war widows, and it operates with significant volunteer input from its thousands of members. We have the Homes for Heroes program, which has built around nine rooms at Governor Phillip Manor for our homeless vets. The program offers a comprehensive rehabilitation service. For the support residents receive, they're required to give back to the program by doing voluntary work, mentoring other people and engaging in training and rehabilitation. Homes for Heroes does a wonderful job helping homeless young veterans to get back into mainstream life.

Other organisations supporting veterans in my electorate include: St Mary's RSL sub-Branch—Ron Blakely is the president and Tony Fryer is secretary; the Royal Marines Association division of Western Sydney; the Red Cross; Vietnam vets at St Mary's, which is also affectionately known as the Train; Nepean Legacy and Legacy Widows' Club Nepean; the Australian Light Horse Association; the wives of Vietnam vets with Maureen Clements; and the Nashos, of which John Taylor is the secretary and acting vice-president. I was incredibly honoured to take up my first role as patron with the Nashos.

I look forward to meeting more and more Defence Force personnel and to having the pleasure of welcoming Amanda Rishworth, the shadow minister, in November. I'm incredibly grateful to the Defence Force personnel I met on my trip to Afghanistan. We're still in regular contact—we're now friends officially on Facebook—and they often communicate with me when they're doing their jobs and going about their business. I'm very grateful for the information and advocacy that they provide to me on the issues that need to be changed.

I stand with all the veterans and service men and women of this country, and I will ensure that I will always work to achieve the best possible outcomes for them and their families.

Mr TEHAN (Wannon—Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Cyber Security and Minister for Defence Personnel) (12:04): I thank the people who spoke on this bill with the best interests of veterans at heart and who spoke in a very bipartisan manner because, as all of us know in this place, veterans deserve all of our attention and for us to work in this place in a very cooperative way. I thank the shadow minister again for the way that she engages with me to make sure that we can deal with these issues in a bipartisan way.

I am pleased to present the Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Omnibus) Bill 2017. The bill comprises nine schedules that would implement several small but necessary amendments to veterans legislation to clarify, improve or streamline the operation of the law. Schedule 1 of the omnibus bill amends the Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986 to modernise and

align the Veterans' Review Board's operations with those of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal following the amendments made by the Tribunals Amalgamation Act 2015. The amendments also support the alternative dispute resolution processes and the recent amendments to the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004 which provide for a single appeal path for reconsidering decisions.

Schedule 2 would amend the provisions of the Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986 concerning the Specialist Medical Review Council to improve the operation of the SMRC, streamline some of the SMRC's administrative arrangements and better reflect the manner in which its functions and processes have evolved over time. The proposed amendments would simplify the nomination and appointment process for councils, enable online lodgements of claims, streamline the notice of investigation requirements and give the SMRC an ability to pay the travel costs of applicants who appear before an oral hearing of the SMRC.

The proposed amendments in schedule 3 of the omnibus bill would enable international agreements to be made that would cover allied veterans and defence force members with service of the type for which benefits and payments, including rehabilitation, can be provided by the Repatriation Commission or the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission under the relevant acts. Currently, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs can only enter into an arrangement with the governments of countries that are or have been dominions of the Crown. This will enable the Minister for Veterans' Affairs to enter into agreements with a broader range of countries.

The proposed amendments in schedule 4 are intended to clarify that vocational rehabilitation assistance under an employer incentive scheme in the form of wage incentive payments is within the scope of the enabling provisions of the relevant legislation.

The proposed amendments in schedule 5 would amend subsection 409(2) of the Military Compensation Act 2004 and subsection 151A(1) of the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988 to add the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation as a person to whom the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission may provide information for purposes allowed under the CSC's legislation. Those amendments would implement a recommendation by the 2011 Review of Military Compensation Arrangements intended to improve the information-sharing framework for incapacity and superannuation benefits between DVA and CSC and, therefore, reduce the time taken by DVA and CSC to process claims, which would better support injured former ADF members. In addition, enabling the CSC to use medical reports held by the MRCC to determine superannuation claims would also avoid the need to send ADF members for further medical assessment where DVA already holds relevant medical evidence that could be used by the CSC to determine superannuation benefits. ADF members would be spared from any retraumatisation from having to tell their stories. This is particularly significant for ADF members who suffer psychological conditions, including those that have arisen as a result of physical or psychological abuse.

Each of the sets of amendments is relatively modest. They enhance the operation of the department and will mean better outcomes for veterans. I thank members for their contribution to the debate and I commend this bill to the House.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Message from the Governor-General recommending appropriation for the bill, and message from the Administrator recommending appropriation for the proposed amendments, announced.

Consideration in Detail

Bill—by leave—taken as a whole.

Mr TEHAN (Wannon—Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Cyber Security and Minister for Defence Personnel) (12:09): I present a supplementary explanatory memorandum to the bill. I ask leave of the House to move government amendments (1) to (10), as circulated, together.

Leave granted.

Mr TEHAN: I move government amendments (1) to (10):

- (1) Clause 2, page 3 (table item 10), omit "6", substitute "5A".
- (2) Schedule 1, items 6 and 7, page 5 (line 25) to page 6 (line 6), omit the items.
- (3) Schedule 1, item 8, page 6 (lines 17 to 19), omit subitem (4).
- (4) Schedule 3, page 14 (line 1) to page 17 (line 15), omit the Schedule, substitute:

Schedule 3—International arrangements

Part 1—Main amendments

Australian Participants in British Nuclear Tests and British Commonwealth Occupation Force (Treatment) Act 2006

1 At the end of subsection 7(1)

Add:

Note: Under section 203 of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*, the Minister may enter into an arrangement with a foreign country providing for the provision of treatment that is, or the making of payments that are, comparable to treatment or payments under this Act.

Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004

2 At the end of section 3

Add:

Note: Under section 203 of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*, the Minister may enter into an arrangement with a foreign country providing for the making of payments that are, or the provision of treatment or rehabilitation that is, comparable to payments or treatment or rehabilitation under this Act.

Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986

3 Paragraph 199(f)

Omit "(Arrangements with Governments of other countries)", substitute "(International arrangements)".

4 Section 203

Repeal the section, substitute:

203 International arrangements

(1) The Minister may, on behalf of the Commonwealth, enter into an arrangement with a foreign country, being an arrangement:

(a) that relates to reciprocity in veterans' affairs matters; and

(b) that makes provision for and in relation to the making of payments, or the provision of treatment or rehabilitation, to or in relation to classes of persons specified in the arrangement.

(2) Without limiting subsection (1), the arrangement may make provision for and in relation to the making of payments that are, or the provision of treatment or rehabilitation that is, comparable to payments or treatment or rehabilitation under any of the following:

(a) this Act;

(b) the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*;

(c) the *Australian Participants in British Nuclear Tests and British Commonwealth Occupation Force (Treatment) Act 2006*.

Provisions of arrangement have full effect

(3) The provisions of an arrangement that is in force under this section have effect despite anything in any of the Acts referred to in subsection (2).

Administration of arrangement

(4) The Commission, or the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission, may give effect to and administer an arrangement that is in force under this section.

Variation or revocation of arrangement

(5) An arrangement that is in force under this section may be varied or revoked by the Minister on behalf of the Commonwealth.

Publication of arrangement

(6) The Minister must arrange for a copy of an arrangement entered into under subsection (1), or of any variations to such an arrangement, to be published on the Department's website.

Arrangement is not a legislative instrument

(7) An arrangement entered into under subsection (1) is not a legislative instrument.

5 Transitional provisions

(1) An arrangement that:

(a) was entered into under section 203 of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* before the commencement of this item (including an arrangement having effect as if it were entered into under that section because of section 56 of the *Veterans' Entitlements (Transitional Provisions and Consequential Amendments) Act 1986*); and

(b) was in force immediately before the commencement of this item;

continues in force on and after that commencement as if it were an arrangement entered into under section 203 of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* as substituted by this Part.

(2) Subitem (1) does not prevent a variation or revocation, on or after the commencement of this item, of an arrangement continued in force under this item.

Part 2—Contingent amendments

Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988

6 At the end of subsection 4AA(5)

Add:

Note: Under section 203 of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*, the Minister may enter into an arrangement with a foreign country providing for the making of payments that are, or the provision of treatment or rehabilitation that is, comparable to payments or treatment or rehabilitation under this Act.

Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986

7 At the end of subsection 203(2)

Add:

; (d) the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988*.

(5) Page 23 (after line 14), after Schedule 5, insert:

Schedule 5A—Pharmaceutical benefits***National Health Act 1953*****1 Subsection 84(1) (subparagraph (c)(ii) of the definition of *concessional beneficiary*)**

Repeal the subparagraph, substitute:

(ii) who is eligible for fringe benefits under section 53A of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*;
or

(6) Schedule 6, item 1, page 24 (lines 11 and 12), omit paragraph 437A(b), substitute:

(b) an SES employee, or acting SES employee, in the Department.

(7) Schedule 7, page 25 (lines 3 and 4), omit the heading, substitute:

Australian Participants in British Nuclear Tests and British Commonwealth Occupation Force (Treatment) Act 2006

(8) Schedule 7, item 6, page 25 (lines 26 and 27), omit "*Australian Participants in British Nuclear Tests (Treatment) Act 2006*", substitute "*Australian Participants in British Nuclear Tests and British Commonwealth Occupation Force (Treatment) Act 2006*".

(9) Schedule 7, item 44, page 33 (line 31) to page 34 (line 1), omit "*Australian Participants in British Nuclear Tests (Treatment) Act 2006*", substitute "*Australian Participants in British Nuclear Tests and British Commonwealth Occupation Force (Treatment) Act 2006*".

(10) Schedule 7, item 54, page 36 (lines 9 and 10), omit "*Australian Participants in British Nuclear Tests (Treatment) Act 2006*", substitute "*Australian Participants in British Nuclear Tests and British Commonwealth Occupation Force (Treatment) Act 2006*".

I would like to give the shadow minister an opportunity to say a few words on the amendments.

Ms RISHWORTH (Kingston) (12:10): As foreshadowed in my speech on the second reading, I would like to say that Labor will be supporting all of the government's amendments to this bill. Obviously, one of the amendments that we are very, very pleased about is the amendment relating to the Veterans' Review Board. This is, I think, an important amendment that addresses the concerns of the ex-service community and apprehensions that were discussed during the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee process. These changes are important to retain the unique nature of the Veterans' Review Board as a place where veterans can have their voices heard. So I do think that this amendment is suitable and, as mentioned in my speech on the second reading, has the benefit of removing the section that would limit the ability of veterans to be heard. This is, I think, an important measure, to keep faith with the veterans community. As I said also, Labor welcomes the aligning of the principles of the Veterans' Review Board with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, but it was important to us that the nature of the Veterans' Review Board be maintained. So we did bring this to the attention of the government, and I'm very pleased that the government has an amendment that will deliver that.

Also, I would note that there are amendments that the government has circulated which seek to restore the concessional pharmaceuticals to those veterans who had lost them as a

result of the government's unfair asset-test changes. We do know that these changes to the asset test saw more than 13,000 Australians receiving a Veterans' Affairs pension losing part of that pension or indeed being kicked off the pension. While it has been two years too late, it is pleasing to see the pensioner concession card finally being restored to those who had lost it. But I would hope that the government continues to ensure that a wide range of concessions which were received by those part-pensioners who no longer receive them are still available. As to those concessions that were provided by councils, it is unclear what the government has done and how the government has pursued ensuring that those concessions are reinstated. It took two years to reinstate the Commonwealth benefits and it is my understanding that the states, in principle, have agreed. It is incumbent on the government to ensure that all concessions by all three levels of government are restored to this group of people, because Labor did not support this change. We were very, very clear, under the guidance of our great shadow minister, who made it very, very clear that we thought this was an unfair change. So I do hope that the minister responsible for the Department of Social Services preserves these concessions and ensures that they are reinstated for these people.

The remaining elements of these amendments seek to address some minor technical amendments. On the whole, we will support the government's amendments. We think they improve the omnibus bill and therefore they have our support.

Question agreed to.

Bill, as amended, agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr TEHAN (Wannon—Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Cyber Security and Minister for Defence Personnel) (12:14): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Social Services Legislation Amendment (Cashless Debit Card) Bill 2017

Second Reading

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Ms MACKLIN (Jagajaga) (12:15): I'm speaking today on the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Cashless Debit Card) Bill 2017. In the 2017 budget, the government announced that it would roll out the cashless debit card in two further locations from 1 September 2017. These proposed locations, according to the government, are the Goldfields in Western Australia, and Bundaberg and Hervey Bay in Queensland. This bill enables this by repealing one section of the Social Security (Administration) Act. The section repealed by the bill, section 124PF, contains the existing limitations on the cashless debit card trial, which require that the trials end on 30 June 2018, that there be the limitation for trials to occur in up to three discrete trial areas, and that the trial areas include no more than 10,000 participants.

This bill provides the framework for additional cashless debit card locations but does not enable the rollout of the card in any specific location. Any new locations for the rollout still

require a legislative instrument to be tabled in the parliament. These instruments are disallowable, which means that the rollout of the card can be agreed or opposed in specific locations and not in others. This is an important point. It means that the potential passage of this bill does not automatically mean that the card will be rolled out in Bundaberg or the Goldfields, for example. It can still be disallowed through a disallowable instrument in the Senate.

Labor will not oppose this bill in the House today, but we do reserve our final position until the completion of the Senate inquiry into this bill that's currently underway. I must say, I'm very disappointed that this bill has come on for debate in the House of Representatives before the Senate inquiry has concluded. Rolling out this card is a very big decision for any community, and for this parliament, and it should not be rushed. This legislation requires greater scrutiny and deliberation than is being allowed for by the minister by bringing forward this bill for debate today. We certainly, on our side of the House, want to see the findings of the Senate inquiry before determining our final position.

Labor also want time to be able to conduct our own consultations with local community leaders in the newly proposed sites of Kalgoorlie and the surrounding communities, and Bundaberg and nearby Hervey Bay. The particular disallowable instruments to enable the card, of course, have yet to be introduced into the parliament, and the government has not said when they will be, so Labor reserves the right to support or oppose specific locations on a case-by-case basis.

I have received a lot of correspondence from people seeking Labor's position on the cashless debit card, so I do today want to take the time to spell out the principles that are guiding Labor's approach to this issue. We do support genuine, community-driven initiatives designed to tackle alcohol abuse. We do understand that many, many communities want assistance in addressing chronic alcohol related abuse. We also know that the cashless debit card alone cannot be a solution in addressing this problem. Labor have consistently said that we would take a community-by-community approach to the further rollout of the cashless card. We'll listen to each community's leaders and talk with them about the consequences of this card being rolled out in their community. Wraparound support services must also be community designed, agreed upon and resourced to address the challenges facing these communities, and, of course, they're different in different places. We understand—and this is a very important point—that the vast majority of social security recipients are more than capable of managing their own personal finances. That's why Labor does not support the cashless debit card being rolled out nationwide.

In 2015, Labor supported the cashless debit card trials in the east Kimberley and Ceduna and the surrounding communities. We did so after consulting with local community leaders. We also did so after securing additional funding for wraparound services, including drug and alcohol counselling and more mental health support services. It is important to recognise that, in the case of Ceduna, there was a formal memorandum of understanding that was signed with community leaders in 2015, and that included not only the Ceduna council and the community heads working group but also community leaders from the surrounding Aboriginal communities.

In assessing the best way to address alcohol related abuse and violence, all policy levers need to be considered. Just last week the Northern Territory government released a report by

Trevor Riley proposing some of the biggest ever changes to the Northern Territory's alcohol management policies, and there are a range of recommendations that are relevant to this debate. I'm pleased to see that the Gunner government have said that they will accept, in principle, nearly all of the recommendations from the review—for example, they've indicated that they will enact a complete moratorium on all new takeaway alcohol licences—the point being that there's a suite of policy approaches that must be taken into consideration when trying to reduce alcohol consumption in an effort to deal with violence and abuse. I'd say to everyone that's been involved in this cashless debit card trial that it really was never going to be the case that an 18-month trial could meaningfully address multiple generations of disadvantage, poverty and social dysfunction. I think it was very misguided of those who thought that it could.

Income management, of course, is a very complex policy question, and one of the concerns that are often raised with me is: why should it apply to everyone in a community? What evidence is there that income management should apply to everyone in a community to effectively counter alcohol related abuse that only applies to some people? Why shouldn't people go on income management after certain trigger points—for instance, following the recommendations of the local department of child protection? These are some of the many questions that are being put that need answers.

Communities also want to know how consent by a location will actually be measured and what assessment is being undertaken by the government of the service gaps in each community where the cashless card is being proposed. What access is there to the alcohol and drug treatment services, mental health supports, family violence counselling, housing, health, education, jobs and strong cultural requirements that are, of course, essential for strong communities? All of these issues need to be assessed in deciding whether or not this card should be introduced in any particular place.

The intent of the trials of the cashless card in Ceduna and the east Kimberley was to test whether significantly reducing access to discretionary cash by placing a large proportion of a person's welfare payment into a restricted bank account can reduce the habitual abuse of and associated harm from alcohol, gambling and illegal drugs. The government has recently released the ORIMA evaluation of the trials, and this evaluation shows very mixed results.

I'm sorry to say that the evaluation has been widely criticised for being deeply flawed. I want to go particularly to one detailed analysis of the ORIMA evaluation. Janet Hunt is the deputy director of the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research at the Australian National University and she says that the evaluation showed that the government's cashless card trials had not actually improved safety and violence despite that being one of the trial's objectives. Her research paper on the evaluation is critical of the methodology used in the ORIMA evaluation. She points out that the people interviewed for the evaluation may have told interviewers that they drank less than before the trial began but that such recall over a year 'is not likely to have been very reliable'. She also makes the valid point that, given that people had to give their identification to the interviewer, they may have said exactly what they thought the interviewer wanted to hear and they certainly would not have incriminated themselves by saying that they were taking illegal drugs. I think we can all understand that this would be particularly true for the Aboriginal population, who for historical reasons are likely to view authority figures with serious suspicion.

The Minister for Human Services described the cashless debit card trials as a huge success, and the Prime Minister himself said that the card has seen 'a massive reduction in alcohol abuse, in drug abuse, in domestic violence, in violence generally'. But Janet Hunt made clear that this wasn't the case, stating clearly:

Someone needs to tell them that the report does not say that.

When participants were asked about the impact of the trial on their children's lives, only 17 per cent reported feeling their lives were better as a result. In fact, a bigger group of parents—around 24 per cent—felt that their children's lives were actually worse. Asked to reflect on the trial's impact on their own lives, 32 per cent reported it had made their lives worse, compared with 23 per cent saying their lives had improved. One in three people responding to the survey reported struggling to transfer money to children who were away at boarding school or to pay for things at community fairs, swimming pools or school canteens. Crime statistics remained flat or worsened, the only improvement being lower rates of drunk driving and public intoxication in Ceduna. So we certainly don't believe that the government can justify the further rollout of this card on what is clearly a flawed evaluation.

The cost of the rollout of the cashless debit card is also an important consideration in this debate. According to documents released by the Department of Social Services to the opposition under freedom of information, the government has spent up to \$18.9 million on implementing and managing the two existing trials between July 2015 and April 2017. The government has paid \$7.9 million of that to the debit card provider, Indue, and almost \$1.6 million to ORIMA Research to provide a frankly substandard evaluation. Wraparound services in the community such as drug and alcohol treatment and financial counselling cost a further \$2.6 million. The \$18.9 million equates to more than \$10,000 per participant.

It's quite extraordinary that we're debating this bill today without any indication from the minister about how much it will cost taxpayers to roll out the card in the two new proposed sites in the Goldfields and Bundaberg-Hervey Bay. There is no indication whatsoever about what this will cost taxpayers.

In April this year the shadow minister for human services and I went to the east Kimberley to meet with community leaders in Kununurra and in Wyndham. We met with a range of different Aboriginal organisations and also the Kununurra Hospital, St John Ambulance, Kununurra police, the Sobering Up Shelter, Job Pathways, the Department for Child Protection and a number of other organisations in Wyndham. The feedback we received was mixed. I have an enormous amount of respect and regard for Ian Trust, the head of the Wunan Foundation. He is adamant that the card can be a circuit-breaker for his people. The St John Ambulance Brigade in Kununurra said that the call-outs for alcohol related violence had gone down. The police made it clear that, with respect to domestic violence rates within the Kimberley, 75 per cent of the incidents are influenced by alcohol, with either the victim or the perpetrator, and they're supportive of any policy attempts to tackle alcohol consumption in the community.

At the recent Senate inquiry, the Western Australia Police Force released data on domestic assaults. The 12 months to 30 June 2017 saw 508 domestic assaults in Kununurra. For the 12 months previous to that, 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016, there were 319 domestic assaults. So, unfortunately, the data says that domestic assaults in this area have gone up. It is the case, and the Western Australia Police Force noted this, that it's very difficult to fully assess the value

of the card from a violence perspective because the Kimberley district revised their approach to domestic violence to include a more thorough first response to reports of domestic violence. So it is very, very difficult to make an assessment about whether things have become better or worse in relation to domestic violence. What the data does show, though, is that there has been a uniform increase in the reporting of domestic assaults across the Kimberley. Of course, I'm sure we would all agree that 508 domestic assaults in Kununurra, based on the figures from the Western Australia Police Force, are far too many.

The shadow minister for human services and I also visited the women's refuge in Kununurra and talked to some of the women who were staying there, and they did not have a positive view of the card. From their point of view, life had become harder with the card; there was more violence and more crime as cash had become scarce. More recently, others said that they felt let down by the Minister for Human Services, who promised a lot but, in their eyes, had failed to deliver. Mr Lawford Benning, the chairperson of MG Corporation, an original supporter of the card, told the recent Senate inquiry hearing:

... the Minister for Human Services, made various commitments to me prior to the introduction of the CDC—

the cashless debit card—

trial in Kununurra, none of which were delivered on time or as promised.

One of the issues that were raised in Kununurra with us was that the local Indigenous community thought that they would be given delegated authority to remove people from the cashless debit card without the process being intrusive. I have to say that it is still the case that the exact process of removing people or reducing the amount of money on the card is very, very opaque. This issue really needs to be cleared up. In Ceduna recently, I met with people who were on the cashless debit card. They then applied to be removed from the card through the community panel and ultimately got off the card, but the exact process by which this took place remains completely unclear. Who in the Department of Social Services ultimately makes the decision and on what basis? We really don't know. More importantly, local people in Kununurra, Wyndham, Ceduna and the surrounding communities also don't know.

We also met with people who were on the card and found it very difficult to manage their money because they didn't have money to send away to their children in boarding school and a whole range of other reasons. Others said that the sly-grog trade meant that there are, unfortunately, ways in which people get around the card if they want to buy alcohol. The policymakers would be better off restricting the sale of alcohol through tougher alcohol management rules and tougher policing of the sly-grog trade rather than introducing a cashless card on all social security recipients.

It is important to note that the current Takeaway Alcohol Management System in Kununurra allows for people to buy two cartons of full-strength beer, six bottles of wine, or one litre of wine or spirits with an alcohol content of 15 per cent or more per day. That's the amount of alcohol that the current Takeaway Alcohol Management System allows for every single day in Kununurra. Of course, this stands in marked contrast to the situation, for example, in Fitzroy Crossing, where only light-strength takeaway alcohol can be sold. The controls were introduced in Fitzroy Crossing, and in Halls Creek two years later, with a lot of community support, and the studies of the impact in those two communities have been very positive, showing a dramatic drop in assaults, a drop in domestic violence and a drop in

presentations to hospital emergency departments. I must say, this point was made to me again by Ian Trust in Kununurra, where he indicated that he certainly wanted to see tighter alcohol takeaway limits in that community.

A common sentiment expressed to the member for Barton and me during our visit was that things are so bad in these communities that they're willing to give anything new a go. I would say that they support the cashless card not out of hope but out of despair. They certainly don't think that this card is a silver bullet. They emphasised just how important it is to help people into work and the need for better employment programs. They want to see young people especially finding meaningful work and also that we implement tougher alcohol management controls.

As I mentioned, in September I went to Ceduna and some of the surrounding communities and met with a range of people on the ground there about the rollout of the card. Once again, we received quite a mixed response. The Mayor of Ceduna is a very strong supporter. Corey McLennan, from one of the local Aboriginal corporations, is a compelling advocate for the card continuing. They really want to see the card continue. By contrast, the Aboriginal health service in Ceduna and their CEO have spoken powerfully against the card. At the recent Senate inquiry, their CEO, Zell Dodd, said:

... there is an urgent need for Aboriginal people to be at the centre of building their own capacity and purpose ... growing local capacity and training opportunities so that Aboriginal people are equipped physically, mentally and spiritually to deal with the issues that confront them on a daily basis. For many it is on a 24/7 basis. Services have to be in place for a minimum of five years, not three.

It's also the case that Zell Dodd raised concerns about the funding certainty of the wraparound services in Ceduna. The health service indicated that the funding associated with the card rollout for an alcohol and drug worker actually only lasted for one year. They also noticed that the nearest alcohol and drug rehab centre was more than four to five hours away in Port Augusta—and, of course, this was not acceptable.

Other Aboriginal leaders I spoke to gave quite a nuanced perspective on the card. Some said that the card had resulted in some positive change but not as much as claimed by the government. It stopped some people drinking as much as they had before, but some people are still drinking. It hasn't encouraged people into work. Many, many people have said to me that the real solution has to be to help people into work, to encourage Indigenous businesses that employ people in their own communities. One thing everyone agreed to throughout my visit to Ceduna and the far west was that the Community Development Program needs to be fixed. Everyone, including those who support the card, said how important that is. Corey McLennan, for example, who is a supporter of the card, was scathing about the Community Development Program. Bob Larking, from Scotdesco Aboriginal Community, was the same. We simply cannot be talking about reducing alcohol consumption and violence without talking about jobs and the failure of the Community Development Program.

The government is now proposing to roll out this card in the Goldfields region, including a number of different communities. It wants that to happen from January 2018. I understand the government's proposal is that that be in place for 12 months. The Mayor of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, a supporter of the card, said at the recent Senate inquiry that the failure of the Community Development Program was the 'main reason that we're sitting here today'. By that he meant that they were considering the cashless debit card. The second site the government's

proposing is Bundaberg-Hervey Bay. In quite a different approach, the government's proposing that this rollout of the card be targeted at those under 35 years of age and at those who receive Newstart, youth allowance, jobseeker, parenting payment single or parenting payment partnered. At this stage, the Senate inquiry hasn't heard from anyone in this area. Labor will reserve our final position until the completion of the Senate inquiry that's currently underway.

As I said, we won't oppose the bill today, but I am very, very disappointed that the government has brought this debate on before the Senate inquiry is finished. We need to have answered all of the questions that I have raised here today. This legislation really does require proper scrutiny. We of course will be conducting our own consultations with communities in the Goldfields and the Bundaberg-Hervey Bay area. We reserve our right to support or oppose specific locations on a case-by-case basis, depending on the views of local communities.

Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (12:42): By all accounts, the government's trial rollout of the cashless debit card has been a terrific success, contrary to what we heard from the previous speaker, the member for Jagajaga. Recently, the published evaluation results said: 'It provided a considerable positive impact.' Published findings include a variety of significant improvements in key measures, such as that 41 per cent of drinkers were drinking less, 48 per cent of drug users were taking fewer drugs and 48 per cent of regular gamblers were gambling less. In addition, there were also significant increases in positive behaviour, such as 40 per cent of parents and carers reporting they were better able to look after the needs of their children, and 45 per cent of participating people confirming they were better able to save money. Given this success, the extension of the cashless debit card and its rollout for welfare recipients into additional vulnerable and disadvantaged communities, which is what the passage of the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Cashless Debit Card) Bill 2017 is all about, is a no-brainer.

In the two principal locations where the cashless debit card has been trialled, it has quite clearly worked, and any policy that actually works, especially in the challenging areas of welfare dependence and substance abuse, deserves to be applied to the fullest extent possible. Essentially, the cashless debit card works to reduce the amount of cash available to recipients in trial communities. This works to place downward pressure on the availability of drugs, alcohol and gambling, and, it was hoped—and is now proven—to improve social and family outcomes.

The operating mechanism of the cashless debit card is simple enough: having 80 per cent of welfare payments to recipients quarantined to be spent in the best interest of welfare recipients and their dependants, and not used for the purchase of alcohol, drugs or gambling products. The remaining 20 per cent of welfare payments continues to go into regular cash accounts and can be used for whatever purpose the recipients wish. The aim is to quarantine money for the essentials of life, for those people and families, heavily—and, perhaps, in some cases totally—dependent on welfare and to avoid the problems that too often flow for families and for individuals from spending on products that engender despair and dysfunction, very often with violence.

It is also a way of ensuring that the taxpayers' strong commitment to the provision of a social safety net is honoured. Welfare payments are provided to help people in need with essential living costs, especially food, clothing, shelter, transportation and the like. Welfare

payments are not intended to fuel substance abuse, whether alcohol, drugs or other, or to provide an opportunity to gamble. The main game in this program is ultimately to enhance the lives of those people, especially the women and children, who live in communities where the problems of substance abuse, gambling and, too often, violence are prevalent.

Australians are fortunate to live in a country and at a time when dealing with, even recognising, these problems is so openly embraced by governments, to the extent that programs like this can provide some much-needed support and help turn the tide on disadvantage and despair. Not that long ago, domestic violence was a taboo topic, but today, thanks to the dedication of so many—including many victims, might I add, mostly women—both recognition of the problem and the level of support services for families affected by it have finally become a major focus for governments, for institutions and for communities right across the country. Increasing acceptance of the cashless debit card demonstrates that many communities are now ready to do whatever they can to ameliorate suffering, especially at locations where there are clusters of disadvantage and where the problems are greater than they are in more affluent communities elsewhere.

Now, this is not to say that problems of domestic violence and neglect are limited to severely disadvantaged communities. Clearly, they're not. As my colleague the member for Bradfield knows, there are problems on the North Shore of Sydney, which is one of the most affluent pockets of the country. No doubt, that's almost mirrored in Toorak, Brighton and the more affluent suburbs of other cities across the country. Indeed, the theme of the third annual conference of the STOP Domestic Violence organisation, to be held in Melbourne next month, is that domestic violence does not discriminate. And there is more proof of that in very recent statistics from the New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research data, which establishes that, in no fewer than 761 suburbs and towns across that state, more domestic violence suspects are picked up by police than for almost any other form of criminal behaviour.

But, having made that point, there is no doubt that where disadvantage is greatest, the problems of alcohol abuse and other forms of substance abuse—as well as sometimes ridiculously high spending on gambling—and the often closely related domestic violence statistics are also greater. That was certainly the rationale behind the first trial sites for this program last year. These trial sites were in communities with a strong Indigenous representation—over 78 per cent—and that straightforward fact has attracted some attention. But there's a reason so many leaders in those communities have come out in favour of the program, and that's simply that it has worked. And now they and other leaders in communities across the country, far more diverse communities, are engaged and also wanting to see this program rolled out.

One point must be made very clearly: this card, this program, is not directed at particular individuals, or races or religions, or anyone else; it is applied equally to all participants—and only in those communities that strongly support its introduction and only following extensive local consultation. More than 180 consultations were recently conducted in Bundaberg and Hervey Bay. Furthermore, the local MP, the member for Hinkler, seeking to consult directly with his community, sent a direct mail-out to over 32,000 of his constituents, phone polled another 500 and emailed around 5½ thousand more to get their thoughts and feedback on a possible rollout of the cashless debit card for his electorate. The result was that approximately

75 per cent of the feedback received was supportive of the cashless debit card. As a consequence of such a powerful community endorsement, a rollout for Hinkler has now been announced, subject to the passage of this bill. It must be said that the Indigenous population of Hinkler, at 33.5 per cent of the population, is less than that of other trial locations.

Safeguards are firmly in place to ensure that if the cashless debit card program is to be expanded, it will grow only in those communities that want to take part. If the parliament supports this bill, the government will co-design specially tailored programs for individual communities by working with those communities. And there are many communities that continue to express interest in being part of that extended rollout. A further safeguard is that any growth of the program can only go ahead with the agreement of the parliament via the disallowable instrument process, a process that was also in place for the first trials.

The objectives of this program are honourable not only to the Australian taxpayer but also in relation to those people the Australian taxpayer has long committed to support in their time of need. This bill, and the highly effective welfare mechanism it seeks to extend, is part of our strong and abiding commitment to the social safety net that is at the very heart of what it means to be Australian. The objectives are clearly set down in the existing legislative authority. They are: to reduce the amount of payments to be available that may be spent on alcohol, gambling or illicit drugs; to determine whether such a reduction decreases violence or harm; to determine whether such arrangements are more effective when community bodies are involved; and to encourage socially responsible behaviour. There is clear evidence that these objectives are now being met.

Let me address a concern raised by some, and that is that this program somehow impinges on human rights. However important these concerns may be, it is the government's considered view that the expansion of the cashless debit card actually advances the wellbeing and protection of the human beings it impacts. It does so by ensuring that income support payments are spent in the best interests of welfare recipients, their dependents—for whom, of course, they carry a responsibility—and the local communities of which they are part. The cashless debit card is assisting to reduce immediate hardship and deprivation, to reduce violence and harm and to encourage socially responsible behaviour. These are noble and compassionate goals. On that firm basis the government believes that there are limits on one's rights, limits that are reasonable and proportional in light of the objectives, which are to enhance the dignity and, indeed, the opportunities available to our most vulnerable citizens.

As I made clear at the beginning of my address, the problems that this program addresses are some of the most insidious and troublesome that our community suffers from, especially substance abuse and domestic violence. These problems are widespread, even approaching epidemic in some areas. Perhaps such problems offend our aspiration for a model, civil society and an Australia that we all want to see. So, when we find something that works, we should quite deliberately extend the confirmed benefits as broadly as possible, and that's precisely what we're doing in this case.

The cashless debit card is an important and now proven policy of this government, a policy that certainly has my enthusiastic support, and, for this reason, I'm delighted to commend it to the House.

Dr FREELANDER (Macarthur) (12:56): I rise to offer not unqualified support to the bill currently before the House. In saying that, I recognise that this bill seeks to deal with very

complex, difficult and deeply ingrained social problems. There are no simplistic answers, in spite of what you might hear from the other side. The Social Services Legislation Amendment (Cashless Debit Card) Bill 2017 will allow the existing trial of the cashless debit card to be extended to additional sites. Presently, there's a legislated limit of three sites, with a maximum of 10,000 participants in total. The legislation also sets 30 June 2018 as the end date for the CDC trials. Those limitations will be removed when this bill comes into effect. New trials will require the making of fresh legislative instruments which can be disallowed by either house.

I find the government's proposal troubling. I'm open-minded on the use of income management measures, but I'm in total agreement with the commentator Peter Martin from *The Sydney Morning Herald* when he writes:

If you were going to make life much more difficult for people on welfare you'd want to be sure there was a point. You'd want to trial the indignities, you'd want to know they helped.

As I said in relation to yet another of this government's many bills targeting those at the margins, if anyone in this country has a right to complain about government red tape and overregulation and also about lack of access, it's the poor and the disadvantaged.

My personal concerns centre less on the identified trial results or even on the government's effusive and overblown response to them, though these concerns are real enough. What I truly doubt is the CDC's capacity to deliver substantial and lasting benefits over the longer term to some of the most disadvantaged communities. I worry also that the cashless debit card, like its precursors and other forms of income management arrangement, might, in some instances, deepen welfare dependency or even further inure us to it. As one highly experienced social researcher has said:

Most trials have some initial effects, the Hawthorne factor, but these usually wear off, so good policy needs very solid data to justify major changes, particularly in areas that deeply affect people's lives.

It's an open question for me whether a better approach might be to trial more extensive and intensive efforts to lift the standard of health and standard of education of those living in disadvantaged conditions. There are many things we can do that can improve people's situations without putting in the cashless debit card. By that I mean improving overall health—not just more health care, but infant health, health of young adults and pregnancy health. There are many things we can do before we move to the cashless debit card. I think we also need to try other forms of assistance—some, at times, more radical—and see whether they can produce more lasting and more cost-effective solutions. That's more than I fear we are likely to see from the cashless debit card in the longer term, and I do worry about its persistence as a method of social control in very disadvantaged communities.

Extensive research work undertaken by those who have spent a lifetime in this field dealing with the interrelationship between health, economic and societal wellbeing clearly demonstrates that you cannot address health issues without attacking inequality and vice versa. I speak in particular of Sir Michael Marmot, the previous head of the World Medical Association, and his belief in the social determinants of health. As a paediatrician, you might imagine the sorts of things I have in mind, such as early childhood health and pregnancy health. We know now that the science of epigenetics tells us that we can do a lot about people's lifetime health experiences and lifetime education experiences if we intervene to provide good antenatal care and good pregnancy care for people. So, like the Jesuits, I believe

you have to get children when they're very young, even before they're born, to make long-term differences.

I've read and re-read the minister's second reading speech and the explanatory memorandum, the department's very brief submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs inquiry and the exchanges between the government and the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights. I am also indebted to the Parliamentary Library for their insights and assistance. If the customary regulatory impact statement had been provided I would have read that as well, but it wasn't. The government has declined to include a financial impact statement in the explanatory memorandum on the basis of commercial confidentiality. But the department has advised through the parliament that the estimated cost of implementing and managing the CDC trial in Ceduna and the East Kimberley from 1 July 2015 to April 2018 is \$18.9 million. That's just, of course, for a total of 2,000 participants. This is a very expensive program for very limited apparent benefits.

In 2013, the Australian National Audit Office reported that the estimated cost per person per year for managing income measures such as the CDC could be as high as \$7,900 per person per year in remote areas. The income management regime that operated as part of the Northern Territory intervention cost in the order of \$410 million and was also roundly criticised, including by a government-commissioned evaluation report, a report prepared by the Social Policy Research Centre at UNSW. All I'd say is that you can get a lot of health care, a lot of medical support and a lot of educational support for that sort of money.

The cashless debit card can be used for purchases, excluding certain forms of gambling, illicit drugs, tobacco, alcohol and pornography. The CDC is a Visa debit card issued by the payment company, Indue. Cardholders can use the card at any bricks-and-mortar store that accepts Visa debit cards, unless the store has been blocked. It can also have its uses online. I acknowledge that the government has made progress in improving some of the technical aspects of the scheme, but there's some way to go yet, especially if the CDC is to operate effectively in more densely populated areas. Like earlier cards, the CDC suffers from the limitation that it directly blocks specific merchants and businesses rather than specific goods and services. Blocked merchants can be approved on a case-by-case basis if they undertake to have their staff guard against prohibited activity and if the store refuses to process prohibited transactions, including excluded goods such as alcohol.

The manual screening process necessarily adds to the cost and complexity of the scheme. It also makes elements of compliance highly contingent and it is difficult to see how it might readily translate from isolated regional communities to regional centres. The proposed Hinkler and Bundaberg trials will no doubt test this. In each of the two trials to date in the East Kimberley and Ceduna, 80 per cent of an individual's welfare payments are deposited in the cashless debit card account, with the remaining 20 per cent being placed in their ordinary savings accounts. Retaining some access to cash does mean that the scheme cannot entirely eliminate the possibility of welfare recipients using some portion of the entitlements on alcohol, prohibited drugs, gambling et cetera. Circumvention and gaming the system have been an issue for all income management schemes trialled in Australia over the past decade, as have cost and effectiveness.

ORIMA Research's first evaluation of the Ceduna and east Kimberley trials unearthed at least eight ways in which participants can circumvent the CDC restrictions. That tally is

consistent with experience from all welfare card schemes trialled in Australia over the last decade. Even strong and undeniably well-meaning supporters of income management, such as Andrew Forrest and the Minderoo Foundation, argue that both past and current debit card systems suffer from technological limitations that make them difficult and expensive to implement and maintain. The Minderoo Foundation's submission to the as yet uncompleted Senate Community Affairs Committee inquiry argues that the government needs to overcome such technological limitations before extending the card to new communities. Blind to even the advice of those supporting further trials, the government has announced that it does intend extending income management and the CDC trials to at least two new sites: the Goldfields region of Western Australia and the federal electorate of Hinkler, centred on Bundaberg. The PM memorably described this as an act of love. Others might see it more akin to an act of blind faith.

Like some, I suspect, on both sides of this House, I do see how a cashless debit card or some other form of income management arrangement might be a useful data source, make a positive difference in the short term or act as an adjunct to other measures. I can also see it playing a supporting role, but only if it is well targeted, supported by local communities and proves cost-effective, meaning that it does not chew up either the scarce community resources and money that would be better spent elsewhere, such as in education, or goodwill that might be better invested elsewhere.

In his second reading speech, the minister quotes ORIMA Research's most recent evaluation report, which found that 'overall the trial has been effective to date'—hardly effusive praise. In particular, the trial has been effective in reducing alcohol consumption in the shorter term, illegal drug use and gambling, and has provided some evidence of proof of concept. This is a much more qualified claim than was initially made by the minister, who, on 1 September, in his excitement, ejaculated that the ORIMA evaluation has positive health and social outcomes 'almost without precedent'. Now, that is clearly not true.

Mr Stephen Jones: He did what?

Dr FREELANDER: That's my language. I was quoting him. Like the Prime Minister's 'act of love' remark, this really was a contender for an 'eggbeater of the month' award. I don't doubt the sincerity of the minister and the government on this matter, but I do doubt their understanding of the concepts.

I can see why some might reasonably conclude that the cashless debit card trials undertaken to date have produced some mildly encouraging results, but this is only in the short term and, overwhelmingly, the trial results are more mixed than conclusive. That's a view I share with researchers and commentators such as Eva Cox, Peter Martin, Dr Janet Hunt of the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research at the ANU, and numerous submissions to the Senate Community Affairs Committee inquiry into the bill. To quote Peter Martin yet again on the minister's somewhat eccentric reading of ORIMA's final evaluation report:

Forty-five per cent of the of the users surveyed found they were better at saving. Less publicised was that 50 per cent found they were not. Twenty-three per cent said it had made their life better. Less publicised was that 42 per cent said it had made their lives worse.

Forty per cent said they could better look after their children. Less publicised was that 48 per cent said they could not.

Eva Cox noted:

There are serious flaws in data collection, described in the Orima report, some of the limits are acknowledged in the report ... These are not acknowledged by the Government.

The Western Australian Council of Social Service says in its Community Affairs Committee submission:

Our overriding concern with the proposed legislative extension of the Cashless Debit Card trials is the significant gap between the actual evidence of the impacts of the trials carried out to date and the claims being made politically about that evidence.

Overstating the positive aspects of the trials not only is misleading and unhelpful but can be harmful, especially if the government falls into the trap of believing its own publicity—something it is very prone to do. A proliferation of further trials or a national rollout of income management would be horrendously expensive and is not supported by the evidence assembled either by the ORIMA study or by earlier ill-fated ventures involving cashless welfare cards and income management arrangements.

The bill has been looked at by two parliamentary committees and is in the process of being examined by a third. The Senate Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Bills reported on 6 September 2017:

... this bill converts authority to run a trial program into a general power to implement that program.

The Scrutiny of Bills Committee also raised concerns that the bill reduces parliament's capacity to supervise the operation of any extended trial. The committee requested additional advice from the minister as to why the primary legislation does not include more guidance and safeguards on matters such as site selection and participation criteria. These concerns are of the sort routinely raised by the Scrutiny of Bills Committee about this government's social welfare legislation.

The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights also examined the bill and queried whether the extension of the trials process is of itself a proportionate limitation on human rights. The Senate referred the bill to its Community Affairs Legislation Committee, which is not due to report until 13 November. The community affairs committee has not completed its inquiries, and a further public hearing is scheduled early in November. Quite rightly, in this instance, where the views of individuals and communities should be afforded the most respect, Labor has decided to reserve its final position on the bill until the community affairs committee completes its work. As part of its consultation process, the relevant shadow minister visited the east Kimberley and Ceduna trial sites, and Labor does still see the need for further evidence before strongly supporting this bill. This is entirely consistent with Labor's longstanding position on income management arrangements. It's consistent, too, with the findings of two Senate committees and many others on both sides of the House. I thank the House.

Mr RICK WILSON (O'Connor) (13:11): I rise today in support of the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Cashless Debit Card) Bill 2017. The passage of this bill will provide the legislative authority to allow the Goldfields region of my electorate to be the third and, to date, largest site for the cashless debit card. On 29 May 2017, I spoke in this place in support of the need in my Goldfields community for the cashless debit card as one tool in a suite of strategies to tackle some of the social and health issues fuelled by alcohol and other drugs in this part of my electorate.

Today, I stand here to give voice to my community and the leaders who have so bravely stood up and fought for the introduction of this card. They are people like Leonora Indigenous leader Nana Gaye Harris, who started the ball rolling when she first sought me out in Leonora in late 2015; people like Laverton Indigenous elders Bruce Smith and Janice Scott, who moved an entire room to tears with their powerful account of children living on the streets of Laverton, abandoned by parents on the grog; and people like Coolgardie community leader Betty Logan and her niece, Amanda Bennell, who in the presence of the Prime Minister challenged naysayers to look into the eyes of a child suffering the effects of fetal alcohol syndrome and not feel compassion. I give voice to people like Leonora police officer in charge Isaac Rinaudo, who has described children as young as five years of age breaking into houses just to steal food. And I give voices to civic leaders like Laverton's Patrick Hill; Leonora's Jim Epis and Peter Craig; Jill Dwyer and Ian Tucker from the Shire of Menzies; Mal Cullen and Betty Logan from the Coolgardie shire; and Mayor John Bowler of the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder. They are fighting for what's best for the communities that they know and love and have been committed to for all their lives. Today, I'm their voice in the Australian parliament.

On 1 September this year, the Prime Minister came to the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder and announced that, based on demonstrable need and a willingness reflected through extensive community consultations, the Goldfields would be the next site to roll out the cashless debit card. The Prime Minister's announcement was the culmination of over 18 months of community consultations and followed promising outcomes seen in the cashless debit card trials in Ceduna and east Kimberley. The second independent evaluation of these two trials, conducted by ORIMA Research, was released the same day. This evaluation concluded that, across these two trial sites, which involved a total of 2,141 participants, alcohol consumption and gambling had markedly reduced and alcohol related violence and harm had also diminished significantly. It found in particular that, of people who drank alcohol, 42 per cent reported drinking less frequently and 30 per cent of binge drinkers reported they were doing so less often. There was a 37 per cent reduction in alcohol related hospital presentations in Ceduna in the first quarter of 2017 when compared to the same period before the card was introduced. Other key findings included that 48 per cent of drug takers were using fewer drugs and 48 per cent of gamblers were gambling less. But, most importantly, the trend showed improving outcomes over time.

Many ask: why do we need this card in the Goldfields? The Goldfields is an area of tremendous mineral wealth, but also considerable social disadvantage. It has a population of around 36,000, of which approximately 10 per cent receive working-age income support payments. Tragically, a considerable amount of this money is being squandered on gambling, alcohol and other drug habits instead of the necessities of life: food, clothing, shelter and transport.

In the main street of Kalgoorlie, newsagent Kerry Holman reports that on a daily basis that she sells scratchies to parents on welfare while children plead for food. Other vendors report shoplifting of food and daily essentials as a constant. Meanwhile, government and non-government agencies report providing emergency food and clothing vouchers, even on the days after payments are made into their bank accounts. In Laverton, shire president Patrick Hill reported open gambling in public places, with anything from \$2,000 to \$5,000 in the ring,

yet the kids are running around with no food and no clothes. Pat believes, 'If you restrict the cash, you restrict the things that are happening at the moment.'

This is supported by findings of the independent evaluation in Ceduna, which showed a marked decrease in requests for emergency food relief and financial assistance, while local merchants reported increased purchases of baby items, food, clothing, shoes, toys and other goods for children. Overall, the independent evaluation also found 40 per cent of cashless debit card participants across both Ceduna and the East Kimberley trial sites reported they were better able to care for their children.

The consequential harm from alcohol and other drug abuse is another massive issue for the Goldfields. WA police data indicates that domestic and non-domestic assaults in the Goldfields are more than twice the state average, with alcohol being a factor in two-thirds of all domestic assaults and half of all non-domestic assaults. In the Goldfields, alcohol related hospitalisations and deaths is 25 per cent higher than the state average. As mentioned, the independent evaluation of trials in Ceduna and East Kimberley confirmed a decrease in the alcohol related hospital presentations.

I'm not alone in looking forward to our hospital and emergency service workers having some respite. Mal Cullen, president of the shire of Coolgardie, reported, 'Our police are under increasing pressure, and ambulance service people are being abused.' In the northern Goldfields, I've been told there are sometimes three Royal Flying Doctor Service medical transfers per day, mostly for alcohol related issues.

Publicans in the City of Kalgoorlie, Boulder, Laverton and Leonora, together with the Australian Hotels Association, support the introduction of the cashless debit card, even though these liquor outlets stand to lose income with its introduction. They state the overall impact of less alcohol driven social disorder on the streets will be well worth it.

Last Friday's front page of the *Kalgoorlie Miner* quoted the Kalgoorlie police as saying that ice related crime was spiralling out of control, with offenders often between 10 and 18 years of age. Meanwhile, police in Leonora reported that between January and June this year there were more assaults than all other crimes put together. In Laverton, there were three times more assaults than any other crime, with Senior Sergeant Justin Tarasinki citing domestic and non-domestic violence, often as a direct result of alcohol consumption. He added, 'We're also concerned about kids who are confronted with the damage alcohol is causing adults, including their own parents, and how they're often exposed to alcohol from an early age.' These testimonies come from respected members of our community who agree there is a real and urgent need for the introduction of the card.

I'd like to take a minute now to define what the card actually is and how it will work in practice. This card is a cashless debit Visa card, and for those who say there's a stigma attached, just take a look. It's the same as the Visa card I use for my everyday purchases. No-one on this card will be financially worse off. They'll receive the same welfare benefit they've always been entitled to. Twenty per cent will be available for withdrawal as cash, and the remaining 80 per cent will be deposited onto the cashless debit card, which can be used for the purchase of goods and services, but not to purchase alcohol or to gamble. As an example: a single parent with three children receives just under \$1,500 per fortnight in benefit; \$1,175 of that will be credited to their Visa debit card, with the remaining \$294 deposited into an account, which can be withdrawn as cash when required.

I plan to request a cashless Visa debit card myself and to use it when I'm in the Goldfields. With this Visa debit card I can pay for my hotel accommodation, I can buy groceries and I can buy a meal in a licensed premises; however, I can't buy beer and I can't use it to have a punt on the ponies. For those on the card, their benefit will continue to be deposited at the same regular intervals and can be linked to their mobile phone for real-time account balances. Large purchases such as whitegoods or motor vehicles can be catered for. Direct debit payments can be scheduled, and there is financial counselling and practical assistance available. I might add that that has been taken up on a voluntary basis by 40 per cent of people on the card so far.

I aim to ensure that every shire in the rollout area has its own local support officer to assist with the practicalities of managing or replacing the card. In addition, there will be case managers assigned to coordinate wraparound and support services. This card will apply to all working-age benefit recipients; however, in the case of disability support pension recipients, a wellbeing exemption can be applied for.

There are those who state that this card is discriminatory, but I'm confident that the cashless debit card trial sites to date have been selected based on a demonstrable need, combined with the support of local leaders. To date, in the two trial sites, which have included 2,241 participants, 78 per cent have identified as Indigenous. In Kalgoorlie-Boulder, over 60 per cent of welfare recipients are non-Indigenous. Across the entire Goldfields, there is a fifty-fifty split between Indigenous and non-Indigenous welfare recipients. The Goldfields definitely have a proven need.

I have worked hard to secure the support of these dispersed but united communities, that extend from the Shire of Coolgardie in the west to the WA, South Australia and Northern Territory border. I was first exposed to the dire situation in the northern Goldfields in late 2015 when approached to support more place based services to the town of Leonora, which was suffering a spate of youth suicides. I also met a remarkable woman, Nana Gaye Harris, who implored me to help her come up with a way to address the alcohol related harm her community was experiencing. We discussed the potential benefits of the cashless debit card, and her community has been working towards this trial ever since.

Since late 2015, I've had countless conversations with community members, Indigenous and non-Indigenous leaders, business owners, health and other service providers, local government authorities and the police towards consideration of the Goldfields as the next site for the rollout of the cashless debit card. At my invitation, Minister Tudge came to Kalgoorlie in November 2015 to meet with community leaders and service providers. Following my meeting with Gaye Harris, he returned on 22 December 2015, travelling to Leonora to meet with a cross-section of the northern Goldfields community. Shire representatives, service providers, local police, Indigenous leaders and community members from Leonora, Laverton and the Ngaanyatjarra Lands discussed with Minister Tudge the possible rollout of the cashless debit card in dealing with serious social and health issues. The minister made it clear that communities would need to consult widely with their members and would need to commit to being involved in any design, were they to become a cashless debit card site.

Since this time, I've committed to consulting widely with adjacent communities and securing the support of residents, business and local governments of the shires of Laverton, Leonora, Coolgardie and Menzies and the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder. There's been

considerable interest expressed by the Shire of Dundas, and I'm working with Minister Tudge for their inclusion in the rollout trial.

Prior to announcing the Goldfields as a site for the next cashless debit card rollout, the Department of Social Services conducted more than 285 consultations, including attendance at over 125 meetings across the Goldfields. This incorporated more than 30 consultations with local governments across six Goldfields shires; over 45 consultations with representatives, local service providers and peak bodies working with disadvantaged families; and in excess of 50 consultations with frontline state government officials delivering health and education and public safety services. And the Department of Social Services hosted 10 community information sessions in the greater Goldfields region, attended by more than 180 people.

The minister himself attended further stakeholder meetings. In May 2017, he received strong feedback from the shires of Laverton and Leonora that the time for consultation was over and it was time to get on with it. Minister Tudge listened to an extraordinary plea from a respected elder and grandcarer, Janice Scott of Laverton. She said: 'Our children have no rights. They have no future. Our people are dying. We need this card, and we need to try something now.' At the recent Kalgoorlie hearing of the Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee, witnesses were asked if there had been enough consultation on the cashless debit card. Jim Epis, who has been the CEO of the Shire of Leonora for over 20 years, said:

You can only consult so much, and the people in Leonora ... have had a gutful. Stop talking about it and just ... do it.

He said:

Aboriginal people are the same; they don't want to sit down and meet, meet, meet all the time ... Surely we've consulted enough.

I firmly believe the time is right to introduce this card into the Goldfields. I want to state for the record that I do not believe that this card is the silver bullet that will fix all the social issues of the greater Goldfields, but, if we can take some of the cash out of these communities, it will address gambling and illicit drug problems. And if this card can be a tool to help reduce the amount of alcohol-related domestic and other violence, if this card can redirect welfare dollars to where they are best spent, on the necessities of life, and if federal, state and local government agencies together are committed to providing the ancillary services to support those on the card, for those wanting to beat an addiction and for those wanting to manage their finances for the benefit of themselves and their dependants, I see no downside in giving this a go. If our communities are behind it, which I firmly believe they are, then we should just pass this bill and get on with it.

I note that the shadow minister has indicated that the Labor Party will support this bill through the House, and I sincerely thank her for that. And I welcome the shadow minister's willingness to visit the Goldfields and meet with the leaders of my community. I'm confident that she'll hear the same message that I've received from my communities: that the time for talk is over and it's time to get on with it. I will close with the words of Laverton elder Janice Scott when she implored: 'Please give our children a chance.'

Ms HUSAR (Lindsay) (13:25): 'Cashless'—that's a very interesting term to bandy around in this chamber today! I rise to speak on the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Cashless Debit Card) Bill 2017, being mindful of a sneaking trepidation that all may not be

as it seems. While the intentions of the government and this side of the House are clear and unambiguous, it is still not clear that the cashless debit card will deliver the much-needed assistance to communities that they require. Indeed, since its introduction, east Kimberley community leaders have raised concerns regarding the delivery of promised support services surrounding these trials. I would suggest that Labor and other members of this place will be looking closely at these comments and listening to the community leaders and members to find out the real outcomes of these trials. As the shadow minister for families and community services, Jenny Macklin, has rightly pointed out, it is mystifying why the government has introduced this legislation with the Senate inquiry that is already underway. We rightfully reserve judgement until that is complete—and so should the other side of the House. It is disappointing to see them jump the gun and attempt to pre-empt their findings.

Unlike the east Kimberley and Ceduna trials, the lack of consultation in the Goldfields and Hervey Bay areas is symptomatic of a government that doesn't listen, doesn't communicate and doesn't implement its promises. The actions, or lack thereof, in east Kimberley are in stark contrast to the hope that the trial of the card was thought to deliver. Mothers were hoping that their families would see support programs and training to help break the treacherous cycle of gambling addiction and alcohol and drug abuse. The member for Jagajaga, Jenny Macklin, who probably has more experience than anyone in this place regarding the implementation of these policies, rightly points out that surrounding support programs quite simply have not, at this time, been seen.

I note that the government likes to trot out the figures, provided through the evaluation of the cashless debit card trial, which were released by ORIMA Research in a flurry of publicity. They claimed that the figures were in and the Messiah had somehow arrived. I would be the first to applaud that, if that were indeed the case. Quite simply, we cannot be sure—and many experts have raised questions about the trial's methodology and the anonymity of participants. Janet Hunt of the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research in the ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences, in her issues paper, points out that there are too many factors surrounding the evaluation and, importantly, notes the fact that participants were required to identify themselves prior to their participation and that that raises serious questions about how they would respond, and, in some cases, understand the questions and the implications of their answers. As previous speakers have rightly pointed out, it would be surprising if someone with a drug problem who had been identified by the interviewer would suddenly open up and discuss their volume of usage. Similarly, with no or little baseline data, can the stated drop in alcohol use be used with any accuracy? Again, I point to identification as a key problem. We're talking about people who have suffered greatly at the hands of government representatives and others. Yet the original problem of domestic and other violence remains—the very reason for these trials to begin with. This is hardly encouraging for potential participants in the Hervey Bay and Goldfields areas targeted by this legislation.

It is because of the limitations of the data presented by the government as fact that Labor is highlighting that the section repealed by this bill would still require a legislative instrument to be tabled in parliament, and, as we on this side have said previously, these instruments are disallowable and that means that the rollouts can be agreed or opposed in certain locations. The trial of cashless debit cards has been viewed through a prism of suspicion and distrust, and rightly so. It takes a great leap of faith for these communities to commit to their

implementation. That's why Labor has consulted closely with communities in Ceduna and East Kimberley, listening to the communities' views widely, discreetly and humbly. We do support genuine, intuitive policies that acknowledge the problems and opportunities that are unique to remote and discrete communities. Because of the tireless efforts of my colleagues Jenny Macklin and Linda Burney, we understand that a cashless debit system may be part of the solution.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Coulton): Order! The debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 43. The debate may be resumed at a later hour. The member for Lindsay will be given an opportunity at that time to conclude her contribution.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Mogadishu: Attacks

Mr KHALIL (Wills) (13:30): I rise to speak of the abhorrent terrorist attack in the Somali capital of Mogadishu this past Saturday which killed at least 320 innocent civilians and injured 500 more. Al-Shabaab, an affiliate of al-Qaeda, has a history of launching bomb attacks against innocent civilians. This despicable attack is another setback in Somalia's decade-long struggle against these terrorists. The sheer scale of the loss of human life is mind numbing. It's the deadliest-ever attack on Somali soil and the deadliest terrorist attack the world has seen in many, many years.

It has greatly shaken the Somali community in my home state of Victoria, many of whom have themselves fled the violence in their homeland to seek refuge in Australia. Their population has grown from less than 250 in 1990 to almost 8,000 today and, during this period of significant growth, they've made remarkable contributions to Australian society and have affirmed their place in our proud multicultural society. Many would have family in Mogadishu, and they are deeply affected by these attacks.

It is saddening that there has been relatively minimal media coverage of these attacks. But here in this parliament, I, as an African-Australian MP, say that Somali lives matter, that African lives matter, and I call on the government to provide strong support not only to assist the Somali people to rebuild but to send a strong message to the Somali community here in Australia and worldwide that we as Australians stand united with Somalia and Somali Australians against this evil.

Fadden Electorate: Dreamworld

Mr ROBERT (Fadden) (13:31): Today I'd like to acknowledge the first-year anniversary of the tragedy that occurred at Dreamworld on the Gold Coast in my electorate, to pay my respects to the victims and their families and also to the Dreamworld staff and guests who were present on that day. Like so many Australians, I was deeply saddened by the tragic loss of life at a theme park, a place of fun. My heartfelt prayers and sincere condolences go to the families of the three Canberrans, Kate Goodchild, Luke Dorsett and Roozi Araghi, and to the Central Coast's Cindy Lowe. I also praise the courage and skill of the first responders on the scene who tried desperately to save and resuscitate those who had such grievous injuries. In particular, I praise Mr Shane Green, the manager of the first-aid department at Dreamworld, for his courageous efforts and recognise the profound impact that fateful day has had on him.

I'm also aware that the findings of the official investigation into the tragedy are yet to be handed down, but Dreamworld, of course, has invested in safety to ensure that it becomes one

of the safest theme parks in the world. Dreamworld employs over a thousand people in my electorate and, with Wet'n'Wild and other theme parks, is one of its major employers. Whilst the tragedy must be examined and victims always remembered, the role of amusement and theme parks goes on. So I encourage all Australians: if you're down at the Gold Coast, pop into Dreamworld, pay your respects, take the family out for a great day and enjoy all that our modern theme parks have in a safe environment.

Marriage

Ms BRODTMANN (Canberra) (13:33): We are in the final days of this expensive, divisive postal survey on marriage equality. The survey closes on 7 November, yet tomorrow is the last day that Australians should mail their survey to ensure it's counted. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, about 12 million surveys have been returned so far, and this is the one thing that is keeping the yes campaigners awake at night—the realisation that millions of votes may simply never get posted. You could be forgiven for thinking the result was actually in the bag; the most recent poll showed almost 60 per cent of those who had already voted or sent in their survey had ticked 'yes'. But this lead has steadily been decreasing, apparently, over the course of the campaign, so we can't afford to be complacent.

In a tightening race, pro-marriage equality campaigners are becoming concerned, not about 'no' voters but about lazy 'yes' voters. Their chief concern is the roughly two million people under the age of 35, most of whom say they'd vote yes but who haven't yet sent in their survey. That apathy could tip the result to no. So I'm calling on all Canberrans and all Australians out there—especially young Canberrans and Australians—who haven't yet posted their survey to make sure they get out and post their survey tomorrow. Put it on the to-do list; post that survey tomorrow. I'm calling on you to vote yes for marriage equality in Australia.

Forde Electorate: Twin Rivers Centre

Mr VAN MANEN (Forde—Government Whip) (13:34): It's my pleasure to rise in the chamber today to once again give my congratulations to the Twin Rivers Centre in my electorate of Forde, which celebrated its 25th anniversary on Saturday night. I was glad to have the chance at Saturday night's celebration to pay tribute to Twin Rivers Christian Church founding pastors Bob and Naomi Engwicht and current pastors Reuben and Michelle Roos for the incredible work they and the team do in our local community. The Twin Rivers Food Co-op, founded and still run by Noel and Gayle Roberts, also celebrated 25 years of operation on Saturday night. The Twin Rivers church and community centre has become a beacon of hope for our community over the past 45 years, connecting countless families to valuable support networks and programs and inspiring its members to actively commit to make our region a better place to live.

Recently, the centre has been the beneficiary of various grants from the Australian government which have supported the rebuild of its kitchen facilities and the installation of solar panels to assist with the centre's electricity bills. It was my pleasure, at the time of those grants being finalised, to announce the good news to such worthy recipients. I thank the hardworking men and women of the Twin Rivers Centre for all you do to support, love and inspire our wonderful communities. Congratulations on 25 years of success.

Cunningham Electorate: Science

Ms BIRD (Cunningham) (13:36): This week my local area has excelled in science achievement. I couldn't be prouder—and I'm sure the member for Whitlam joins me in that. Last week, one of my wonderful local public schools shone in the Prime Minister's Science Awards. Congratulations to Neil Bramsen and Mount Ousley Public School, winners of the Prime Minister's science prize for primary science teaching. A very proud local MP and the school's principal, Peter Holmes, were in the Great Hall of Parliament House to celebrate one of our great public schools achieving such wonderful recognition. Neil Bramsen instigated the outdoor classroom at Mount Ousley. Students record bird sightings, study the beach and assess levels of marine debris, or read and think in the butterfly garden. They have also talked to astronauts on the International Space Station and made global connections, through Skype, with schools in Africa and America.

At the beginning of this week, Professor Gordon Wallace, an outstanding scientist and leader from the University of Wollongong, was announced as the 2017 New South Wales Scientist of the Year for his groundbreaking work on implantable 3D printed structures containing living cells to regenerate damaged cartilage, bones and even organs. And Gordon paid great tribute to his whole team in receiving the award. We are very proud of them. My sincere congratulations go to Neil Bramsen and Gordon Wallace, leading in science from Wollongong.

Bonner Electorate: Foodbank

Mr VASTA (Bonner) (13:37): I want to talk about an issue that is particularly important as the Christmas holidays draw near, with some families doing it especially tough—and that is food wastage. I'm proud to have once again partnered with Foodbank Queensland for their annual Christmas donation drive. My office will be taking donations of non-perishable goods until 12 December. Every donation will be going out to people in need this Christmas. Last year, my office was inundated with generous donations. I want to thank the Bonner community for giving so freely. No doubt my constituents' generosity will shine through again this time around. People can donate anything from canned vegetables, pasta sauce, rice, jams and spreads to tinned fruit, long-life products and other non-perishable food items.

It's staggering that over 600,000 people in Australia, one-third of them children, seek food relief from charities every month, while Australia produces enough food to feed 60 million people a year. Food wastage costs Australia \$20 billion a year and seriously harms our environment. That is why this government is developing a national food wastage strategy, with the goal of halving food wastage by 2030. I commend Foodbank for taking a leading role in the development of this strategy. The government is convening a national food waste summit next month, and I look forward to seeing some great results from that.

Herbert Electorate: Broadband

Ms O'TOOLE (Herbert) (13:39): The Turnbull government has made a complete mess of the NBN in my electorate. In fact, where I come from, we talk about the 'no broadband neighbours', because that's exactly what is happening in Townsville. In my electorate it is quite common to have one side of the street able to access the NBN and the other side not. Townsville is full of no-broadband neighbours. No-broadband neighbours are homes that have been declared to be service class 0, meaning that NBN Co has made an operational

decision that it would be too resource intensive or too time consuming to connect them. These premises are simply left behind until the NBN moves on to the next area.

In my electorate, small business operator and director of 2Technical, Luke Cashion-Lozell, has been toing and froing with stakeholders and NBN Co for some time. The NBN has been connected to Luke's office since March but, even though Luke has a notice of completion from NBN Co and 80 per cent of the tenants in his building are connected to the NBN, it appears he is not actually connected. He has reached out to multiple retail service providers, who did not help. He has reached out to NBN Co, who did not help. He has reached out to the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman, who also did not help. Luke sent me an email in which he wrote: 'I find it horrifying that NBN Co are able to operate like they're seemingly ungoverned by anyone, completely outside of the purview of the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman.' I agree, Luke: this is horrifying.

Young Veterans Sunshine Coast Veterans' Health Week

Mr WALLACE (Fisher) (13:41): As I rise today, we celebrate Veterans' Health Week. From 21 to 29 October, events are being held around Australia which help veterans and their families improve and maintain their health. This year I was grateful to have the opportunity to meet the Young Veterans Sunshine Coast group and their organisers, Jane McFadden and Tay Sukhanthapree. The group has 268 members so far and gets together once a fortnight for social activities like yoga and paddle boarding. This kind of companionship can be exceptionally valuable in helping veterans transition into civilian life and in reducing their chances of developing PTSD.

There is more to improving veterans' health than formal service provision. As the group says of themselves, 'It's not a sit-down counselling session, just a bunch of people catching up and talking in jargon we all understand and relate to whilst having a great social day.' Sadly, the weather on Sunday prevented the group from swimming with the whales off Mooloolaba as they'd planned, but it didn't dampen their enthusiasm to meet and celebrate. Some frames of tenpin bowling in Alexandra Headland were an excellent indoor alternative. In this Veterans' Health Week, on behalf of the House, I want to congratulate Jane and Tay on their simple but life-changing initiative and thank them for their continuing hard work.

Bushfires Telecommunications

Ms SHARKIE (Mayo) (13:42): The countdown to the start of the fire danger season in Mayo and other bushfire prone areas of southern Australia has started. In a little over a month, my community will face the prospect of regular days of declared catastrophic conditions. Power will be deliberately switched off to protect high-risk areas from the danger of fires ignited by power lines. Under the NBN rollout, my community and others face a new risk: a communication blackout on weather conditions and fire emergency alerts. Households with a downgraded NBN fibre-to-the-node technology will lose their landline and internet service immediately. Residents relying on mobile phones will lose coverage after approximately four hours, when the batteries in towers go flat.

Last month, I introduced a telecommunications amendment bill in relation to mobile phones, to compel carriers to provide 24 hours of standby power to phone towers in high-risk

bushfire areas. It is not much. I've written to every member with a high-risk area in their electorate and I've spoken with Senator Fifield, the Minister for Communications; Senator Nash, the Minister for Regional Communications; and the member for Whitlam, the opposition spokesperson for regional communications. I thank all three for their time. With a month to go until the start of the fire danger season, we need to address this critical gap in our communications. It cannot be underestimated. I urge the government to take up this legislation and I strongly encourage every MP in this House to show their support.

Robertson Electorate: Environment

Mrs WICKS (Robertson) (13:44): I rise to speak about our local environment in my electorate on the Central Coast, in particular about reports about a potential sale of wetlands in Davistown. There are calls from local residents for the New South Wales government or the Central Coast Council to intervene and purchase the land in question, which I understand is privately owned in some capacity, to help limit its future development. While this does appear to be a matter for the state and local governments and the landowner, there are fears expressed by the local Davistown residents about the protection of our local environment on the Central Coast. So today I wrote to the Minister for the Environment and Energy to ask for clarification on whether the particular area in question may be subject to Commonwealth environmental protection.

Next week, on my return to the Central Coast, I also plan to host a round table. I'll be inviting local community advocates and residents, representatives from the Central Coast Council and the New South Wales government to discuss this issue. At the last election, unlike members opposite, we took a clear, local and fully funded environmental plan for Robertson to the community and we will not walk away from it. This plan was a \$2.2 million election commitment and included a \$250,000 boost to help Clean 4 Shore keep our waterways clean, help upgrade the 5 Lands Walk track, build the Springfield walkway, support surf lifesaving clubs through the Solar Communities program and deliver Green Army teams. One of those teams has been working to identify, survey and monitor the green and golden bell frog at Avoca Lagoon and Davistown. I intend to stand alongside my community at this time. *(Time expired)*

Broadband

Ms O'NEIL (Hotham) (13:45): Last week the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman reported that NBN complaints surged by 160 per cent compared to the previous financial year. The Prime Minister called this a 'calamitous train wreck'. I agree. You shouldn't spend \$50 billion on a network that gives you slower, less reliable and more expensive internet; a cost blowout of \$20 billion; Australia slipping from 30th to 51st in international broadband rankings; and 76 per cent of NBN users reporting slow speeds, disconnections and dropouts. That is a calamitous train wreck, and the buck stops with the man who sits there.

Day after day, my electorate office is inundated with calls from Hotham constituents who are so frustrated that they cannot get connected to broadband and then, when they are connected, the problems are endless. I get complaints about faulty installations, poorly done installations, unreliable connections, dropouts, incompatibility with existing medical alarm services, and the unclear division of responsibility between NBN Co and telecommunications providers, leading to poor customer service.

On the other side, they say this is a mistake by Labor. That is wrong. The NBN was our Snowy Mountains; it was our electricity grid and our roads and our railways of the 21st century. When I ask local businesses to tell me one thing that government can do to help them more, they always talk to me about broadband. We had one chance to do it properly, with fibre. Instead, the government squibbed that opportunity and my constituents are paying the price.

Australian War Memorial

Mr HASTIE (Canning) (13:47): I note that Canberra has been ranked third in the Lonely Planet's Best in Travel, Top Cities list for 2018. In fact, it's the only Australian city to be ranked in the top 10. I don't want to debate that decision. I accept that there are good reasons for it, and one of them is the Australian War Memorial—one of finest national war memorials in the world. Our War Memorial reminds us of the sacrifice that many Australians made in defending our country and preserves their stories and courageous acts for us and future generations. It's fitting that we can see it from parliament.

It gave me and other MPs and senators great pleasure to see the new exhibition *From the Shadows*. It is an exhibition developed in partnership with the Australian Special Operations Command that tells the story of Australian special operations in World War II through to Borneo, Malaya, Vietnam, East Timor, Iraq and, most recently, Afghanistan. It displays 600 objects, combined with 200 private recollections—often very gripping and moving—told by soldiers who have served Australia in the shadows and their families. There are many objects that tell a story. I think of the gloves of a private who wore them during the day that he dragged Cameron Baird VC from the line of fire after he was fatally wounded in 2013, and there is the CamelBak and antenna of Sergeant D, shot to pieces and still containing a bullet from the day that he ran into machine-gun fire to protect Trooper Jason Brown, who was mortally wounded in 2010. I congratulate Dr Brendan Nelson, Dr Karl James, the historian, and co-curator Danielle Cassar for an excellent exhibition.

Parramatta Electorate: Diwali

Ms OWENS (Parramatta) (13:48): This year saw another round of wonderful Diwali celebrations in Parramatta as we marked the Hindu new year and celebrated the triumph of light over darkness and good over evil. Every year in Parramatta, it's fireworks, lights, food, fashion and great company. I attended a number of events this year and I'd like to thank the organisers and volunteers who made them such a great success. Thanks to the Hindu Council Diwali Fair in Parramatta Park and thanks to the president, Nihal Singh Agar. Thanks to the Little India Diwali Fair in Harris Park, for the first time hosted by the Council of Indian Australians. Thanks to the president, Mohit Kumar. Thanks to the guys at BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir for the Annakut Festival in Rosehill, and thanks to Deshan Desai for the invitation. Of course, Diwali was celebrated right here in Parliament House.

There were a few events I couldn't make it to, and some of them I was very sorry to miss. I missed the Diwali celebration dinner organised by the Cumberland Council. I don't know how I missed the Diwali cruise on Sydney Harbour. And I don't know how I missed the India Club grand Diwali party. I am definitely going to that one; it is first on my list next year. I am sorry too to the Australian Hindi Indian Association; I didn't make yours either.

In Parramatta we seem to have Diwali every day over a two-week period. There is an extraordinary number of events as our wonderful Subcontinent community goes out and celebrates one of the great Hindu festivals of the year. Thanks for the invitations, and I'll see you all next year!

Small Business Day

Mr RICK WILSON (O'Connor) (13:50): This Saturday is Small Business Day. I want to take the opportunity today to put on the record my admiration for the small business owners in my electorate. I'm proud of the fact that O'Connor is home to 19,265 medium to small businesses. It's a remarkable statistic and one of the reasons I'm so proud to live in and represent O'Connor in this parliament. It takes courage, ambition and determination to start your own business, and the road isn't always easy. As a farmer and small businessman I have travelled this road and lived the highs and lows that risking your own capital and backing your judgement can bring.

I'm proud to be part of a government where many of our members share my experience in small business and share a common goal of supporting our small businesses. To this end, the government is cutting the company tax rate for small to medium businesses because we believe in supporting the people who have the courage to pursue their dreams. The instant asset write-off for capital items up to \$20,000 is always well-received in my electorate.

It's the work ethic and the drive of our small business owners that creates so many jobs for Australians. They create tens of thousands of jobs in my electorate and 5½ million jobs across the nation.

This Saturday I'll be home for the 126th Katanning Agricultural Show, an event that wouldn't be possible without the support and sponsorship of our local businesses. We should all take a moment this Saturday to show our appreciation and celebrate the contribution of our small businesses to our great nation.

Minister for Employment

Ms CHESTERS (Bendigo) (13:51): We quite often talk about how we're moving to a cashless society. I say bring it on, because after last night in Senate estimates we know that Senator Cash misled the Senate estimates at least five times about her office's involvement in the AWU AFP raids. But this minister has form. This is the same minister that knowingly appointed the ABCC commissioner, Nigel Hadgkiss, who's now had to resign. She appointed him, knowing he had broken the law. He had actually breached the Fair Work Act. This was at the same time as the minister was presiding over some horrible situations going on in workplace health and safety.

Since the reintroduction of the ABCC, whilst this minister has been in charge, construction deaths, sadly, are up. This time last year they were at 21; today they are at 27. Wage theft is now a growing problem in our workplaces. Celebrity chefs are getting away with ripping their staff off, underpaying them by \$2.6 million. Worker exploitation is out of control. This minister should resign, not just because of what she has done in Senate estimates but because of what she is doing in her role as minister across the workspace.

Smarter About Drugs

Mr TIM WILSON (Goldstein) (13:54): In August I had the pleasure to attend the launch of the Smarter About Drugs program by Australia21 at Star of the Sea College in the wonderful electorate of Goldstein. The program is designed as a resource to help educators facilitate critical and informed discussions among students about drug and alcohol issues—something I'm sure is dear to everybody's heart. Australia21 is, of course, a leading voice in the conversation about how Australia can respond to drugs more effectively and safely. Crucially, they are also giving young people a voice on policy issues that are important to their future. That's why I was so pleased to attend the launch of their event at Star of the Sea College in Brighton, which was attended by the principal of Star of the Sea, Ms Mary O'Connor. I'd also like to congratulate the politics teacher, Peter Farrar, for his contribution in bringing Australia21 and the students together as part of the conversation about being smarter about drugs.

I'd also like to acknowledge Rebecca Bunn, the chair of YoungA21; Yvonne Bonomo, the director of addiction medicine at St Vincent's Hospital, who also presented; David Stanley from Harm Reduction Australia; and Carl von Stein, the deputy chair of the Drug Awareness Foundation. They came together to have a conversation about drugs, to help young people understand the risks and how they can be properly addressed. Together they are doing phenomenal work to protect young Australians from substance abuse. *(Time expired)*

Intersex Awareness Day

Mr PERRETT (Moreton—Opposition Whip) (13:54): Today is Intersex Awareness Day. Intersex Australians are people whose biological sex characteristics at birth are not typically male or female. These people make up the 'I' in LGBTIQ. These are the people most Australians never hear about and have little understanding of. Being born with intersex characteristics is statistically as common as being born with red hair, yet intersex Australians remain largely invisible.

As one of the co-conveners of the Parliamentary Friendship Group for LGBTIQ Australians, I hosted a breakfast here in Parliament House last week in recognition of Intersex Awareness Day. In this place there are many parliamentary friendship groups, but I'm particularly proud of the friends of LGBTIQ, along with Warren Entsch from the Liberal Party and Greens' Senator Janet Rice.

Around 20 members and senators attended the breakfast, where the intersex community generously shared some of their own very personal stories. They eloquently expressed that intersex Australians simply want the same rights as all: body autonomy, self-determination and legal recognition. The breakfast was a very moving and informative event, one that I hope will be repeated annually. I also hope that it will be the impetus for a much wider conversation about the rights of intersex Australians. So today, on Intersex Awareness Day, let's make sure intersex Australians are seen and heard and proud to be citizens of this nation, and that not one of them is ever invisible again.

La Trobe Electorate: Bunjil Place

Mr WOOD (La Trobe) (13:56): Excitement is mounting in La Trobe, with the opening this weekend of Bunjil Place, which is a fantastic new arts, culture, leisure and entertainment precinct on the edge of my electorate. Bunjil Place will be the first facility of its kind in

Australia, bringing together creative entertainment and community in a way that is unparalleled anywhere else in the country. This art precinct will offer a variety of exciting entertainment activities for visitors, such as comedy acts, orchestras and theatrical performances.

I'm very proud to report that the federal government has contributed \$10 million towards the overall cost of \$125 million for this landmark project. Covering almost 25,000 square metres, Bunjil Place will feature a diverse mix of facilities all in one place, including an 800-seat theatre with a full fly tower and orchestra pit, which will be suitable for theatre, musical recitals, ballet and opera; a studio with retractable seating for 200 people, suitable for professional community use, theatre, cabaret, circus performance, exhibitions and debates; and a 350-seat function centre with technology for weddings, conferences, gala dinners and celebrations. For the people of La Trobe and Casey, this is a very exciting time. Bunjil Place will be the resident new home for arts in La Trobe.

Minister for Employment

Mr STEPHEN JONES (Whitlam) (13:58): Over the last 48 hours we have watched in absolute dismay as another scandal unfolds over this government. This time it's Minister Cash who has been caught as the mastermind of a gross abuse of government power, where they have used the scarce resources of the Australian Federal Police for a political purpose—that is, to go after their political enemies.

When this travesty was discovered, instead of taking responsibility, the minister misled the parliament and then blamed her staff. Well, frankly, the minister's stories do not stack up. They are unbelievable. She should not have organised a raid on the union office. She should not have turned it into a media spectacle. And she should not have misled parliament about her role in the entire affair.

The minister sets a very high standard for union members all around the country. She should not set a standard that she is not willing to apply to herself. So, if the minister is not willing to take responsibility for her gross misuse of government power, it is time for this Prime Minister to do the right thing. This is about telling the truth and taking responsibility. The Prime Minister should do the right thing and sack the minister today.

Day for Daniel

Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (13:59): We in this House are all federal MPs, but in our houses and homes we are all mums and dads—at least a lot of us are. I should acknowledge that we're doing a pretty good job as mums and dads, and I acknowledge the members for Higgins, Hotham and Adelaide, who this very year have brought new life into this world. Also, dads deserve a bit of recognition. The member for Mitchell, the member for Canning and the member for Deakin have also all had children this year. Also, the member for Berowra's wife is pregnant, as is mine.

I have a serious thing to say about this. As much as each and every one of us loves our children, so too did Bruce and Denise Morcombe love their child, Daniel, who in 2003, at the age of only 13, was abducted and murdered—and they've given their lives to education ever since. Tomorrow, I walk with the Morcombes for Day for Daniel. I carry a message from the Prime Minister, and, with the blessing of this House, I would also like to carry your best wishes to the entire Morcombe family.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

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

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Minister for Employment

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:01): My question is to the Prime Minister. Can the Prime Minister confirm the following events: by midday yesterday Senator Cash had told the Senate five times her office was not aware of imminent police raids before they began, but at 6.10 pm Alice Workman of BuzzFeed reported that journalists had received a leak about the raids from Senator Cash's office, and at 7:30 pm, realising that the truth had been exposed, Senator Cash finally admitted she'd misled the Senate?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:02): What I can confirm is that Senator Cash defends the interests of trade union members in a way the Leader of the Opposition never did. She defends them. Let's look at this bastion of advocacy for the members of the AWU. This is what the Leader of the Opposition said at the royal commission:

It is perfectly consistent with the tradition of the trade union movement to have services provided by unions paid for by employers.

Regrettably, it is, and one of the services provided by unions to employees is trading away their penalty rates—that's what they get paid for, in example after example of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The members for Bendigo and Griffith are both warned.

Mr TURNBULL: Over a million dollars was paid to the AWU by employers when the Leader of the Opposition was the secretary. There was one payment after another from Thiess-John Holland, ACI Glass, Chiquita Mushrooms—that really worked out well for the members, didn't it?—and Huntsman chemicals. It's a long list, and one payment after another was found by the royal commission to have no benefit for members and, indeed, to compromise the interests of the members because it compromised the ability of the union to represent them.

What we have done is pass legislation to prevent those corrupt payments being made—to prevent secret payments being made.

Ms Catherine King interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Ballarat is warned.

Mr TURNBULL: The Labor Party, who are shouting and yelling out, shouted and yelled then. They hated it. They thought there was nothing worse than allowing members to know when the employer was actually paying money to the union.

The fact is that what Senator Cash has done is ensure that the standards of integrity and impartiality are applied to the union movement. That's what she has done, and in a way that the Leader of the Opposition never did when trading away penalty rates and taking money

from employers. That was the pattern and that is coming to an end because of legislation we passed and they opposed.

Economy

Mr VASTA (Bonner) (14:05): My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister update the House on actions taken by the government to support Australian workers, including putting downward pressure on power prices?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:05): I thank the honourable member for his question. Every policy of my government is focused on delivering more investment and more jobs, and we have seen that delivered in the last year: 371,500 new jobs, with 85 per cent of them full-time.

Mr Brian Mitchell interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Lyons is warned.

Mr TURNBULL: That is the longest run of job creation in 23 years. Jobs and growth is not just slogan; it's an outcome. If you want to see the parallel universe where the Labor Party dwells, it's not just one where it's legitimate for unions to take backhanders for employers and to trade away penalty rates. That's one element, but there's another interesting element. We have the member for McMahon talking about the need for inclusive growth. Labor does not have one policy that would encourage one business to invest one dollar or hire one employee. We say we support inclusive growth, and what we mean by inclusion is that people get included in the workforce—they actually get employment. They get the opportunity to get ahead.

It's not just that Labor wants to hit Australians with \$150 billion more in taxes. It's not just that Labor wants to jack up the taxes on small businesses and medium businesses, like the bakery I was at with the minister for energy

earlier in the week. It was started by a couple, Nick and Louise. As with so many businesses, they built it up from their retained earnings. Labor has two messages to them: (1), your tax is going to go up, so you'll have less to invest; and (2), your energy costs are going to go up. With some of the honourable members opposite, I know there's a great interest in meat pies and the way in which they're delivered. I'm sure they'd realise that energy is a very large part of the cost of a bakery. What Labor offers is this: more expensive, less reliable energy and higher taxes. What does that mean? It means less investment, less employment and less opportunities. What the member for McMahon and his leader should think about very carefully is that you can't have inclusive growth without growth. You can't have inclusive growth without jobs. Everything we're doing supports growth and jobs. Everything Labor does undermines it.

Mr Frydenberg interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Minister for the Environment and Energy is warned.

Minister for Employment

Ms PLIBERSEK (Sydney—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:08): My question is to the Prime Minister, and I refer to the Prime Minister's answer yesterday. Can the Prime Minister confirm the employment minister and her senior media adviser, who has now resigned for leaking details to the media of imminent raids, attended his question time

briefing yesterday? At what time did the meeting take place, did it take place in his personal office, and who else was present, including, but not limited to, ministers, MPs and members of the Prime Minister's office?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:09): The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is not going to do a very good impersonation of Perry Mason today. She may embark on a fishing expedition, but I repeat what I said yesterday: the Minister for Employment assured me she did not advise any journalists about the raid, and that is precisely what she has said in the Senate during estimates.

Mr Snowden interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Lingiari will cease interjecting.

Energy

Ms FLINT (Boothby) (14:09): My question is to the Treasurer. I refer the Treasurer to data that reveals Adelaide power prices increased by more than twice the national average over the September quarter. Would the Treasurer outline why it is crucial to have a national approach to energy security and affordability? Is he aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Treasurer) (14:10): I thank the member for Boothby for her question. She makes reference to those September quarter figures for inflation and the impact of electricity prices. She would also be aware that electricity prices for Adelaide went up 24.3 per cent through the year.

I'm asked about comparisons to other cities. I'm happy to oblige the member. This is more than 1½ times the rate of increase in Sydney, almost three times the rate of increase in Melbourne, almost seven times the increase in Brisbane and 27 times the rate of increase in Hobart. The member for Port Adelaide thinks somehow South Australia is a leader on energy crisis. The only thing they're leading on is ruining the energy market and ruining the household budgets of South Australian families. This week, the Productivity Commission also confirmed that South Australia experienced the most volatility in wholesale prices, with the highest number of price spikes of any state: 610 between January 2013 and August of 2016.

The member for Boothby and, I think, most South Australians—except for the Premier and maybe the member for Port Adelaide—understand why this is happening in South Australia. It's because of the irresponsible energy policies of South Australian Labor government, who have put unrealistic renewable energy targets ahead of affordability for families and reliability for the supply of energy to businesses. That's the trade-off they've made.

We can't allow the Labor experiment in South Australia, which has failed and continues to fail, to infect the rest of the national energy market in Australia. The recommendation of the COAG-appointed independent Energy Security Board is that we have to go forward in one direction together. That direction is the National Energy Guarantee, which provides certainty to increase investment in new energy supply, to provide households and business with the reliability that they deserve, to provide savings of up to \$115 per year and to act to ensure we meet our emissions reduction targets. That's what the National Energy Guarantee delivers.

It's time for the Labor Party to get on board with the National Energy Guarantee, to ensure that we have bipartisanship in this place that means we can move as one entire nation in the direction that household and businesses demand of this parliament and demand of state and territory governments all around the country. Labor knows, as the shadow Treasurer knows,

that their policies and the 50 per cent RET will force up prices by at least \$192 per year. If he wants to be very lippy about this topic, maybe we'll get a question today; he hasn't had one in a while. *(Time expired)*

Minister for Employment

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR (Gorton) (14:13): My question is to the Prime Minister. Does the Prime Minister expect Australians to believe the employment minister's office watched the minister mislead the Senate five times before midday yesterday, but didn't say a thing? The senior media adviser, who has now resigned, attended the Prime Minister's question time briefing with the minister but said nothing, and the adviser then heard the Prime Minister be asked twice about the matter during question time, but still did nothing.

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:13): I thank the honourable member for his question. He's addressed a number of questions to the media adviser concerned, who has properly resigned after a very, very wrong, improper act of indiscretion.

Mr Champion interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Wakefield!

Mr TURNBULL: He was wrong to do what he has admitted to, but he was right to resign.

Mr Champion interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Wakefield will leave under 94(a).

The member for Wakefield then left the chamber.

Mr TURNBULL: I want to draw honourable members' attention—in the context of the remarks made yesterday by the member for Gorton and indeed some very intemperate remarks by the member for Whitlam just before question time—to a statement from the Australian Federal Police Commissioner, Andrew Colvin. This is what Commissioner Colvin says. He says:

The AFP requires the ongoing assistance and support of the public to serve the community in which we all—

Ms Ryan interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Lalor will cease interjecting. The Prime Minister will resume his seat. The member for Gorton.

Mr Brendan O'Connor: Speaker, on relevance: I did not ask a question about the statement of the Federal Police; I asked about—

The SPEAKER: The member for Gorton will resume his seat.

Mr Brendan O'Connor interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Gorton will resume his seat!

Mr Brendan O'Connor interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Gorton is warned. He has a habit of ignoring me when I ask him to resume his seat. It is not an opportunity in a point of order to rant and rave across the dispatch box when you do not have the call. The Prime Minister has the call.

Mr TURNBULL: The commissioner, Andrew Colvin, notes:

The AFP has this week been the subject of commentary and innuendo regarding its independence and the ability of AFP members to carry out their work objectively and without political interference.

He says:

The AFP requires the ongoing assistance and support of the public to serve the community in which we all live, and undertakes its activities without fear or favour. The AFP rejects in the strongest terms any suggestion to the contrary. The AFP makes all its operational decisions independently, based on experience, operational priorities and the law.

The AFP's primary obligations are to ensure the safety and security of the Australian community and enforce the rule of law.

Mr Khalil interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Wills is warned.

Mr TURNBULL: He says:

The AFP prides itself on its independence and integrity, and has a proven track record of these values while operating under the remit of eight individual Prime Ministers and their governments since it was founded in 1979.

It's about time the Leader of the Opposition disowned all of these disgraceful, reckless attacks on the integrity of the AFP by his members. The Leader of the Opposition should reflect on the fact that the Australian Federal Police, the men and women of that force, keep us safe. They are independent. They uphold the rule of law, and it's about time Labor did too.

The SPEAKER: Just before I call the member for Kennedy, I've got some business to get through here.

Ms Catherine King interjecting—

The SPEAKER: I warned the member for Ballarat yesterday. Again today.

Ms Catherine King: Sorry.

The SPEAKER: No, I'm not accepting 'sorry'. We don't do that. It's not a negotiation. You can leave under 94(a).

The member for Ballarat then left the chamber.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER (14:17): I'd like to make a very special welcome to the Hon. Peter Watson, the Speaker of the Western Australian Legislative Assembly.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

North Queensland: Insurance

Mr KATTER (Kennedy) (14:18): My question is to the Minister for Revenue and Financial Services. In May 2014, I raised the issue of skyrocketing North Queensland insurance premiums. ACCC figures show northern premiums rising 80 per cent in five years. With 400 per cent increases, North Queensland is the lead contributor. With pre-Cyclone-Tracy old-building-code buildings all gone, this discrimination cannot now be justified. In 2006, Cyclone Larry damages were \$1.5 billion; in 2011, Cyclone Yasi, only \$800 million. When will the Prime Minister establish an authority to underwrite exceptional circumstances, providing the platform for yarding profiteering insurers?

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Applause of relief!

Ms O'DWYER (Higgins—Minister for Revenue and Financial Services) (14:19): I very much thank the member for Kennedy for his question, and I note his very strong interest in ensuring that Queenslanders pay appropriate insurance premiums and not one dollar more than they are required to. I'm happy to report to the parliament that this is exactly why the Australian government has directed the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission to monitor prices, costs and profits in the insurance market in northern Australia in relation to home, contents and strata insurance. This commenced on 1 July 2017, and it will continue for three years. The government have committed \$7.9 million to this inquiry, and we will very closely monitor the findings of the surveillance that the ACCC conducts. The government will consider whether there is any need to take action in improving insurance affordability as a result of this very important inquiry.

Energy

Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (14:19): My question is to the Minister for the Environment and Energy. Will the minister update the House on the government's action to guarantee affordable and reliable energy for hardworking Australians and businesses, including in my home state of Queensland? And how does this compare with alternative approaches?

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong—Minister for the Environment and Energy) (14:20): I thank the member for Fairfax for his question. He comes from the great state of Queensland. But it's not a great state for energy policy because, as a result of the actions of the Labor state government, the Palaszczuk government, the green light has been given to the government-owned generators to game the system and, as a result, Queenslanders have paid on average 30 per cent more for their wholesale electricity prices in the first five months of this year than the other states in the National Electricity Market. And it's been left to the Turnbull government to do the heavy lifting on energy policy.

Through the National Energy Guarantee, we have delivered a credible, workable, practical policy that will deliver more reliable and affordable power—no subsidies, no taxes, no trading schemes—and it's been broadly welcomed by business, big and small, as being a way forward for this country. It builds on the work that we've done in other areas of energy policy, such as: passing legislation just a couple of weeks ago to stop the gaming by the networks of the poles and wires; the work that we've done with the retailers to ensure that hundreds of thousands of Australians save hundreds of dollars a year on their retail bill; and the work that we've done with the gas companies. As a result of the Prime Minister's intervention, we will not see a shortfall in the domestic market, as was expected for 2018 and 2019.

I can inform the House today that AP LNG have announced that they will provide 41 additional petajoules to the domestic market starting from next week. That's the equivalent of enough gas to power two million homes across New South Wales, an enormous amount of extra gas that has been delivered as a result of the Turnbull government's intervention.

It's been days since we've had a question from those opposite on energy. They've gone silent. The member for Port Adelaide has turned into the Marcel Marceau of Australian politics. The Leader of the Opposition said that when it comes to energy policy, time for talk is over. I didn't know that he'd take his own advice, the reason being that he knows that under

the Labor Party's policy, Australian households will be \$300 a year worse off. Shame on the Labor Party. Shame on the Labor Party for their energy policy! It's time they realise that the way forward for this country to get reliable and affordable power is to listen to the experts, as they asked us to do, and to give us a bipartisan consensus to ensure that the National Energy Guarantee becomes a reality. It's time the Labor Party got on board.

Minister for Employment

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (14:23): My question is to the Prime Minister. Does the Prime Minister expect Australians to believe that the media reported yesterday an allegation that the employment minister's office had leaked the raids? The employment minister then came to the Prime Minister and said that she herself had not personally leaked the raids. And the Prime Minister, with all his training as a cross-examiner, didn't think to ask if her office had leaked the raids, which was the only allegation that had been made? Did the Prime Minister, in fact, ask this question? Or had he already been advised it was safer not to ask?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:24): The member for Watson does his best at innuendo, but he's not a particularly talented cross-examiner. Here are the facts. The minister gave me the assurance I told the House about yesterday—that she'd not disclosed the matter to journalists before the raid. That was the assurance that she gave me. Subsequently, as honourable members know, her media adviser admitted his wrongful conduct and he's resigned. I understand why the Labor Party want to focus on the wrongful conduct of a ministerial staffer rather than on why \$100,000 of AWU members' funds were given to an organisation that wants to put most of those members out of a job. That is the question. And they want to know why, when the Registered Organisations Commission asked for documentary information from the AWU, they weren't provided it. They want to know about that too. But what I think Australians will find very hard to understand—

Ms Butler interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Griffith will leave under 94(a).

The member for Griffith then left the chamber.

Mr TURNBULL: is why the opposition, at this time of economic challenges, at this time of high electricity prices, has now no interest in asking about the National Energy Guarantee, no interest in talking about measures that will improve employment and no interest in economic issues. They're only interested in one thing, and that is to protect union officials from transparency and accountability. And the law is catching up with those traditions of the trade union movement, thanks to the hard work and dedication of the employment minister, Senator Cash.

Mr Conroy interjecting—

Mr Khalil interjecting—

Mr Brian Mitchell interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Shortland! And I remind the member for Wills and the member for Lyons that they've warned.

Energy

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Maranoa) (14:27): My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources and Minister for Resources and Northern Australia. Will the Deputy Prime Minister advise the House why the government's National Energy Guarantee is crucial to the success of hardworking Australians in the agriculture sector, including those in my electorate of Maranoa? Is he aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr JOYCE (New England—Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources and Minister for Resources and Northern Australia) (14:27): It's great to have all their attention for once. I'd like to thank the member for Maranoa for his question, and he understands full well how important energy prices are and how important it is to keep blue-collar workers in a job, especially in the meat-processing industry, especially in the abattoirs. There are so many abattoirs in his electorate, like John Dee at Warwick and Western Meat Exporters at Charleville. I remember actually getting the deal through for Western Meat Exporters in Charleville when I worked for QIDC. It was a big deal then—\$8 million. It now employs hundreds of people. That was a great outcome for Charleville.

For Hall egg farms at Millmerran and all the irrigators in the Darling Downs and out at St George, electricity prices are terribly important. We're now seeing, in places such as St George, that they're going from electricity back to diesel. Why are they doing that? They're doing that because power prices under the Queensland Labor government are hopeless. What's happened is Queensland now has the dearest power prices in Australia, and that is a remarkable effort for Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk, because she had to get around South Australia to get the dearest power prices, and South Australia's were the best in the Western world!

So what we have to do in our policy is to make sure we get clear transparency so that people can change between accounts. We're making sure that the gas prices, at Wallumbilla, are down, and now the spot price is down between \$7 and \$8. Wallumbilla is also in the member's electorate. At one point in time Darren Lockyer played there. We're also making sure that we keep the coal fire burning, because, if we don't keep that coal fire burning, you're not going to have any blue-collar workers.

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr JOYCE: They're laughing because they don't believe in blue-collar workers anymore. They don't. They believe that blue-collar workers are now politically incorrect and they're doing everything in their power to turn themselves into a party that represents the inner suburbs and other sections of the workforce but no longer blue-collar workers. There's very little experience in blue-collar work on that side of the chamber. Very few of them have ever actually been labourers. There are very few labourers in the Labor Party. They've given up on labourers in the Labor Party.

They've also given up on making sure that we look after the dignity of the people in the weatherboard and iron, in towns such as Augathella, Eulo, Eromanga, Birdsville, Goondiwindi, Kingaroy—that we look after these people who are doing it tough on the peripheries of society. We make sure that they have the dignity of affordable power in their house so they can keep themselves cool in summer and warm in winter and we make sure that

we don't create second-class citizens of a section of Australian society. This is something that I know, in the National Party and in the coalition, we hold closest to our heart. Every time we look at policy, we are saying: 'How does this affect those at the margins of society? How do we make sure there's dignity in these people's lives?' We are not there for those who have more interest— *(Time expired)*

Minister for Employment

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:31): My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer to the Prime Minister's answer. Is it now the position of the government that staff can mislead their ministers, that ministers can mislead the parliament and that the minister will remain entirely unaccountable? How are your ministers meant to be running the country when they can't even run their office?

Mr Pyne interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the House will cease interjecting.

Mr Porter interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Minister for Social Services will cease interjecting.

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:31): The honourable member knows very well that a minister is accountable for what she says, and her obligation is to speak the truth. She was misled, as she said, and, once her staffer told her the truth and made the admission that he'd done the wrong thing, she corrected the record. She acted entirely properly. And that stands in stark contrast to the actions of the Leader of the Opposition. It's not a question of his staff; it's a question of the people that own him. He is a wholly owned subsidiary of the CFMEU. He is a wholly owned subsidiary of a militant trade union, cashed up and powerful, that defies the law. It treats judges, courts and fines as of no account. And, of course, he has delivered for them. He sent messages of joy and comradeship to the rally that John Setka addressed in which he attacked the Australian Federal Police as a political henchman—exactly the same criticism that his own industrial relations spokesman, the member for Gorton, made about the Federal Police. The Leader of the Opposition has not disowned either of them; he does not dare—they own him. He has no ability to stand up to that union, despite being called to account by Bob Hawke and by Kevin Rudd. Bob Hawke said that when he was Prime Minister he had the courage and the commitment to disaffiliate the BLF. He deregistered the BLF. He had the courage to do that. What does the Leader of the Opposition do? He just takes more money from them. He just gets the old receipt book out and takes more money from them, just as he took money, when he was the secretary of the union, from one employer after another and did not tell his members about it. He did not tell his members about it.

Ms Husar interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Lindsay is warned.

Mr TURNBULL: Then, when we sought to change the law, to do no more than oblige unions to disclose to their members the money they were getting from employers and to take that money only for legitimate purposes—transparent, openness; you'd think everyone would sign up to that—not the party opposite. They are not the party of the workers. They're the party of the workers' representatives.

Mr Perrett interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Moreton will leave under 94(a). He's lucky he's not named.

The member for Moreton then left the chamber.

Energy

Mr LAMING (Bowman) (14:34): My question is to the Minister for Health. I'm asking the minister to outline to the House why an affordable and reliable energy supply is important for health services in Queensland, including both Mater and Redland hospitals in my electorate of Bowman. Is the minister aware of any threats that may jeopardise the delivery of services for my patients?

Mr HUNT (Flinders—Minister for Health and Minister for Sport) (14:35): I want to thank the member for Bowman. He's not just a great local advocate for hospitals such as Mater and Redland but also a lifelong medical professional. He is, in fact, an eye surgeon, and to this day he continues to hold pro bono clinics in eye health care—really something extraordinary.

One of the things he knows is that Labor loves higher electricity prices, and those higher electricity prices are a threat to patients. They're a threat to hospitals such as Mater and Redlands and they're a threat to every hospital in Queensland. That's why we're introducing a National Energy Guarantee. That is why only today you're seeing the benefits of the work of the Prime Minister and the Minister for the Environment and Energy in pushing the gas companies to make more gas available, which will bring down the price of gas in this country, and in fact he's already so doing. We're also seeing the benefits of the abolition of limited merits review, another government initiative.

These are things that are aimed fairly and squarely at bringing down the cost of electricity and energy and bringing down the impact of that on hospitals—not just in the electorate of Bowman and not just in Queensland but right around Australia. And the member has also done something that not one person on the Labor side has done: he voted against a carbon tax. Labor introduced a carbon tax that had a \$2,425 impact per annum on each hospital bed in Queensland. That was the impact of the carbon tax, on the Queensland Treasury's own modelling. And right now he is fighting against the Queensland government's impact—gouging, with regard to their own state-owned enterprises in electricity, and the 50 per cent RET in Queensland—which we have seen is posing blackout threats this summer.

The member's next task, which he's committed to, is to join all of us in fighting against Labor's attack on hospitals around Australia. Their 50 per cent renewable energy target national pledge is going to have an impact of \$300 per year compared with our approach. That's \$300 per family per year, and that is going to hurt each and every hospital. So, the member for Bowman isn't just an advocate for better health care and isn't just a practitioner of better health care; he's an advocate for hospitals that don't face the impact of Labor's assault on their electricity prices. He's going to continue to fight against Labor's bad practices, and so will we.

Minister for Employment

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (14:38): My question is to the Prime Minister. During the 'Utegate' scandal, the Prime Minister spoke about misleading the parliament, saying:

That is an offence that should result in the dismissal or resignation of a minister. It is perfectly clear.

Given that it is perfectly clear that the employment minister misled the Senate five times, why won't the Prime Minister, under his own standards, sack the employment minister?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:39): The honourable member knows very well that the Minister for Employment, Senator Cash, gave evidence in the course of estimates in which she described the facts of the matter as known to her at the time. When her staffer admitted to having done the wrong thing, she corrected the record in light of that admission. That is precisely what she should have done, and she did it—with an integrity that the honourable member might reflect has been all too rarely shown by those who claim to represent and lead trade unions in this country.

Mr Albanese interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Grayndler!

Trade Unions

Mr GEE (Calare) (14:39): My question is to the Minister for Defence Industry, representing the Minister for Employment. Will the minister outline to the House why it is important that the union movement is run honestly on behalf of hardworking Australian families and businesses? Is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Defence Industry) (14:40): I thank the member for Calare for his question. Yesterday on Radio National, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, on the Fran Kelly program, in answer to a question about the issue that we've been discussing in the last couple of days, said the government set up a royal commission, the Heydon royal commission, which 'found nothing'. Saying the royal commission found nothing is like saying that, in 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue and found nothing. He didn't come across North America. What would finding something look like? Finding the lost city of Atlantis? Would that have been finding something? The Ark of the Covenant—would that have been finding something, Member for Sydney? What a ludicrous statement!

Let me remind the Labor Party of some of the things the royal commission found. As a consequence of the royal commission, there have been 10 successful prosecutions, eight criminal convictions and two civil penalties. Eleven matters are currently before the courts in criminal and civil matters. One hundred and nineteen referrals have been made to the DPP because of the Heydon royal commission, because of illegal activity. Because of the Heydon royal commission, the Australian Building and Construction Commission has been re-established. Because of the royal commission, the Registered Organisations Commission has been established and the corrupting benefits legislation has been passed by both houses of parliament. Before the House now is the ensuring integrity bill and the proper use of workers' benefits bill. That's all happened because of the Heydon royal commission, which the Deputy Leader of the Opposition says found nothing.

The problem with the Labor Party and their relationship with the union movement is they are addicted to the rivers of gold that the union movement funnels to the Labor Party for their election campaigns. If the Leader of the Opposition had any integrity, he would turn his back on the CFMEU rivers of gold that hold up his leadership. The problem is—and the Australian public get it—that, if the Leader of the Opposition isn't strong enough to stand up to the

CFMEU, he certainly isn't strong enough to stand up for the nation's interests at home or abroad.

Minister for Employment

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:43): My question is to the Prime Minister. Is the reason that the Prime Minister hasn't sacked his employment minister that the Prime Minister is in this up to his neck?

The SPEAKER: I've got a problem with that question. It's very short and the last part was about 'in this'. It might be very obvious to members of the opposition what they're referring to, but I don't believe it conforms with standing orders.

Mr Rob Mitchell interjecting—

The SPEAKER: And I will tell you what: if you want to watch the rest of it back in your office, Second Deputy Speaker, I can accommodate you. I will hear from the Manager of Opposition Business.

Mr Burke: Speaker, I move that so much of the standing and sessional orders—

The SPEAKER: No. The Manager of Opposition Business will resume his seat. That's quite out of order. I'm ruling on the question and whether it's in order or not. I called you on the basis that you were going to do what you normally do and argue with me that the question is in order. The Manager of Opposition Business can resume his seat. This will be very simple. The question is out of order. I'm going to the next question.

National Security

Mr WOOD (La Trobe) (14:44): My question is to the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection. Will the minister update the House on the work the Australian Border Force has undertaken with the Australian Federal Police to protect Australian families and the integrity of our borders?

Mr DUTTON (Dickson—Minister for Immigration and Border Protection) (14:44): I think I know how this is going to be book-ended now. I think the Manager of Opposition Business went a little bit too early, didn't he? He often stuffs up just at the wrong moment, but there you go. I want to thank the member for La Trobe for his question because he has the greatest respect for our law enforcement officers across the country. He supports the Australian Federal Police, he supports very strongly the Australian Border Force and so does this government. This government has absolute and complete faith in our law enforcement agencies because they are independent and they are proud of the fact that they are independent. We have stood up Counter Terrorism Unit officers in our international airports because we recognise the significant threat from terrorists, both those here and those that might seek to come to our country as well. We have seen 884 people stopped by the CTU officers since 2014, and those officers attached to the Australian Border Force walk hand in glove with the Australian Federal Police at our airports around the country.

Imagine how those Federal Police officers would have felt in the last 24 hours when their integrity has been questioned by those opposite.

Mr Tim Wilson interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Goldstein is warned.

Mr DUTTON: Imagine those officers who stand there every day to protect us. They are led by an exceptional leader in Commissioner Andrew Colvin. Imagine how he feels and his officers feel when up hill and down dale those members on the frontbench, those members opposite, have questioned the integrity of the Australian Federal Police. It is a disgraceful episode but, I'm sorry to say, it's not without precedent. It's not without precedent because the fact is that, for many years, union leaders in this country have seen themselves above the law. So when the Leader of the Opposition interjected earlier that the Prime Minister was up to—

Mr Brian Mitchell interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The minister will pause for a second. The member for Lyons has been warned numerous times, which is a regular occurrence. He can anticipate my next sentence; that's even quicker, thank you. The minister has the call.

The member for Lyons then left the chamber.

Mr DUTTON: That's an improvement in the IQ level already.

The SPEAKER: The minister will withdraw.

Mr DUTTON: I withdraw, Mr Speaker. So when the Leader of the Opposition said to the Prime Minister before that—

Mr Conroy interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Shortland is warned.

Mr DUTTON: he was up to his neck in it, I will tell you who is up to his neck in it: it is this bloke here. The Australian public are on to this Leader of the Opposition. Throwing these red herrings out will not distract from the fact that the Australian Federal Police, of their own volition, decided to raid the AWU because they are worried about the integrity of this Leader of the Opposition. And he has form: he has fronted the royal commission; he has been part of a union movement that has been proven to be corrupt in the courts; and they have paid penalties. *(Time expired)*

MOTIONS

Minister for Employment

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (14:48): I move:

That so much of the standing and sessional orders be suspended as would prevent the Manager of Opposition Business from moving immediately:

The House:

(1) notes:

(a) yesterday morning, the media aired an allegation the Employment Minister's Office had leaked the raids, which allowed television crews to turn up to the raids before the police did;

(b) by midday yesterday, the Employment Minister had five times denied that her office had been involved in leaking the raids;

(c) at the Prime Minister's Question Time briefing yesterday, attended by the Employment Minister and the Senior Media Adviser who has now resigned for leaking the raids, the Prime Minister, according to the Government's account, failed to ask a single question about the involvement of the Minister's office in leaking the raids;

(d) at 6.10 pm, Alice Workman of BuzzFeed reported that journalists received a leak about the raids from the Employment Minister's office before the raids began;

(e) at 7.30 pm, after the truth had been exposed, only then did the Employment Minister finally admit that she had misled the Senate on five separate occasions; and

(f) during the ute gate scandal, the now Prime Minister himself said that misleading the Parliament "is an offence that should result in the dismissal or resignation of a Minister. It is perfectly clear"; and

(2) therefore, calls on the Prime Minister to:

(a) sack the Employment Minister for breaching Ministerial Standards by repeatedly misleading the Senate; and

(b) explain to the House his involvement, his office's involvement and his Government's involvement in this serious matter where the publicly stated version of events doesn't add up.

The Australian Federal Police upholds the law, but this government—

The SPEAKER: The Manager of Opposition Business will resume his seat. The Leader of the House has the call.

Mr Pyne: Mr Speaker, you have to build momentum for these kinds of things. I move—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the House will resume his seat. The Manager of Opposition Business has the call.

Mr BURKE: The Australian Federal Police upholds the rule of law, but the government does not. This began with a complete abuse of power—

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong—Minister for the Environment and Energy) (14:50): I move:

That the Member be no longer heard.

The SPEAKER: The question is the Manager of Opposition Business be no further heard.

The House divided. [14:54]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes72

Noes64

Majority.....8

AYES

Abbott, AJ
Andrews, KJ
Banks, J
Broad, AJ
Buchholz, S
Christensen, GR
Coulton, M
Drum, DK (teller)
Evans, TM
Fletcher, PW
Frydenberg, JA
Gillespie, DA
Hartsuyker, L
Hawke, AG
Hogan, KJ
Hunt, GA
Joyce, BT
Kelly, C
Landry, ML

Alexander, JG
Andrews, KL
Bishop, JI
Broadbent, RE
Chester, D
Coleman, DB
Crewther, CJ
Dutton, PC
Falinski, J
Flint, NJ
Gee, AR
Goodenough, IR
Hastie, AW
Henderson, SM
Howarth, LR
Irons, SJ
Keenan, M
Laming, A
Laundy, C

AYES

Leeser, J
Littleproud, D
McCormack, MF
Morrison, SJ
O'Brien, LS
O'Dowd, KD
Pasin, A
Porter, CC
Price, ML
Ramsey, RE (teller)
Sudmalis, AE
Taylor, AJ
Tudge, AE
Van Manen, AJ
Wallace, AB
Wilson, RJ
Wyatt, KG

Ley, SP
Marino, NB
McVeigh, JJ
Morton, B
O'Brien, T
O'Dwyer, KM
Pitt, KJ
Prentice, J
Pyne, CM
Robert, SR
Sukkar, MS
Tehan, DT
Turnbull, MB
Vasta, RX
Wicks, LE
Wilson, TR
Zimmerman, T

NOES

Albanese, AN
Bandt, AP
Bowen, CE
Burke, AS
Byrne, AM
Chesters, LM
Claydon, SC
Conroy, PM
Dick, MD
Feeney, D
Freeland, MR (teller)
Giles, AJ
Hart, RA
Hill, JC
Husic, EN
Keay, JT
Keogh, MJ
King, MMH
Leigh, AK
Marles, RD
McGowan, C
Neumann, SK
O'Neil, CE
Owens, JA
Rishworth, AL
Ryan, JC (teller)
Shorten, WR
Stanley, AM
Swanson, MJ
Thistlethwaite, MJ
Watts, TG
Wilson, JH

Aly, A
Bird, SL
Brodtmann, G
Butler, MC
Chalmers, JE
Clare, JD
Collins, JM
Danby, M
Elliot, MJ
Fitzgibbon, JA
Georganas, S
Gosling, LJ
Hayes, CP
Husar, E
Jones, SP
Kelly, MJ
Khalil, P
Lamb, S
Macklin, JL
McBride, EM
Mitchell, RG
O'Connor, BPJ
O'Toole, C
Plibersek, TJ
Rowland, MA
Sharkie, RCC
Snowdon, WE
Swan, WM
Templeman, SR
Vamvakinou, M
Wilkie, AD
Zappia, A

Question agreed to.

The SPEAKER (14:57): Is the motion seconded?

Mr Albanese: I second the motion. It's time to cash out this minister. She has misled parliament.

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Defence Industry) (14:57): I move:

That the Member be no longer heard.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the member for Grayndler be longer heard.

The House divided [14:58]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes	72
Noes	64
Majority.....	8

AYES

Abbott, AJ
 Andrews, KJ
 Banks, J
 Broad, AJ
 Buchholz, S
 Christensen, GR
 Coulton, M
 Drum, DK (teller)
 Evans, TM
 Fletcher, PW
 Frydenberg, JA
 Gillespie, DA
 Hartsuyker, L
 Hawke, AG
 Hogan, KJ
 Hunt, GA
 Joyce, BT
 Kelly, C
 Landry, ML
 Leaser, J
 Littleproud, D
 McCormack, MF
 Morrison, SJ
 O'Brien, LS
 O'Dowd, KD
 Pasin, A
 Porter, CC
 Price, ML
 Ramsey, RE (teller)
 Sudmalis, AE
 Taylor, AJ
 Tudge, AE
 Van Manen, AJ
 Wallace, AB
 Wilson, RJ

Alexander, JG
 Andrews, KL
 Bishop, JI
 Broadbent, RE
 Chester, D
 Coleman, DB
 Crewther, CJ
 Dutton, PC
 Falinski, J
 Flint, NJ
 Gee, AR
 Goodenough, IR
 Hastie, AW
 Henderson, SM
 Howarth, LR
 Irons, SJ
 Keenan, M
 Laming, A
 Laundry, C
 Ley, SP
 Marino, NB
 McVeigh, JJ
 Morton, B
 O'Brien, T
 O'Dwyer, KM
 Pitt, KJ
 Prentice, J
 Pyne, CM
 Robert, SR
 Sukkar, MS
 Tehan, DT
 Turnbull, MB
 Vasta, RX
 Wicks, LE
 Wilson, TR

AYES

Wyatt, KG

Zimmerman, T

NOES

Albanese, AN
 Bandt, AP
 Bowen, CE
 Burke, AS
 Byrne, AM
 Chesters, LM
 Claydon, SC
 Conroy, PM
 Dick, MD
 Feeney, D
 Freeland, MR (teller)
 Giles, AJ
 Hart, RA
 Hill, JC
 Husic, EN
 Keay, JT
 Keogh, MJ
 King, MMH
 Leigh, AK
 Marles, RD
 McGowan, C
 Neumann, SK
 O'Neil, CE
 Owens, JA
 Rishworth, AL
 Ryan, JC (teller)
 Shorten, WR
 Stanley, AM
 Swanson, MJ
 Thistlethwaite, MJ
 Watts, TG
 Wilson, JH

Aly, A
 Bird, SL
 Brodtmann, G
 Butler, MC
 Chalmers, JE
 Clare, JD
 Collins, JM
 Danby, M
 Elliot, MJ
 Fitzgibbon, JA
 Georganas, S
 Gosling, LJ
 Hayes, CP
 Husar, E
 Jones, SP
 Kelly, MJ
 Khalil, P
 Lamb, S
 Macklin, JL
 McBride, EM
 Mitchell, RG
 O'Connor, BPJ
 O'Toole, C
 Plibersek, TJ
 Rowland, MA
 Sharkie, RCC
 Snowdon, WE
 Swan, WM
 Templeman, SR
 Vamvakinou, M
 Wilkie, AD
 Zappia, A

Question agreed to.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR (Gorton) (15:00): The Prime Minister must show some leadership and sack—

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Defence Industry) (15:01): I move:

That the question be now put.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the motion be put.

The House divided. [15:02]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes72
 Noes64

Majority.....8

AYES

Abbott, AJ
 Andrews, KJ
 Banks, J
 Broad, AJ
 Buchholz, S
 Christensen, GR
 Coulton, M
 Drum, DK (teller)
 Evans, TM
 Fletcher, PW
 Frydenberg, JA
 Gillespie, DA
 Hartsuyker, L
 Hawke, AG
 Hogan, KJ
 Hunt, GA
 Joyce, BT
 Kelly, C
 Landry, ML
 Leaser, J
 Littleproud, D
 McCormack, MF
 Morrison, SJ
 O'Brien, LS
 O'Dowd, KD
 Pasin, A
 Porter, CC
 Price, ML
 Ramsey, RE (teller)
 Sudmalis, AE
 Taylor, AJ
 Tudge, AE
 Van Manen, AJ
 Wallace, AB
 Wilson, RJ
 Wyatt, KG

Alexander, JG
 Andrews, KL
 Bishop, JI
 Broadbent, RE
 Chester, D
 Coleman, DB
 Crewther, CJ
 Dutton, PC
 Falinski, J
 Flint, NJ
 Gee, AR
 Goodenough, IR
 Hastie, AW
 Henderson, SM
 Howarth, LR
 Irons, SJ
 Keenan, M
 Laming, A
 Laundry, C
 Ley, SP
 Marino, NB
 McVeigh, JJ
 Morton, B
 O'Brien, T
 O'Dwyer, KM
 Pitt, KJ
 Prentice, J
 Pyne, CM
 Robert, SR
 Sukkar, MS
 Tehan, DT
 Turnbull, MB
 Vasta, RX
 Wicks, LE
 Wilson, TR
 Zimmerman, T

NOES

Albanese, AN
 Bandt, AP
 Bowen, CE
 Burke, AS
 Byrne, AM
 Chesters, LM
 Claydon, SC
 Conroy, PM
 Dick, MD
 Feeney, D
 Freeland, MR (teller)
 Giles, AJ
 Hart, RA

Aly, A
 Bird, SL
 Brodtmann, G
 Butler, MC
 Chalmers, JE
 Clare, JD
 Collins, JM
 Danby, M
 Elliot, MJ
 Fitzgibbon, JA
 Georganas, S
 Gosling, LJ
 Hayes, CP

NOES

Hill, JC
 Husic, EN
 Keay, JT
 Keogh, MJ
 King, MMH
 Leigh, AK
 Marles, RD
 McGowan, C
 Neumann, SK
 O'Neil, CE
 Owens, JA
 Rishworth, AL
 Ryan, JC (teller)
 Shorten, WR
 Stanley, AM
 Swanson, MJ
 Thistlethwaite, MJ
 Watts, TG
 Wilson, JH

Husar, E
 Jones, SP
 Kelly, MJ
 Khalil, P
 Lamb, S
 Macklin, JL
 McBride, EM
 Mitchell, RG
 O'Connor, BPJ
 O'Toole, C
 Plibersek, TJ
 Rowland, MA
 Sharkie, RCC
 Snowdon, WE
 Swan, WM
 Templeman, SR
 Vamvakinou, M
 Wilkie, AD
 Zappia, A

Question agreed to.

The SPEAKER (15:04): The question now is that the motion moved by the Manager of Opposition Business be agreed to.

The House divided. [15:04]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes62
 Noes74
 Majority.....12

AYES

Albanese, AN
 Bandt, AP
 Bowen, CE
 Burke, AS
 Byrne, AM
 Chesters, LM
 Claydon, SC
 Conroy, PM
 Dick, MD
 Feeney, D
 Freeland, MR (teller)
 Giles, AJ
 Hart, RA
 Hill, JC
 Husic, EN
 Keay, JT
 Keogh, MJ
 King, MMH
 Leigh, AK
 Marles, RD

Aly, A
 Bird, SL
 Brodtmann, G
 Butler, MC
 Chalmers, JE
 Clare, JD
 Collins, JM
 Danby, M
 Elliot, MJ
 Fitzgibbon, JA
 Georganas, S
 Gosling, LJ
 Hayes, CP
 Husar, E
 Jones, SP
 Kelly, MJ
 Khalil, P
 Lamb, S
 Macklin, JL
 McBride, EM

AYES

Mitchell, RG
O'Connor, BPJ
O'Toole, C
Plibersek, TJ
Rowland, MA
Shorten, WR
Stanley, AM
Swanson, MJ
Thistlethwaite, MJ
Watts, TG
Wilson, JH

Neumann, SK
O'Neil, CE
Owens, JA
Rishworth, AL
Ryan, JC (teller)
Snowdon, WE
Swan, WM
Templeman, SR
Vamvakinou, M
Wilkie, AD
Zappia, A

NOES

Abbott, AJ
Andrews, KJ
Banks, J
Broad, AJ
Buchholz, S
Christensen, GR
Coulton, M
Drum, DK (teller)
Evans, TM
Fletcher, PW
Frydenberg, JA
Gillespie, DA
Hartsuyker, L
Hawke, AG
Hogan, KJ
Hunt, GA
Joyce, BT
Kelly, C
Landry, ML
Leeser, J
Littleproud, D
McCormack, MF
McVeigh, JJ
Morton, B
O'Brien, T
O'Dwyer, KM
Pitt, KJ
Prentice, J
Pyne, CM
Robert, SR
Sudmalis, AE
Taylor, AJ
Tudge, AE
Van Manen, AJ
Wallace, AB
Wilson, RJ
Wyatt, KG

Alexander, JG
Andrews, KL
Bishop, JI
Broadbent, RE
Chester, D
Coleman, DB
Crewther, CJ
Dutton, PC
Falinski, J
Flint, NJ
Gee, AR
Goodenough, IR
Hastie, AW
Henderson, SM
Howarth, LR
Irons, SJ
Keenan, M
Laming, A
Laundy, C
Ley, SP
Marino, NB
McGowan, C
Morrison, SJ
O'Brien, LS
O'Dowd, KD
Pasin, A
Porter, CC
Price, ML
Ramsey, RE (teller)
Sharkie, RCC
Sukkar, MS
Tehan, DT
Turnbull, MB
Vasta, RX
Wicks, LE
Wilson, TR
Zimmerman, T

Question negatived.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Superannuation

Mr COLEMAN (Banks) (15:12): My question is to the Minister for Revenue and Financial Services. Will the minister update the House on action the government is taking to protect the retirement savings of hardworking Australians and improve transparency of the system? How does this compare with alternative approaches?

Ms O'DWYER (Higgins—Minister for Revenue and Financial Services) (15:13): I thank the member for Banks for his question. He knows that the Turnbull government has introduced very comprehensive reforms to Australia's compulsory superannuation system to protect members and to protect members' money. The government is determined to see the very highest standards of accountability, transparency and independent oversight of Australia's \$2.3 trillion superannuation industry.

Let's be very clear: successive Australian governments have compelled hardworking Australians to set aside around 10 per cent of their wages for superannuation funds. They deserve to know what is happening to their money. They must be confident that the people who are put in charge of these funds are acting only in the interests of members.

Questions were asked of the former RBA governor and industry fund director Bernie Fraser in a recent Senate committee inquiry about a payment made by AustralianSuper to the AWU in the 2006-07 financial year. It was specifically described by the AWU in its 2007 AEC declaration as a 'donation'. The \$27,500 payment was made at the same time that the Leader of the Opposition was the AWU national secretary and also a director of AustralianSuper alongside Bernie Fraser, current Labor Senator Doug Cameron and former Labor MP Greg Combet.

Coincidentally, a similar sized donation was subsequently made by, yes, the AWU to the Leader of the Opposition's political campaign in the seat of Maribyrnong. But it was only when this payment from AustralianSuper to the AWU came under scrutiny in June, following reports by *The Australian* newspaper, that the AWU resubmitted its original AEC declaration, changing the very nature of the AWU payment from 'donation' to 'other receipt' on 15 June this year, some 10 years later.

What role did the Leader of the Opposition have in deciding that a payment should be made to his own union when he was both a director of AustralianSuper and the National Secretary of the AWU? What steps did the Leader of the Opposition take to fully disclose his conflict to the board and how did he and fellow AustralianSuper directors satisfy themselves that this was an appropriate use of members' money?

We know that superannuation is not the government's money, not the employers' money, not the executives' money, not the trade unions' money and not the Labor Party's money; it is the members' money.

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

DOCUMENTS

Presentation

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Defence Industry) (15:16): 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*.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Turnbull Government

The SPEAKER (15:16): I have received a letter from the honourable Leader of the Opposition proposing that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely:

The failure of this Government to respect proper standards and accountability.

I call upon those honourable 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—

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (15:17): This matter of public importance must start with this observation: Labor's criticism of the government's bungled raids is not about the integrity of the AFP; it's about the lack of integrity in this rotten government. Yesterday morning I said that these raids were the desperate action of a grubby government led by, quite frankly, a grubby Prime Minister—and I repeat that today. This isn't a throwaway line, but everything that has happened in the previous 36 hours, since I first made that statement, and everything that this government has done since yesterday morning confirms the truth that Australia has a grubby government and an increasingly grubby Prime Minister. During question time, this point was most clearly illustrated when the Prime Minister had a chance to defend Senator Cash. When the opposition moved a resolution condemning her, they did not defend her; they simply gagged the debate. Of course, the events this week—the unprecedented actions of this government—are occurring because this government is a desperate government running out of time.

Senator Cash should try and salvage what remains of her reputation by resigning immediately. After all, if she seeks inspiration on the matter she should listen to the words that her leader, the member for Wentworth, said during the 'Utegate' scandal in 2009. He said that misleading the parliament:

... is an offence that should result in the dismissal or resignation of a minister. It is perfectly clear.

But, like so many other issues under this current Prime Minister, we've seen a pattern of behaviour emerge again. What this Prime Minister and this government do is focus all their energy on their opponents and none on the people of Australia. What this government and this Prime Minister do, whenever confronted by a choice to take the high road for national interest and put people first, is always look for the low road of their self-interest and to attack their opponents.

We see the classic Turnbullian power play: wild, wild accusations, extreme language, big promises. You can just see him when he was a barrister with the clients the night before the case: 'We've got this in the bag. I'm the best that money can buy, and we've got this in the

bag.' But the next morning, as we saw yesterday morning, we see that the case has changed. The facts are actually not as good—poor old client. 'Oh, my learned leader, the barrister, says—oh, the facts are changing. I'll be back to you in a moment.' You could just see the disappointed ranks of the government: 'But, dear leader, you said that we would win this. We've got Shorten where we want him. We have Labor where we want them. We have the unions where we want them.' And what happened? Classic overreach. Deep down, every member of the government knows that their Prime Minister lacks judgement.

What should the government have been doing this week? They should have been prioritising first home buyers, but instead they defend the negative-gearing tax interests. They are a government who, when they have the chance to pull the trigger on gas exports, instead spend their time defending their beleaguered Deputy Prime Minister. They are a government who, when they talk about workplace relations, always talk about unions and union representatives. They say they like the workers, but they've never seen a worker whose penalty rate they don't want to cut arbitrarily. I've got no doubt that they pop into 7-Eleven when the coffee maker at home is broken, and they get served by workers, but does it ever cross their born-to-rule elitist minds that maybe the workers who are serving them in these fast-food operations are not getting paid properly; they're the victims of wage theft? They love to talk about employment, but they never talk about casualised employment. They never talk about the people who are underemployed.

Mr Falinski interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Mackellar is warned.

Mr SHORTEN: You're better off keeping your mouth shut so we're still left to wonder if you're a fool, mate. Now, the test for the Prime Minister today is simple—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will withdraw.

Mr Shorten: All right. I withdraw. Misleading the parliament just once is an offence that demands a resignation. But old Senator Cash, not content to mislead the parliament, misled it five times—five times! If she won't resign, the Prime Minister must sack her. He must put the national interest and the integrity of the parliament ahead of his own political interest.

But the problem is that this born-to-rule Prime Minister thinks that he is above the rules. This is the problem, the infection which infects the whole of the government. They think, these conservatives, that they're born to rule and that they're always right, no matter what the facts. The problem is: they are born to rule, but they're unfit to govern.

We know, we understand, that this isn't the minister's first offence; it was just her worst performance. Credit to Senator Cameron, Senator Watt and Senator Kitching, who pushed through a shameful and deliberate conservative filibuster to uncover the truth. Imagine if we had an employment minister who actually focused on the 700,000 Australians who are unemployed and the 1.1 million Australians who are underemployed, someone who cared about the fact that she presides over the lowest wage growth since records were kept or the 700,000-plus workers who are having their penalty rates cut? Imagine if we heard speeches from the government about workplace safety or industrial diseases or labour hire exploitation? Instead, this minister appointed a law-breaker to head up the ABCC and is now asking Australians to pay another \$400,000 to pay his legal bills.

But it wasn't just Senator Cash who humiliated herself last night. They say that you don't get a second chance to make a first impression. In its first public outing, the Registered Organisations Commission has shown its true colours: nakedly political, grossly incompetent, shamefully partisan and hopelessly compromised. It must be amazing to Australians when they hear that the government can whistle up 13 police to chase up documents 10 years old within a day, based on an unknown caller. Imagine how many Australians are frustrated to hear that.

An honourable member interjecting—

The SPEAKER: I remind the member that he's been warned.

Mr SHORTEN: They might be worried about law and order, their personal safety. No-one other than the government can get 13 police to chase up documents 10 years old, when ordinary Australians can't get the attention and the safety they want. This is a government not focused on the priorities of the people. But, of course, we know that this is a government that doesn't care about the conditions of ordinary people. We're not going to let the government off the hook for the abolition of the Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal, putting pressure on drivers to cut corners and take risks. We've already seen a seven per cent increase in the rate of fatal crashes involving articulated trucks. And the consequences of letting ideological obsessions control industrial relations policy are that workplaces are less safe, wages are flat and the rip-offs and the rorts against workers continue.

Whilst this government spends every week obsessing about its political opponents, Australians suffer. In the last financial year, 55 million calls to Centrelink went unanswered—families looking for support, people with disability looking for help, and jobseekers trying to pick themselves up and get back into the employment market. This is a government that can't answer the phone to its citizens but can find their address to send the debt collectors to. And in *The Courier-Mail* today we see another cabinet leak, saying the Prime Minister's decided to turn his back on constitutional recognition for the First Australians. This is a government that never misses an opportunity not to represent and put the people first.

I have to say—and I don't mind admitting this, even as Leader of the Opposition—that, when the member for Wentworth rolled the former Prime Minister, I thought my job would get harder but I actually thought politics would get better. I think the Australian people genuinely thought it was a chance to put some faith and hope back into politics. But the Prime Minister, by all his actions ever since that event two years ago, has systematically destroyed the faith and hope of people who thought he'd be better than what he's turned out to be. And we know that the Prime Minister has a particular style of destruction: when all else fails him, he chases his opponents. Ask Peter King, the former member for Wentworth. Ask Brendan Nelson. Ask Tony Abbott. Ask Kevin Rudd. Well, I just want to advise the government on this fact: Australians have worked this Prime Minister out; they know he doesn't believe in anything except his own survival. That's just not good enough for Australia. Every day between now and the next election, we will put people first: we will stand up for better quality jobs, housing affordability, better energy prices and a fair go all round.

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Defence Industry) (15:27): The coalition is not going to be lectured by the Labor Party about standards. I have been in this chamber for quite a while, and I could give you example after example of the Labor Party standing by some of the worst members the House of Representatives has produced—the

member for Dobell being a classic case. But I don't even need to go back that far because right now, in the current Labor caucus, are two people who should not be in the positions they are in: Senator Kitching, who the Leader of the Opposition referred to earlier, and Senator Dastyari, who is back on the frontbench of the Labor Party. Senator Dastyari was required to stand down because he got donors to pay his personal bills for him. He didn't just fail to declare donations from Chinese donors, from foreign donors, to the Labor Party in some kind of administrative muck-up; he actually asked donors to pay for his own personal expenses!

Mr Champion interjecting—

Mr PYNE: As the member for Wakefield said, who is rarely in the House—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Irons): The member for Wakefield has already been tossed out once today; it can happen again.

Mr PYNE: Senator Dastyari was stood down. And now he's back. He was stood down for a matter of months. This week the Leader of the Opposition, incapable of standing up to the CFMEU, is even incapable of standing up to Sam Dastyari. So he's put Sam Dastyari back on the frontbench and he's in the decision-making team of the Leader of the Opposition's office.

Secondly, there is Senator Kimberley Kitching, the hand-picked candidate of the Leader of the Opposition to go into the Senate. She was hand-picked by the Leader of the Opposition against the advice of most of his frontbench from Victoria, including the member for Isaacs, who threatened to resign as shadow Attorney-General over the appointment of Kimberley Kitching but then didn't have the courage of his convictions. Senator Kitching was referred by the Heydon royal commission—the royal commission that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition says found nothing—to the DPP for criminal charges. In spite of knowing that, the Leader of the Opposition put her into the Senate, over the complaints and objections of some of his frontbenchers. She was referred to the DPP for possible criminal charges for aiding and abetting the false and misleading statements of six other HSU officials by sitting their right-of-entry test. Apparently, she bragged that she got 100 per cent in some of the tests, saying, 'Did another one—got 100 per cent again.' This is the person who the Leader of the Opposition thought should sit in the Australian Senate and who he is praising right now in the House for her pursuit of the Minister for Employment.

But it's not just Senator Dastyari or Senator Kitching; the Leader of the Opposition himself has amongst the lowest standards of any Leader of the Opposition who's ever sat in that seat. The issue that we are debating today is the misuse of union members' money. The opposition thinks that the indiscretion of a ministerial staffer is a capital offence but that the misuse of union members' money is something that should be ignored. In fact, people who do it are promoted in the Labor caucus. The issues that we're discussing are the questions the Leader of the Opposition needs to answer about the donation of \$100,000 to GetUp! in start-up money, when it was first getting started, when he was on the board of GetUp! and also the national secretary of the Australian Workers' Union. So, when he was secretary of AWU, \$100,000 went to GetUp! from the AWU, and he was on the board of GetUp! when it got started. And, quite legitimately, members of the fourth estate have asking the Leader of the Opposition to answer questions about whether the correct processes were followed in the union, and he has refused to answer those questions. He has refused to cooperate, and the AWU has refused to cooperate. That is why the offices of the AWU in Melbourne and Sydney were raided—because the ROC had evidence, enough suspicion to suspect, that those documents could be

destroyed. The ROC and the AFP obtained a warrant from a magistrate in Victoria, who agreed that they had good enough cause to have that suspicion that the offices should be raided.

The AFP don't go around raiding union offices for the fun of it; they did it because they wanted to make sure the law was upheld. In the Labor Party, that is a capital offence as well, and their response to that has been to attack the AFP—to attack the integrity of the Australian Federal Police—which is utterly disgraceful. One day, perish the thought, the Labor Party might be back in office again, and the AFP will serve them as well as it has served this side of the House and the other side of the House over the last 30 or so years, with complete fairness to both sides. In fact, it was appalling that the AFP commissioner felt the need to defend the AFP by putting out a statement today. Andrew Colvin should not have been placed in this position by the Leader of the Opposition. He was placed in this position by the Leader of the Opposition and by the disgraceful statements of the member for Gorton about the AFP and its lack of integrity, accusing of it being a political tool of the government.

A government member: What a disgrace!

Mr PYNE: It was a disgrace, and it remains a disgrace. He says:

The AFP has this week been the subject of commentary and innuendo regarding its independence and the ability of AFP members to carry out their work objectively and without political interference. The AFP ... undertakes its activities without fear or favour. The AFP rejects in the strongest terms any suggestion to the contrary.

The other two matters that have been discussed and that the Leader of the Opposition has failed to provide the facts about are the donation of \$27,000 that Australian Super gave to the Australian Workers Union when the Leader of the Opposition was the National Secretary of the Australian Workers Union, was on the board of Australian Super and was the candidate for Maribyrnong. Amazingly—coincidentally—not very long later, the AWU made a \$26,000 donation to the Maribyrnong campaign.

The Leader of the Opposition refuses to answer questions about that. Which part of probity doesn't this Leader of the Opposition understand? Thirdly, in 2007 the Leader of the Opposition cut out the middle man: 'I'm sick of wasting time with Australian Super or the GetUp! organisation; I'll get a donation of \$25,000 directly from the Australian Workers Union to the Maribyrnong campaign.' That was when he was the candidate for Maribyrnong and the National Secretary of the AWU.

Mr Hawke interjecting—

Mr PYNE: He cut out the middle man, as the assistant minister points out, and got the money transferred directly across. And this is the man who lectures us about standards and transparency and accountability? He has absolutely zero credibility.

Could I also say in relation to the defence of the AFP: what a disgraceful performance it has been. It is totally contrary, once again, to the Leader of the Opposition's past statements about the Australian Federal Police.

Mr Champion: Tell us about the New South Wales Liberal Party! Tell us about their donation history!

Mr PYNE: I would love to talk about the New South Wales Labor Party, but there isn't time to go through Eddie Obeid; Joe Tripodi; Ian Macdonald—is he still in prison? I think Ian

Macdonald is still in prison, isn't he? I would love to talk about the New South Wales Labor Party, but I've only got so much time. Bill Shorten said in 2015—

Mr Champion interjecting—

Mr PYNE: Why don't you make another interjection? That last one was a great success. Bill Shorten said in 2015:

We recognise that the AFP is independent, they'll make their own decisions about what they choose to investigate or not and that's as it should be.

The Leader of the Opposition knows full well that the smokescreen he's trying to create is just that, a smokescreen to cover his embarrassment about his addiction to being connected to the union movement and his inability to stand up to the CFMEU or the AWU, or even Sam Dastyari or even Senator Kitching. If he won't stand up to the union movement, he won't stand up for the nation's interests.

Opposition members interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Irons): I call the member for Sydney and would just remind those behind her that it's her turn to speak and they're interfering with her speech.

Ms PLIBERSEK (Sydney—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (15:37): Listening to the Leader of the House is like listening to Catweazle ranting about elec-trickery, the telling bone—the conspiracies. It is like a pantomime character getting excited: 'Look out! He's behind you!' But what was notably absent from that spirited defence was a single mention of the Minister for Employment, Michaelia Cash, and why she should remain in her position.

What we know for certain is this minister has misled the parliament five times, and she should go. If the Prime Minister had any courage, he would make her go. Don't forget, this is a Prime Minister who has already lost five government ministers: the former member for Mayo, the member for Fadden, the former member for Fisher, the member for Farrer and Senator Canavan. Today we're likely to get No. 6. Tomorrow we might get Nos 7 and 8. This Prime Minister is going to break John Howard's record for losing ministers—what an incredible achievement!

Only a Prime Minister who is weak, who doesn't have the confidence of his party, would be too gutless to take the action that is obviously necessary to anybody watching. We can only conclude that he's too weak to act because he doesn't have the support of his colleagues or that he was in it up to his neck. I've got to say, it really does not bear examination, does it? The Prime Minister summons the minister down to his office and says: 'There are all these very concerning reports this morning that you or your office have tipped off the media to a raid that happened yesterday. What have you got to say to that?' We are expected to believe that Guthrie Featherstone QC, MP asked just one question: 'Did you do it?', that the minister just answered: 'No. It wasn't me,' and that Guthrie Featherstone QC, MP didn't ask the obvious next question. This Prime Minister's so great at cross-examining that he wrote a book about it—*The Spy Catcher Trial*—talking about what a fantastic lawyer he is, but he didn't say, 'Actually, Minister, the reports aren't about you tipping off the media; the reports are your staff tipping off the media.' It absolutely beggars belief.

It is a classic tactic of those opposite to try and say that we have asserted this or asserted that. I have to be very clear about what the problem is here. It's often not the crime but the cover-up that gets you, and this is the case with this minister too. If she had been frank about

the fact that her staff had done the wrong thing instead of misleading the parliament five times, instead of trying to drag out proceedings last night so she could get past the media cut-off times and past the dinner break, I think people might have a bit of sympathy for her. But the fact that she has persisted in misleading and persists with the same today makes our sympathy evaporate.

I have to be clear about this other element: the Leader of the House tried to imply that we are somehow criticising the Australian Federal Police. That is the very last thing that we are doing. We heard evidence just this week from the Federal Police that government cuts will:

... mostly apply to our discretionary funding. That is areas that fund a large portion of our anti-narcotics, our organised crime work, our general operation work, our fraud and anti-corruption.

In those circumstances, every Australian will be asking themselves why the Federal Police, who are so good at their work, so good at protecting Australians, instead of being out busting organised crime gangs, drug traffickers and gun traffickers are doing work that Star Track Express could have done: going down the road and picking up some documents because the ROC sent them to do so. This is an outrageous use of tightly stretched resources when we are hearing how tightly stretched those resources are.

What we know is that this government will always use taxpayers' resources to pursue political opponents. They will say anything. They will do anything, because this Prime Minister— (*Time expired*)

Mr FALINSKI (Mackellar) (15:42): It is sad. Their concocted outrage can't even limp to the end of five minutes. To have the Deputy Leader of the Opposition stand here in this parliament and compare the AFP work to that of a Star Track Express courier is a disgrace. It's an absolute disgrace, and she should stand up here now and apologise to the hardworking members of the Australian Federal Police. The truth of the matter is this: those opposite would not have put this motion if Michaelia Cash was not a woman, if she was not an effective minister and if she was not calling their mates to account. The fact of the matter is that they can throw up as much dust as they like, they can make as much noise as they want over there but they can't obscure the fact that they are running away from the facts. They can't cover up the secret payments any longer. They can't cover up the secret deals, the self-interest and the corruption that is rampant in the Labor Party, rampant in the union movement and rampant in their associated entities. They can't win this argument. They can't convince anyone of their views, so they're left to do one thing and one thing only: try to confuse people. They try to claim the AFP's work is that of a Star Track Express courier, because what else would you expect of the party of Eddie Obeid, Ian Macdonald, Joe Tripodi, Bob Carr and Luke Foley?

Mr Champion interjecting—

Mr FALINSKI: The member for Wakefield wants to be heard. It's a shame he doesn't try as hard to be understood!

They're led by a man who complained when he was a minister in the previous government that his \$300,000 salary wasn't enough, that he was underpaid. He is a person who is opposed to increased funding for schools, opposed to lowering taxes for small businesses, opposed to completing the funding for the NDIS that those opposite left dangerously unfunded, opposed to more jobs and higher wages, and opposed most of all to the legislation that would end

corrupting benefit payments to unions. He, now, and the Labor Party now, say that a minister should resign because a staff member leaked a story about police raids on a union. Okay, fair enough.

So where were those opposite when Tony Hodges, a former member of Julia Gillard's media team, spread information in order to incite a riot against the then Leader of the Opposition, the member for Warringah? The same media unit then put out stories how Prime Minister Gillard's security team had to protect the poor frail member for Warringah. What a story. In full technicolour for everyone to see, the Prime Minister lost her shoe, and the Leader of the Opposition was escorted by AFP officers. But don't worry; I am sure if there had been some StarTrack couriers standing nearby they could have stepped in and done the job, according to the deputy leader. That's why Prime Minister Gillard resigned, of course. If you leak a story to a newspaper about a union getting raided, that's the same as inciting a riot against the Leader of the Opposition, right? Of course it is. They're the standards.

Mr Champion interjecting—

Mr FALINSKI: The member for Wakefield, back again; thanks for helping us out. The fact of the matter is there is nothing they won't say and do to obscure the facts here. The Leader of the Opposition stands up and talks about the poor quality of the coffee he gets in Melbourne and how poorly paid the person making the coffee is but, let's not forget, it was his Fair Work Commission, appointed by him, who he referred this decision to, that came to this decision. So there we have it. We have a party over there that can't remember anything and forgets everything, including the fact that they get payments from people like the CFMEU, including the fact they used to have a minister in New South Wales by the name of Eddie Obeid and the fact that they gave \$100,000 to GetUP! *(Time expired)*

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR (Gorton) (15:47): This is a very important debate we are having today because it goes to whether in fact the government has colluded with the media in order to expose raids by the Australian Federal Police. I want to make it very clear: the opposition support the Australian Federal Police. They are an independent statutory body and they had to do what they did because a warrant was issued. But let's be very clear about what we're talking about. This is the relationship between the government and the regulatory body it established for these purposes. At the time, when the government foreshadowed its interest to create the Registered Organisation Commission, Labor said we had concerns with this particular body because we said it would be used for political purposes. We said, instead, we would be very happy to see these responsibilities within the remit of ASIC and we argued that that should be the body that deals with serious alleged breaches by officers of registered organisations. We argued that would be the better place. We even explained to the crossbench before the legislation was enacted that the government would use this commission as its political tool to attack its political opponents, because that's the pattern of behaviour of this government since it was elected in 2013.

Let's outline the pattern we have here. We have a government that established a trade union royal commission in order to attack its political opponents. We have a government that's had two royal commissions and summonsed three Labor leaders, two of whom were prime ministers of this country. It is unprecedented that a government would actually set up these executive inquiries and call former Prime Ministers in that way, and yet, of course, that is what this government did. What they did with respect to the trade union royal commission

was call the Leader of the Opposition. He sat in the dock for two days; he actually answered 900 questions. There were no findings against the Leader of the Opposition, despite the fact that the commission itself was discredited. It was discredited because we found out that the commissioner of the trade union royal commission was someone who had accepted an invitation to raise money for the Liberal Party at the same time as he was commissioner of the royal commission.

So the reality is this: this is a pattern of behaviour by this government to use state power to attack its political opponents. It did so with the establishment of that trade union royal commission and it's done so now by creating a standing commission, because that's what the Registered Organisations Commission is. It's a standing commission to investigate, ostensibly, registered organisations. But, of all its investigations and inquiries, which one hit the media? Of all the inquiries and investigations of this new body, which investigation was referred by the minister to the commission? Only one, and that is, of course, the one that relates to the allegations made against the AWU in an attempt to smear the federal leader and federal Labor. That is the only matter that's been referred by the minister.

Let's get the chronology right. The Prime Minister and the minister created the Registered Organisations Commission, the minister appointed the regulator of the commission, the minister referred the investigation of this matter to the commission, the minister's office leaked information about the raids of the investigation to the media, and then the minister suggested she had done nothing wrong and the minister suggested that her office had done nothing wrong, and she said so five times in the Senate. She misled the parliament on five occasions. It beggars belief that she did not know what her office was up to in relation to this matter, given the extent to which she was involved from the establishment of the agency to the referral of the investigation and, of course, to the collusion with the media in order to ensure that they elevated this matter by publicly broadcasting the raids.

There is no way that a reasonable person would conclude that the minister has been involved in anything other than gross abuse of ministerial power, and that's why she has to resign. That's why she has to resign: she has misused her office and, indeed, she has breached ministerial responsibility. If she does not resign and the Prime Minister wants to adhere to the Westminster system and ministerial responsibility, he must sack the minister. If he doesn't sack the minister, this government clearly shows it wants to continue this corrupt behaviour.

Ms PRICE (Durack) (15:52): I rise on yet another absurd motion by those opposite. Haven't we heard some fire and brimstone in this place over the last 24 hours! We've heard some frankly unbelievable claims by those opposite, trotting in here one after the other and sticking up for their union mates, as they do. It's laughable that today's MPI is about proper standards and accountability when those opposite, who claim to represent the workers of Australia, have failed to support our legislation to protect those workers, to protect union funds and to ensure that workplaces are safe. Let's look at our record. The government have done an exemplary job at exposing the criminal and often despicable behaviour of the union movement in this country. We were responsible for the introduction for the ABCC, removing the rotten apples from the building sites and ensuring that the construction sector once again becomes a functioning, workable industry. But did those opposite support that piece of legislation? No, they didn't.

Ms Husar interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Irons): I remind the member for Lindsay that she's already had one warning today.

Ms PRICE: What about corrupt payments? Did they support the corrupting benefits legislation? No, they did not. Did they support the government in stamping out under-the-table corrupt payments, criminal payments, from employers and unions? No, they did not. We have also established the Registered Organisations Commission, which was responsible for the recent raid on the AWU that we are discussing here today, but did Labor support that legislation? No, they did not. And why is that? We all know why, because those opposite dance to the tune of the union movement every day, day after day. As sure as night follows day, we know the rules.

It's worth reflecting on why the AFP raided the AWU. The Registered Organisations Commission opened their investigation into the Leader of the Opposition's union last Friday, but such is their experience and others' experience with the union movement, with their arrogance towards the rule of law, that the Registered Organisations Commission believed that, if they had requested the information, the information would have been destroyed. Let that just sink in. It's all quiet now; how wonderful!

How outrageous that those members opposite come in here, day after day, defending those organisations that display such a criminal lack of respect for our laws and our country's institutions that they would potentially destroy damning evidence against the man who wants to be the next Prime Minister! That is why the commission advised the AFP to raid the offices to collect those documents. The raid was conducted because the Registered Organisations Commission thought there was sufficient evidence of union wrongdoing in regard to the opposition leader's donation of \$100,000 to GetUp! 10 years ago. That is why the AWU was raided.

But this is not the first instance of unions playing fast and loose with the rule of law, is it? We've seen this year CFMEU bosses in Victoria telling rallies of workers that they would find out where the ABCC inspectors lived and would target their children. Or how about the CFMEU walking off the job at the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital in Brisbane? That caused thousands of dollars in excessive government expenditure—

An opposition member interjecting—

Ms PRICE: What? That didn't happen? I'll take that interjection. And it delayed the project. How about the illegal Commonwealth Games industrial action where CFMEU officials threatened a safety inspector?

But don't take my word for it. We've got at least three former Labor prime ministers who have come out to talk about the despicable behaviour of the CFMEU. Kevin Rudd, only two days ago, told the Labor Party it should sever its ties with the CFMEU. Former Prime Minister Bob Hawke said last year that the ALP should sever its ties with the CFMEU, and also former Labor Prime Minister Paul Keating said that the party should reduce the power that the union has over it. I would suggest the current Leader of the Opposition take some advice from his predecessors. So as we, on this side of the House, have all said today, this MPI is truly ridiculous, and those in the Labor Party should hang their heads in shame for the comments they've made in this place today.

Everything we on this side of the House do is about protecting Australian workers. It's about protecting the workplace. It's about protecting their funds. Those opposite do everything in their power to protect the union movement, their union mates, while selling out the union members, as we've seen with the example of the workers at Cleanevent, and we know that they do this to protect their union mates, and we know that it's done to protect the rivers of gold that are given to them to help with their election campaigns. It is shameful that we even have to debate this today, and it is shameful that those opposite do not protect the workers that they claim, day in and day out, that they represent. Shame on you.

Ms ROWLAND (Greenway) (15:57): When it comes to the failures of this government to respect proper standards and accountability, the Prime Minister's track record on the NBN is an absolute pearler. In 2013, this Prime Minister stood up with the then Prime Minister, looked the Australian people in the eye and said that they would deliver a National Broadband Network for \$29 billion and have it finished by 2016. He declared that it would be open and it would be transparent. But then the first test came: the December 2013 strategic review. In this report it was revealed that the Prime Minister's multitechnology mix for the NBN had blown out from \$29 billion to \$41 billion. Did he offer any explanation as to how the high cost of the NBN had become even \$12 billion more expensive overnight, or any explanation as to why it would now not be delivered until 2020? He offered no explanation whatsoever. Worse still, if you want to talk about proper standards and accountability, every key assumption in the 2013 strategic review remains redacted and blacked out. So much for the transparency promised by this Prime Minister. Even to this day, this government refuses to release that information.

Then we saw information emerge about further cost blowouts and delays and failures in the rollout with this Prime Minister's multitechnology mix—the rollout that was supposed to be 'faster, sooner and more affordable'. Here are some of the things that we learned. We started to learn about secret trials where the NBN had reduced the cost and time to deploy fibre. We began to hear about the cost of fibre to the node—about how this Prime Minister's copper NBN's cost was blowing out even further. We heard about how the cost of copper remediation had blown out by more than 1,000 per cent. We learned that the HFC network, which the Prime Minister touted as a game-changer, was actually not fit for purpose.

Did we see any transparency and accountability as a result of that? No. I'll tell you what we saw, Mr Deputy Speaker. We saw a raid. We saw an unprecedented AFP raid in the middle of an election campaign in Australia in 2016. We had the NBN chairman then publish a most politically charged opinion piece about that raid, defending the NBN's actions. Bear in mind that this is the hand-picked chairman of the NBN, hand-picked by this Prime Minister. This was despite advice from the nation's top public servant saying that doing so would breach caretaker conventions. Just to quote from an article at the time:

NBN chairman Ziggy Switkowski wilfully breached caretaker conventions during an election campaign and did so against the express advice of the nation's top public servant.

We see the full extent of these failures again revealed in the August 2015 corporate plan, where the NBN again blew out in costs from \$41 billion to up to \$56 billion. But did we get more transparency? We had scrapped external oversight of the NBN corporate plan.

So we have a project personally undertaken by this Prime Minister, who is so invested in it—the one in which he declared we would have full transparency and openness. We have seen nothing of that. This born-to-rule Prime Minister, who fancies himself as a genius, has

been exposed on every front when it comes to the NBN. He has lurched from failure to failure. He was a failure as communications minister. He is a failure as Prime Minister. He stuffed up the National Broadband Network. Just look at the evidence. We dropped from 30th in the world for internet speeds to 50th. There has been a 160 per cent increase in complaints about the NBN from consumers. We are now placed last out of 28 countries in the world for broadband satisfaction. Last! Last in the world. This great Liberal hope, this champion of copper—he coveted the prime ministership his entire life—exposed as nothing more than shallow and glass jawed. In the immortal words of Paul Keating: you light him up, there's a bit of fizz, but then nothing. Nothing. *(Time expired)*

Mrs WICKS (Robertson) (16:02): I'm pleased to speak on this matter of public importance because the people of my electorate on the Central Coast absolutely demand and expect proper standards and accountability from the government. Since the coalition came to government in 2013, including by winning the seat of Robertson, that's exactly what they've got from this government. We have been delivering on every single one of our commitments to my electorate and we can be held accountable to it by the people of Robertson while also being completely up-front about how we are transforming our critical region, which for six long years prior to September 2013 had been woefully neglected by the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd Labor government.

Let's compare and contrast. We're delivering 600 new jobs into Gosford with the ATO, a \$45 million investment towards a world-class Central Coast medical school and medical research institute, the new state-of-the-art Woy Woy oval on the Peninsula, and many more projects that I don't have time to mention. The Central Coast, and the seat of Robertson in particular, is now seeing a real uplift thanks to this government. But we need to be fully aware of the flaws and the risks of the approach to accountability and proper standards taken by the members of the Labor Party. Under Labor, we need to ask ourselves: what did our region, the beautiful Central Coast, actually become known for? Do I even need to mention the former Labor member for Dobell, Craig Thomson? Do I need to mention the chaos of the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd Labor years, which in Robertson was also reflected in the short-lived stints of Labor representative Belinda Neal—do you know who she is?—and Deborah O'Neill? Do I need to mention the failure to deliver or plan for more local jobs and better infrastructure? Do I need to remind members opposite, including the shadow minister, who ought to remember this, about the big red button that was pushed with great fanfare on Gosford waterfront by the then member for Gosford—

Ms Husar interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Irons): I just remind the member for Lindsay that she's been warned.

Ms Husar interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: You've been warned already during question time, and I'm prepared to get you to leave the chamber if you keep interjecting.

Mrs WICKS: Let me just repeat this point, as it's clearly worth remembering: do I need to remind members opposite about the big red button that was pushed with great fanfare by Stephen Conroy and Deborah O'Neill on the Gosford waterfront? They said that fibre to the premise, rolled gold, high-speed broadband was coming to Gosford, only for the poor

residents and businesses of Gosford to find out that 90 per cent of homes and businesses couldn't actually connect.

This Leader of the Opposition, just like during his time as a union boss, will say and do anything for the sake of politics while, at the same time, ignoring or brazenly voting against anything that actually delivers the critical reform our nation needs. Labor's approach is to respect its union bosses, ignore the decisions of an independent umpire and have no credible plans for jobs or small businesses. For example, for many years local small businesses have been competing on an uneven playing field against big businesses like Woolworths, McDonald's and KFC, as big businesses have negotiated enterprise agreements with big unions to lower Sunday penalty rates. The Leader of the Opposition has been totally hypocritical on this issue. As a union boss, he cut penalty rates to low-paid workers. The Leader of the Opposition is happy for big businesses and big union leaders to do deals cutting penalty rates, but it appears Labor quickly whistles to a different tune on penalty rates when an independent umpire does it for small business.

The Leader of the Opposition says he's against foreign workers, but his record of granting 457 visas shows that he brought foreign workers in at the expense of Australians looking for work. He said he was in favour of a cut in the company tax rate, but now Labor is opposing the coalition's company tax cut. Labor wants to attack Central Coast's small businesses and their employees by repealing the coalition's enterprise tax cut plans, and yet you can see how the coalition's plan is working. Just look at the fantastic response of local businesses in my electorate to the instant asset write-off. Close to 300,000 Australian small businesses have taken advantage of this, including more than 2,200 in my electorate.

We've got a strong record of delivering on reform, including strong changes in industrial relations, such as protecting firefighters from union takeovers and legislation to restore the rule of law and stop union thuggery in the building and construction sector. We've secured the passage of the corrupting benefits legislation that will bring an end to the dodgy deals done between employers and unions that do nothing to benefit workers, and much, much more. But, sadly, because the Leader of the Opposition always puts politics and his own interests ahead of the national interest, he cannot be trusted to deliver for our nation or for the Central Coast. Labor, it would seem, is short on standards and short on accountability.

Ms O'NEIL (Hotham) (16:07): It has been another shocking week for the government. The NBN is a flaming catastrophe; the budget is in bigger debt than it has ever been. This week the government has been busted massively underfunding the Australian Federal Police. And we've got a minister in the other place who has been shown up for misleading parliament yesterday five times, and probably by the end of the week we'll see a few more ministers out the door.

It is a basic sign of maturity to take responsibility when things go wrong, but that is not what we see from the Prime Minister. In fact, the finger is pointing at anyone he can find. It's Labor's fault. It's the unions' fault. But the biggest bait and switch that has been put this week in parliament, and which I want to speak to today, is the inference that by attacking the government, which as an opposition we are entitled and supposed to justly do, we are somehow attacking the integrity of the Australian Federal Police. That is wrong. I speak on behalf of all my Labor colleagues when I say how incredibly proud we are of the brave men and women who work in this incredible organisation. We represent a lot of people who put on

uniforms and do incredible things with their daily work, but it is quite rare to come across a group of people who put themselves in danger, who put themselves in the line of fire, every time they get out of bed and put on a uniform, and go to do work protecting us every single day.

One of the most difficult areas of law that I have responsibility for in my party is the work we do with child exploitation, and that's been discussed this week. The Australian Federal Police are at the front line of that, and just about every other major security threat that we talk about in this parliament. Whether it's terrorism, whether it's the work that we do trying to fight drugs, trying to fight gun importation—all of these things—the Australian Federal Police is absolutely at the epicentre of.

We've heard a lot of frustrated commentary from those on the other side, who are getting up and talking about how much they are enamoured with the work of the Australian Federal Police. I say to those on the other side of the House that, if you were so committed to supporting the brave men and women who protect us on the beat every day, you would probably be making sure that you pay those officers properly. We know that the Australian Federal Police have not had a pay rise for more than two years. That means, in real terms, the people whose work you stand up and laud when you're talking about the incredible work that they do are actually going backwards, and that is because of your government and because of the cuts that you have made to that organisation. Earlier this year, the Australian Federal Police were offered a pay deal which would see them getting a very minimal pay rise; some officers, though, were going to go right backwards in pay, including a set of officers who were going to receive a \$35,000-a-year pay cut. The organisation has refused that industrial agreement, but I want to read to you from a letter to the Prime Minister written by the head of the Australian Federal Police Association, Angela Smith. She writes:

As Prime Minister, you take every opportunity to praise the operational successes of AFP employees, yet this adulation rings hollow if those same employees are rewarded by cuts to their pay and entitlements.

Labor has not taken that view. We have fought for those police officers in their pay agreement and we hope that that will get a good outcome.

We saw the Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police in estimates this week. I have to say that I feel a lot of sympathy for Commissioner Colvin as he tries to navigate a difficult situation, because the truth is that the government has cut \$184 million from this organisation over the coming four years. He revealed in estimates this week that the organisation has lost 117 staff over the last year alone. How can the Prime Minister stand up in question time and say that he is so much in favour of this organisation? He speaks with one voice in this parliament and then he and the Minister for Justice go down to the cabinet room and do something absolutely contrary to those comments, and that is gut this organisation.

This week, the ABC came forward with a memo written by a senior Australian Federal Police officer which showed that, over the last period of time, 23 critical raids have not been properly investigated because the Australian Federal Police does not have the resources to do it. The ABC reported that there was a 1.6-tonne cocaine importation that could not be fully investigated by the Australian Federal Police due to lack of resources.

We are so supportive of this organisation—and we're genuinely supportive of the organisation. I only wish that the government's commentary about the Australian Federal Police was backed up by real support for those officers and funding for that organisation.

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Maranoa) (16:12): The theatrics of those opposite that we've seen over the last 24 hours are nothing more than a desperate attempt to take attention away from the very core of the issue that we are talking about—the very core of what has happened in the last 24 hours and why those raids were undertaken. The values and principles of the union movement have been shown up because a statutory authority saw fit to raid a union because they failed to provide the information that was required of them. Let's talk about the values and principles of the organisation and their link to the Labor Party. How can you say, in any fairness, that a fair organisation would do that? If they have nothing to hide, then why would they undertake those actions in such a public way? The reality is that this MPI is nothing more than just cheap theatrics to hide the Leader of the Opposition from the questions that he needs to answer about the actions that he took when he was part of the union movement—and the union movement and Labor are so intrinsically tied.

The standards and values of the CFMEU are seen in my home state of Queensland. We're seeing now the actions of the CFMEU at Oakey Creek up in Queensland, where they are saying the most abhorrent things about men's and women's children. You come in here with the sanctimony and the way in which you criticise this side for the way that we handle ourselves, yet you sit there and take money from the CFMEU and you defend the actions of these deplorable human beings who would dare to utter those words. Would you not hold them to account? If you had the morals and the values to stand up to that behaviour, then you should do that today. But you don't. You turn your back—you turn your back on the Australian people and you turn your back on the workers at Oakey Creek.

What a disgrace that you would tie yourself to an organisation that would say deplorable things about children. I'm a father of three young boys and I can tell you I would be absolutely disgusted if someone made those accusations, those assertions, about my children. If you are parents and you look deeply inside your heart instead of putting your heads down in shame, which you should, then you should stand up here today and say that those are not the actions of proper human beings that anybody should be associated with. That is an absolute disgrace to be associated with that sort of action. You should stand up and do that today, as should the Leader of the Opposition, not have a distraction. The Labor Party members are running around trying to distract everybody about the real core of the issues here, about the values and principles of the union movement in this country.

But let's think about what could happen if the Labor Party were to be put into parliament. Let's think about what impacts that would have on our nation, the absolute deplorable state that we will see in our economy and the values and principles that they will bring.

Ms Madeleine King interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. The member for Brand has had a fair say.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: She has, Mr Deputy Speaker. These are the sorts of values and principles that they want to defend and they cannot defend those actions. The reality is, if we were lumbered with a Labor government after the next election, we would see these values

and principles trickle down through our nation and that is not something that we can allow to happen.

Finally, because of the work that we in the government have done, we are pulling the economic levers to get growth within this nation. Over 800,000 jobs have been created on our watch. We are pulling the economic levers that are creating jobs. But because those opposite are so intrinsically tied to the union movement, because they are so part of the union movement, because they are part of the values and principles of the labour movement, they cannot understand how an economy works and they will bring those values and principles of big government. Those opposite don't understand that if you empower your nation, if you give people the environment and the infrastructure to create wealth and to create the jobs, they will do it for our nation because they are good people who understand what a hard day's work will do for them and for this nation. They are the principles and values this side uphold, every day of the week. Those low union movements that come out and attack children in this day and age are deplorable.

I'm proud to say that we on this side will hold firm on this. We will make sure that we won't be distracted from where we need to go in isolating the union movement and the actions that they've undertaken over the last years. This is something I'm proud to say that we will continue, despite the theatrics that we see from those opposite.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The discussion is now concluded.

BUSINESS

Days and Hours of Meeting

Mr TAYLOR (Hume—Assistant Minister for Cities and Digital Transformation) (16:17):
by leave—I move:

That the program of sittings for 2018 be agreed to.

Question agreed to.

BILLS

Regulatory Powers (Standardisation Reform) Bill 2016

Report from Federation Chamber

Bill returned from Federation Chamber for further consideration.

Ordered that this bill be considered at a later hour this day.

Australian Grape and Wine Authority Amendment (Wine Australia) Bill 2017

Report from Federation Chamber

Bill returned from Federation Chamber without amendment; certified copy of bill presented.

Bill agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr TAYLOR (Hume—Assistant Minister for Cities and Digital Transformation) (16:19):
by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Fisheries Legislation Amendment (Representation) Bill 2017

Report from Federation Chamber

Bill returned from Federation Chamber without amendment; certified copy of bill presented.

Ordered that this bill be considered immediately.

Bill agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr TAYLOR (Hume—Assistant Minister for Cities and Digital Transformation) (16:20):
by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Regulatory Powers (Standardisation Reform) Bill 2016

Second Reading

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Mr TAYLOR (Hume—Assistant Minister for Cities and Digital Transformation) (16:22):
by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Veterans and Their Families

Mr TEHAN (Wannon—Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Cyber Security and Minister for Defence Personnel) (16:22): I seek leave today to present a response by representatives of the defence and veterans community to the first ministerial statement on veterans and their families.

Leave granted.

Mr TEHAN: I present the response. In the first ministerial statement on veterans and their families, I set out a challenge to the veteran and ex-service organisations to provide a response with a single voice. While this is not a response from all sections or all ex-service organisations, I commend those who have contributed to this response and their engagement with the government on my statement. The government thanks the Defence Force Welfare Association and the Alliance of Defence Service Organisations, including the RSL, for

providing me with this response. It is a very good first step in engaging and representing the views of the wider veterans community. The same will be done next year, and I look forward to tabling a response and also outlining the government's position on this response that the ex-service organisations have provided the government.

Ms RISHWORTH (Kingston) (16:24): On indulgence—I haven't had the chance to read the defence community's response to the ministerial challenge; I've only just received it. But I would say in very, very brief comments that I certainly value my engagement with the ex-service community and I think the best outcomes are served if everyone is pulling in the same direction and coordinating their response. Government and opposition can only get the policy and the policy settings right with a vibrant ex-service community that does give free and frank advice. So I certainly look forward to considering the defence community's response to the ministerial challenge and my ongoing engagement with them.

BILLS

Social Services Legislation Amendment (Cashless Debit Card) Bill 2017

Second Reading

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Ms HUSAR (Lindsay) (16:25): Labor supports the genuine, intuitive policies that acknowledge the problems and opportunities that are unique to remote and discrete communities. Because of the tireless efforts of Jenny Macklin and Linda Burney, we understand that a cashless debit system may be part of a solution. While I mention Linda Burney's name, I would just like to pass on my sincere condolences to my colleague Linda and thank her for all of her work and efforts in making sure that this system is got right. It's a shame that she isn't here today, but I am very privileged to stand up and honour the work that she's been doing.

We also understand that most people are quite capable of managing their own incomes. It is vital that we understand that it can be only a part of and not a holistic answer to complex historical problems. These problems vary from community to community, country to country and state to state. There is no one-size-fits-all answer. We need to develop the levers that provide access to support when and where it is suitable: programs that address alcohol and drug-related problems, not empty promises and half-baked attempts that may be more likely to hinder and not help. We need to listen to communities to find out what assistance they require and to tailor programs to suit specific localities. We also need to empower people to help themselves. One size does not fit all.

That is one of the reasons that Labor does not support a nationwide rollout of the cashless debit card. I also note that Labor only supported the rollout of the cashless debit card in 2015 after extensive consultation and the promise of additional programs designed to work in partnership with the trials. This position was decided after—and only after—consultation with community leaders. The development of a memorandum of understanding with the Ceduna community was also critical to this process.

At this point I note that some community leaders in Kununurra have changed their position on the card due to the lack of support programs wrapping around and actually working in their communities. We support local community action in delivering tailored programs that suit

their needs: programs that complement the objectives of the cashless debit card. This is considered vital for the success of any trial. We need to understand the reasons for the shift in support in Kununurra.

I turn to the cost of these trials undertaken so far. As we have previously heard, the government has spent around \$18.9 million on the East Kimberley and Ceduna trials alone. We believe the Senate inquiry will reveal whether this money has been well spent, but that is an extraordinary amount of money. It is also hoped this will shed light on the \$7.9 million paid to Indue to manage the payment system. Surprisingly, ORIMA Research was funded to the tune of \$1.6 million for research that in the opinion of many has questionable value as either indicator or research tool.

We rightly question the reason why this legislation is being brought forward when there are still so many questions that need to be answered. The 2016 census tells us that Australia's Indigenous population has grown by 17.4 per cent since 2011. That's an estimated 3.3 per cent of our total population, an estimated just under 800,000 people who are concerned about the implications of a rollout of a cashless debit card system. We need to be mindful of the implications of those trials and the psychological impact they have on every single Indigenous person, regardless of where they live. It is imperative that we take the actions of previous governments into account when we are discussing serious amendments, such as the one before the House today. It is also important to note that these populations are centred in the major cities, particularly in electorates like mine in Lindsay.

The impact of these trials is surely an underlying worry for many people in how they view their future. These are people who have suffered and have been hurt by our collective actions, however well-intentioned they may have been. These people need to be reassured of our commitment to the implementation of effective education, rehabilitation and training programs as essential. They are essential to ensure that the inequity, suspicion and historical dislocation is addressed in ways that are well researched, well resourced and effectively delivered.

While we know that most people have the ability to self-manage their incomes, we also understand that some people need a hand. Whether extending the rollout of the cashless debit card is the answer is yet to be fully understood. Labor is committed to consulting widely in the Hervey Bay and Goldfields areas. I reiterate that we mean proper consultation that includes working together with communities to ensure they get the programs they need and desire, and not lecture them. We will not lecture the communities we visit, but we will commit to listening, discussing and acting.

Debate interrupted.

ADJOURNMENT

The SPEAKER (16:30): It being 4.30 pm, I propose the question:

That the House do now adjourn.

Macquarie Electorate: Blue Fringe Arts Vocational Education and Training

Ms TEMPLEMAN (Macquarie) (16:30): Some wonderful artists and writers were honoured this weekend in the Blue Mountains at the 25th Blue Fringe Arts Awards. These

began as the Adrienne Brown Awards in 1992, in honour of Adrienne, who had schizophrenia and who found relief through her love of poetry, the arts and music. Her family recognised the valuable role that artistic expression played in their daughter's life, and from this emerged the Blue Fringe Arts Festival. Anyone who has a lived experience of a mental health issue is able to enter, and there are art, sculpture, photography, textiles and writing prizes.

The festival has an organising committee which includes representatives from Aftercare; Neighbourhood Centres across the mountains, including Springwood and Katoomba; Ability Links; and TAFE, as well as volunteers from the community and the artists themselves. They're generously supported by sponsors from local businesses including Botanical Art, Vivability, Bendigo Bank, Belle Property Leura, Mountain High Pies, Richards Financial Services and Blue Mountains Explorer bus.

The works were diverse and glorious, and I am the very proud owner of a beautiful charcoal piece called *Shoal Bay Sunset* by a young artist, Alan Bridges, which won the People's Choice Award and is now in my Parliament House office. Congratulations to all the artists involved and thanks to volunteers and sponsors for a quarter of a century of this important event.

I have just been talking about one of the many important roles our local Wentworth Falls TAFE plays in our community, as the host venue for the Blue Fringe Arts Awards. My electorate of Macquarie includes the Wentworth Falls and Katoomba TAFEs, specialising in things like outdoor education, hospitality and community health, and Richmond TAFE, which has a huge equine training capacity as well as venomous snakes training, landscaping, plus much more.

TAFE is one institution that has taken a battering in recent years, but it is vital to Australia having a skilled workforce and vital for people in the Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury to access further education. When Labor left office in 2013, there were around 420,000 apprentices; now it is 280,000. The population has grown, and yet apprentice numbers have fallen. Nationally, there was a 30 per cent cut in government-funded training at TAFE between 2013 and 2016.

TAFE teachers and students past and present tell me TAFE is in serious danger if changes are not made soon. In spite of the constant undermining of their positions, the dedicated TAFE teachers have hung in there, putting the needs of their students at the forefront. Let's talk about the students. The stories they tell me are inspiring, about how attending TAFE has helped them feel better about themselves, especially if they've been out of the workforce because of illness or because of caring for someone else. It has helped them feel more confident about their skills and helped them feel more motivated to seek work. TAFE gives people a second chance. We know it can transform lives.

We need to make sure it keeps doing this long into the future in a way that prepares people for future employment. We need to work with business and industry to ensure that alongside trade skills students get to solve problems, collaborate and create. They need great facilities to do that in and their teachers need to be recognised for the contribution that they make. I'm very fortunate to have in my electorate the New South Wales President of the TAFE Teachers Association, Annette Bennett. We are well aware of what needs to be done. We need to make sure TAFE is better at meeting the emerging needs of the 15- to 25-year-olds as they transition from school to work. We need to better meet the additional needs of students who

have a disability or come from disadvantaged backgrounds so they can participate in an equal educational opportunity. We need to better address the needs of special equity groups such as Aboriginals, migrants and women returning to work or looking to participate in the Australian workforce.

Labor will do what needs to be done. For a start, Labor will return to vocational education and training the \$637 million that was cut in the last budget. We have announced that we will secure funding for vocational education and training and ensure that at least two-thirds of it will go to the most trusted provider in the country, and that is TAFE. The remainder will go to only the very best providers in the private sector, because, at the heart of it, we need TAFE. It does more than any other educational institution in this space.

Ryrie, Major General Sir Granville de Laune, KCMG, CB, VD

Mr ZIMMERMAN (North Sydney) (16:35): On 31 October, Australia will commemorate the centenary of the famous charge of our 4th Light Horse Brigade at the battle of Beersheba. This was the last great charge of the Light Horse, the world's greatest mounted column to take the field since Alexander the Great. We will commemorate our soldiers' courage in defence of their ideals, the mateship they showed under fire and their solidarity with the allies they fought alongside, and we will remember a battle and a victory that for so long was understated in the annals of Australian military history, despite its scale and importance in bringing an end to the Ottoman Empire.

Today I want to pay special tribute to one of our great leaders during that battle and a leader of his community in this parliament, Major General Sir Granville Ryrie, the third member for North Sydney. Granville Ryrie, or 'Bull' Ryrie, as the Light Horse affectionately called him, was born in Michelago in country New South Wales on 1 July 1865, not far from where our national capital would be later established. As a young man, Sir Granville worked as a jackeroo, learning the horseback skills which later earned the respect of the Light Horse. Even more interestingly, he took the time to learn about the local Indigenous people and to learn their language.

Sir Granville Ryrie joined the 1st Australian Horse in 1898, serving in the South African war, where he was wounded. In 1904, the regiment became the 3rd Light Horse, and he became its commanding officer. In the same year, Sir Granville entered the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, representing Queanbeyan, before joining the still-nascent federal parliament in 1911 as the member for North Sydney.

In 1914 he volunteered for the front, telling his wife he couldn't look fellow Australians in the face if he stayed. In a sign of the respect he had won among his own constituents, the people of North Sydney came together to buy Sir Granville Plain Bill, a black charger which, despite the homely name, was regarded as one of the best mounts in the Allied forces. Leading the 2nd Light Horse Brigade, Sir Granville was wounded twice at Gallipoli. He won the hearts of his men through his solidarity with them in the trenches and when he protested successfully against an attack order which he knew would've been a bloody failure. In tribute, they named their position on Holly Ridge Ryrie's Post.

In 1916, Granville's 2nd Light Horse Brigade was incorporated into the Anzac Mounted division and, with this division, Sir Granville took part in the battle of Beersheba, seizing the Hebron road. In a letter home, Sir Granville told the story of the charge his own men made

through an enemy camp and in pursuit of Turkish cavalry and guns. In his book *Beersheba*, the journalist Paul Daley wrote that Sir Granville 'forged a reputation as one of his country's most fearless soldiers and finest leaders of men'. Another predecessor of mine comes into the story here. Joe Hockey's grandfather and namesake, Joseph Hokeidonian, was appointed deputy town clerk of Beersheba after the Allied victory.

Sir Granville continued to serve until the Armistice and was decorated several times. I want to particularly pay tribute to his honour and his humanity towards prisoners, on one occasion allowing 5,000 Turkish prisoners to keep their arms and to bivouac with his own soldiers to protect them from the anger of local Allied troops.

After the war, Sir Granville and the Light Horse returned to Sydney to a rapturous welcome. Some have estimated that 200,000 Australians waited at the docks for their arrival. I suspect no current politician would receive such a welcome on returning to their electorate!

Back in parliament, Sir Granville served as Assistant Minister for Defence from 1920 to 1921. In 1922, when Bendigo was at risk, he gave up his seat for Billy Hughes. Sir Granville himself was moved to the newly-created seat of Warringah and became its first member. In 1927, Sir Granville became High Commissioner to London, representing Australia at the League of Nations in Geneva as well. He passed away in 1937 and was buried in his home town, where his family still lives.

Earlier today, I had the pleasure of meeting with his great-grandson, Xander Ryrie, who followed the example of Sir Granville and served in the Australian Army for several years. His own service took him in Sir Granville's footsteps, as a peacekeeper on the Israeli-Egyptian border, wearing the blue cap.

Granville Ryrie was a man who served North Sydney and who served his country with courage and honesty and with a sense of the value of each Australian. He showed an interest in Indigenous Australians when few did and always stood beside the soldiers he led in several wars, as his wounds bore witness to. He was not the only North Sydney resident to show such qualities when their fellow Australians needed it, but he is representative of them all. In paying honour to him today I do so with a salute to the thousands of Australians who marched or rode beside him. We shall never forget their service to our nation.

Immigration Detention

Mr NEUMANN (Blair) (16:40): The incompetence of the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection was on full display during Senate estimates this week. The minister's failures runs widely and deeply when it comes to the management of the offshore processing centres on Manus Island and Nauru and his failure to secure other third-country resettlement arrangements for eligible refugees. The Manus Island RPC will close on 31 October as a result of a ruling of the Supreme Court of Papua New Guinea and in agreement with the Papua New Guinean government. The Department of Immigration and Border Protection confirmed during Senate estimates that alternative accommodation arrangements for refugees won't be completed until 29 October, only two days prior to the closure of Manus Island RPC. Contracts worth between an estimated \$150 million and \$250 million to provide basic services for refugees in PNG after 31 October will be undertaken, but those contracts are yet to be signed. I emphasise the word 'estimated', because that's the closest thing to a guarantee that the immigration minister's department could provide.

It is not as if these issues have sneaked up on the government. For months the immigration minister has been unclear about and unwilling to explain Australia's involvement in offering support for refugees and the PNG government after 31 October. He's left it to the very last minute. The closure of Manus Island RPC was confirmed by both the Prime Minister of Australia and the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea in April this year. *The Australian* said on 8 April:

Neither leader signalled any plan to find an alternative resettlement option for those who are not sent to the US under the refugee rearrangements that they had.

It's clear the immigration minister should have made securing third-country resettlement options, apart from the US, a priority since he became immigration minister in 2014. Instead, we see he's left his department to scramble in the final weeks before the closure of the Manus Island RPC. Manus Island and Nauru were set up by Labor as regional transit facilities for processing, but they have become places of indefinite detention by this government in its fifth year of operation and governance. Labor strongly supports the refugee resettlement agreement with the US and thanks the US for what they are doing.

It was revealed during Senate estimates that, in a similar fashion to the contracts for PNG, contracts for services in Nauru RPC after 31 October have not yet been finalised. The immigration minister needs to ensure that health services and welfare services for those in Nauru will be delivered when the current contractors pull out. A letter of intent was issued on 28 September for a company to take over these services, but that falls short of a contract. When it comes to a suitable contractor being selected, a limited tender process was run by the immigration minister's department. Senate estimates confirmed it was well and truly limited, with only one contractor being considered, and that company having no experience in delivering welfare services and limited experience in delivering garrison services. This flies entirely in the face of recommendations from the Auditor-General in the report *Offshore processing centres in Nauru and Papua New Guinea: procurement of garrison support and welfare services*, which read:

Of most concern is the department's management of processes for contract consolidation and the open tender.

There was no open tender to ensure ongoing services in Nauru were secured and no consideration of value for money or even whether basic service delivery standards would be met. It is another case of too little, too late with the immigration minister's last-minute plan to transfer refugees from Manus Island to Nauru. Only two eligible refugees have expressed interest in a transfer. The minister needs to find third-country arrangements other than the US.

Senate estimates also confirmed that the department is yet to replace its Chief Medical Officer and Surgeon General, following his resignation months ago. This means thousands of people across Australia's onshore and offshore immigration network are still without an advocate to ensure that medical care is based on the best medical advice. The secretary of the department couldn't even remember whether he'd briefed the immigration minister, his own minister, about the resignation of the Chief Medical Officer. Most Australians would expect a boss to know when one of their most senior employees has resigned. But apparently it's a different set of standards for the immigration minister. Australia deserves better than an incompetent minister who can't even secure the cybersafety of his own department. It should

have complied with the top four mitigation strategies by June 2014. The government should do much better than this. (*Time expired*)

Marriage

Ms BANKS (Chisholm) (16:45): I rise today to talk about marriage equality. I'm sure I'm not the only person in Australia who has enjoyed that wonderful feeling of a belly laugh brought on by watching Magda Szubanski herself or in character mode. Magda has made me laugh so many times over the years. And recently she made me cry when she told the story of her friend with a cancer diagnosis who was denied being with her same-sex partner of many years during her treatment as she wasn't regarded as next of kin. I cried not only for her friend but for all those Australians who have similar experiences. These people in 10, 20 or 30 years time may have stories like Magda Szubanski's friend. Their stories will be depicted in movies in years to come—and we will all wonder why we hadn't sorted this out earlier. Well, 2017 is the year we can make this change and stop any more of these experiences happening to future generations of Australians.

In my late 20s, I was told by a doctor I had cancer. They didn't know if it was cancer A or B. If it was cancer A, it would be aggressive and terminal. Cancer B, on the other hand, was the best cancer to have—totally curable. It turned out to be cancer B, but they wouldn't know which it was until I had surgery in 10 days time—the darkest days of my life but also the most loving. Why? Because during that time I had love and family all around me. Specifically, during that time my partner, Mike, was my rock and my lifeline; and, importantly, during that time he asked me to marry him. My darkest hours became brighter; simply by looking forward to a commitment of marriage I felt safe, secure, loved and courageous.

When I heard Magda's story I despaired, because I simply felt it is not fair that two loving people cannot get married in our great country—that two loving people are not able to have equal rights at law that millions of Australians currently enjoy in their committed, loving marriages. Some will say it is courageous and risky for an MP in a marginal seat to be so vociferous in supporting marriage equality. Fighting for marriage equality is not about political courage; rather, it is about standing for equality for all, regardless of their gender, race, sexuality or ethnicity. Before the election, I personally promised hundreds of people that, under a Turnbull government, we would ensure all Australians would have a right to have their say on this issue, that their vote would count as much as mine. We have maintained the integrity of that promise to the Australian people.

Australians are decent people and known around the world for their sense of humour, goodwill and camaraderie towards others. Respectful debate is the cornerstone of our democracy. Telling Australians how to vote is not the way to go, and some have done a disservice to their cause by their behaviour and overreaching statements. However, a 'yes' vote is an acknowledgement that social mores change and should be reflected in a change to the law. Many predict that the 'no' vote will win because young voters, not being the postal generation, won't post their vote. People say, 'They will only do things online or on their mobile phones.' I have never bought into these views. Being the technological generation doesn't make young people complacent and not passionate about issues. Young Australians are making their vote count. They are the future.

And then there is the argument in the 'no' campaign which I find personally disturbing—namely, that only a marriage between a man and a woman will ensure the protection of

children. Children need two things in life: love and stability. Early in my legal career, when I practised in family law, I saw firsthand that love and stability is not automatically afforded to children simply because they have a mother and a father. Love and stability are being provided to Australian children all over the country right now. The presence of love and stability is not limited to traditional nuclear families like my family; rather, it's in the homes of single parents, widows, divorced parents, separated parents, same-sex parents, grandparents, aunties, uncles and special friends, regardless of their gender or sexuality.

Marriage equality is about equality before the law. It's about fairness. It's about love and family. I hope that as Australians, when we watch that movie in the future, all 'yes' voters will feel that in 2017 they made their contribution to a fair, equal and modern Australia.

Tasmania: Labor Party

Mr BRIAN MITCHELL (Lyons) (15:54): Before I begin, I'd like to thank the member for Chisholm. That was a great speech and I'd like to associate myself with her remarks.

Rebecca White has been the leader of the Labor Party in Tasmania since March this year and, if all goes as hoped, by March next year she will be our state's next Premier. Since taking on the leadership following the dignified and selfless retirement of Bryan Green, Rebecca has traversed the state listening to Tasmanians. The state election is due by March but could come at any time. Rebecca White and the Tasmanian Labor team are ready for an election whenever Liberal Premier Will Hodgman can find the courage to call one. Labor has the policies and the people to deliver a strong and effective majority Labor government that will focus on key services, such as health and education, while continuing to grow our state's economy.

Rebecca has represented the state seat of Lyons since 2010. I was delighted to have played a part in her campaign long before I came to this place, and she has been a great strength to me as I serve our common constituents at the federal level. In just the past few months, Rebecca and her team have announced plans for Lyons, including a pledge to fix a notorious intersection on the Bass Highway, at Christmas Hills near Deloraine, and a pledge to invest \$1 million in mountain-biking tourism at St Helens.

Statewide, the big issue is undoubtedly health. It is an area that has been completely mismanaged by the Liberals at both the state and the federal levels. Ambulance ramping is out of control. We have ongoing bed shortages and people with mental illness are simply being shut out of access to quality care. I don't pretend that health is an easy policy area. It is diabolically difficult to manage competing needs within a limited budget, but it has to be said that the Tasmanian health minister, Michael Ferguson, a former Liberal member of this place, has been an unmitigated disaster. Like so many of his colleagues, he puts ideology before practicality; he puts dollars before care. A Rebecca White Tasmanian Labor government will invest an extra \$88 million over three years into our state's struggling health system. Community nurses and health worker numbers will be increased and hospitals will run over seven days a week. This will keep people closer to their families when they need weekend and ongoing treatment.

The federal government recently ripped funding from well supported and popular regional preventative health programs, redirecting it to chronic care. This was appallingly handled, with no consultation and a haphazard changeover. I am yet to be convinced that the change has been for the better. The preventative programs kept people, particularly older people,

happy and active within their local communities and kept them out of hospital. I think it's a terrible shame that the Liberals have axed those valuable programs. Labor have listened to regional communities and, in government, will move to commit more resources to preventative-care models.

With Rebecca White as Premier, two additional ambulance crews and two trucks will hit the road to get Tasmanians treated faster. I should note that Rebecca and I have both been working in recent months to secure funding commitments for Rural Alive and Well, based in Oatlands in our electorate. I am pleased to see today that the federal government provided a one-year lifeline to this vital outreach service. I would have liked to have seen a three-year commitment, but one year is better than nothing. I certainly do not want to see one-year commitments become the norm. They make it impossible for organisations to plan and they fuel fear and insecurity within the workforce and amongst vulnerable clients.

Rebecca and her team have announced wider policies, including a rollout of six new child and family centres across the state to support families and nurture young children. School starting ages will stay where they are. There is also a commitment to ensure that people can pay their utility bills in instalments without financial penalty and a public commitment to aquaculture and national parks. We both share a commitment to TAFE as a pillar of vocational training. Rebecca is a hardworking and compassionate Labor leader with a steely determination to achieve practical results. She understands regional communities in particular because, like me, she lives in one. It brings a perspective to her policy suite that can be difficult to fathom when you live in a nice house in the middle of a city, surrounded by amenities and services. I know Rebecca White well. I consider her to be a very good friend. Tasmania will be well served by a Rebecca White majority state Labor government at the next election in March.

Mallee Electorate: Mildura

Mr BROAD (Mallee) (16:54): I wish to update the House on the strategic plan that we have been implementing in the township of Mildura. Prosperity doesn't just happen; it is actually as a result of choices that we make. The first thing the federal government have done since we have come into power is put common sense back into water policy. We've made it clear that we are not going to participate in buybacks. We wanted to give confidence to irrigators that water is going to be there and available for them to irrigate.

The second thing that the federal government has done is delivered \$103 million for the Sunraysia Modernisation Project, which has been built and has now put a lot of the earthen channels into pipes and has driven efficiency and confidence in the region. We are also advocating for stage 2 of the Sunraysia Modernisation Project to expand the irrigation footprint by a further 25 per cent.

The other thing we've done is put in on-farm tax deductibility for irrigation infrastructure, as well as the \$20,000 instant tax write-offs. This has meant that not only have we built infrastructure but agriculturalists and horticulturists have put infrastructure on their own farms.

The fourth thing we've done is developed three free trade agreements, with China, Korea and Japan. The prosperity that has come out of those has been phenomenal. They have driven

over a billion dollars of additional money into this community and have really set us up for the future.

But, of course, we've got to be able to get the product to the market. The federal government has contributed \$240 million to build the Murray Basin Rail Project. That's with \$200 million from the state government, so it's a \$440 million project now to have Victoria's busiest freight line taking all the horticultural products we produce to the marketplace.

Of course, it continues. If you're going to have cutting-edge producers, you need to have the NBN. We now have 11 NBN towers built around the township of Mildura. We are building the building blocks for prosperity.

The next thing we have done, which we will be opening in a week's time, is to upgrade the Mildura runway, which has cost the federal government \$10 million in a \$25 million upgrade. We now have 737s daily coming into Mildura and 140 commercial flights a week. You can fly direct to Sydney, Adelaide, Broken Hill and Melbourne, and perhaps in the future to Brisbane. This opens us up to the business community.

Of course, we wanted to make Mildura a great place to live. Also in a week's time, we'll be opening the \$18 million Mildura waterfront, a beautiful place to walk down by the water. It means that we are investing in the quality of life in our region.

We do want to build stage 2 of the irrigation infrastructure. We believe there's a strong future there, and we want to expand it. Additionally, we are working on the Mildura Future Ready project. This is a strategic vision of the council. They need to invest in a sporting precinct; our sporting precinct is full. It needs some significant upgrades, and I'll be certainly fighting for \$10 million to build part of the Mildura South sports precinct in the next round of the Building Better Regions Fund.

The other thing that has been a success for our community, which has the largest Indigenous community in the state of Victoria, is that we've had Indigenous employment programs. One of the things you will not see in Mildura is people from the Indigenous culture sitting at the river drinking alcohol. We have people actively engaged in getting people into work. We have businesses that are very proactive in making sure they provide culturally sensitive workplaces. We want to make sure that even though our community has prosperity, the prosperity is shared among everyone and that no-one is left behind.

The things that are building the prosperity in the town have been quite strategic. It hasn't been an accident. It's been really about building those key infrastructures. When you knit them all together, you're taking the products you produce to the market; you're opening up opportunities to the world; you're ensuring that there is first-rate telecommunications; and you're ensuring that we have a place where people want to live. I just want to say to the people of Mildura: the National Party have delivered for you.

Sometimes people in Mildura say that they feel like they miss out. Clearly, when I outline some of the federal government expenditure that goes into the town, they haven't missed out. But, because they are the furthest point from the capital of the state of Victoria, the furthest point from Melbourne, they believe at times they miss out. But I believe that when we work together, when we fight together and we put the case, we should be very proud of what we've achieved in that small town.

Mildura is a great inland city. I notice that Minister Taylor is here, and I hope that he sees that there is a long future for our inland city.

Mr Taylor: Hear, hear!

Mr BROAD: Unfortunately, it doesn't fit into your remit, because it's only 52,000; it's not 80,000 yet. But I believe there's a strong future there, and we'll continue to advocate for good outcomes for that town.

Debate interrupted.

House adjourned at 17:00

Thursday, 26 October 2017

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Vamvakinou) took the chair at 10:00.

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Broadband

Ms MADELEINE KING (Brand) (10:00): Mr Phillips is an 84-year-old constituent who has contacted my office on numerous occasions during his efforts to have a landline connected to his property. This might sound like overkill—a member of parliament being asking to help have a landline connected—but, through no fault of his own, Mr Phillips needs all of the help he can get. He is an 84-year-old. He moved to a new, smaller home on 4 September this year. He did everything required to ensure his services were connected to his new home. On 2 August he filled in the paperwork with Telstra for the landline at his old house to be disconnected and for a landline to be connected to his new home on 4 September. On 12 September, six weeks after he had filled in the required paperwork, Mr Phillips advised me that he had visited his local Telstra store four times to ask for the landline to be connected to his new home, in Calista. Telstra advised that a technician would attend Mr Phillips's new home on 18 September to install a landline. This was pushed out to 21 September. On 28 September, Mr Phillips attended my office again, distressed as Telstra still had not connected a landline. A technician had attended his home the day before but did not put the phone in the socket, and Mr Phillips was afraid to do this himself.

Telstra has advised us that the landline appeared to be working and a phone number had been issued and all that was needed was for Mr Phillips to insert the phone in the socket. My staff member had to go Mr Phillips's home with her own telephone to try Mr Phillips's phone and the second phone in the socket. Neither one connected and no dial tone was available. Telstra again told us that either NBN had taken over the area or the developer had not provided the wiring needed and the matter would be escalated. We were advised that on 10 October a technician would attend Mr Phillips's home on 13 October to install the landline. On 17 October, Mr Phillips once again visited my office, because he is still waiting for a technician to install a landline. Telstra has advised that the problem with installing a telephone for my 84-year-old constituent is that the area in Calista in which he lives has been handed off to NBN Co, and, whenever a provider processes an order for a new connection for a landline in this area, NBN immediately cancels the order.

To add insult to injury NBN is not scheduled to roll out in Calista until 2020. So we have Telstra trying to organise a service for Mr Phillips, with NBN knocking them back each time. Failure to install a landline in three months means he has to wait a further two to three years for a landline phone. This is 2017. Is this what the Prime Minister calls having the NBN rollout in hand. This government is a train wreck. It wrecks everything it touches, and the NBN is its champion disaster. I have listened to government members in this place, Liberals and Nationals, and they are unbelievable. They yell out across the chamber, 'I've got the NBN. My NBN is fine!' Jolly good, job done! Put your feet up and take a load off! Have a break! For God's sake, fix the NBN, fix this mess and do your job.

Western Australian Government

Mr MORTON (Tangney) (10:03): Our national anthem speaks of wealth and toil and says that our land abounds in nature's gifts. How true. What a lucky state Western Australia is to be blessed with so many natural resources and a population that is educated, entrepreneurial and hardworking, that can turn these gifts into a better life for many. The one thing WA doesn't have is a state government that understands or even cares about our resources industry. The WA Labor government just sees the extra money it can grab, whatever the dire consequences for jobs, families, businesses and investment. The WA Labor government has zero understanding of supply and demand or the enormous cost of acceleration and development. But that is the history of WA Labor, from the appalling waste and corruption of WA Inc to the incompetence of the Carpenter Labor government, which lost the INPEX project, which my state colleague Sean L'Estrange, the shadow minister for mines and petroleum, informed the WA parliament cost us in WA \$24 billion in investment and up to 4,000 jobs at peak construction.

Added to that, there was a backlog of 13,000 mining and exploration licences awaiting approval. Labor was asleep at the wheel—lazy and incompetent, even when success was there for the digging. Today, the new WA Labor government is doing its best to deny Western Australians a chance to work in mining, to build businesses and to help everybody prosper, firstly, by trying to increase the gold royalty by 50 per cent, something that the premier, prior to the WA state election, promised he would never do. The *Kalgoorlie Miner*, on 29 October 2015, stated:

Mark McGowan says a Labor Government will not increase gold royalties, labelling the move a counterproductive method of raising revenue ...

But, typically, Labor said one thing before the election and the opposite after. The WA Liberals opposed the increase. Labor has also banned fracking, despite more than 600 wells having been fracked in WA in the past 55 years. Again: ignorance, laziness, destructive virtue signalling. On uranium, finally, Labor has excelled itself. The Minister for Mines and Petroleum promised that the projects approved by the previous coalition government would proceed—the right and honest thing to do. Then he was mugged by the unions, who showed their usual total disregard for their members' jobs and the future and showed the minister who's boss. The *West Australian*, on 18 April 2017, reported that the AMWU state secretary, Steve McCartney, said that the minister had been misquoted and there was 'no way in the world projects would be able to go ahead'. Labor in WA is subservient to its pay masters and its puppet masters—always has been and always will be.

Domestic and Family Violence

Ms LAMB (Longman) (10:06): I rise today in absolute and utter condemnation. That absolute and utter condemnation is directed at Pauline Hanson's One Nation party. It's a party whose entire existence is based on a pathetic strategy of making outrageous claims to generate headlines. It's a strategy that is harmful and dangerous. I cannot believe I have to stand here today and argue that domestic violence is a bad thing. I cannot believe I have to stand here and make note of how damaging the legislation that the Queensland wing of Pauline Hanson's One Nation has proposed is. They say they are 'thinking of the children' but really they're throwing vulnerable children into the crossfire. One Nation are using children as a political tool. It is absolutely despicable behaviour. Pauline Hanson and her Queensland leader, Steve

Dickson, should be ashamed. Putting children at risk of harm is the lowest form of low, and it is absolutely disgusting that One Nation would do this to seek political gain.

Just over an hour ago I was speaking on the phone to Estrelle from Caboolture Regional Domestic Violence Service. She's an expert in the field of domestic violence, having supported countless victims in the Moreton Bay region. She was shocked and appalled at One Nation's policy. She said, 'Has anybody from One Nation consulted with the experts, looked at the figures, spoken to victims?' Estrelle noted, when she was speaking to me, how perpetrators of domestic violence are already using children to get to their partners—manipulating them into attacking them both verbally and physically—and now One Nation want to make things worse. One Nation's domestic violence spokesperson described their policy by saying that a victim must 'prove victimisation through injuries; otherwise visitation should not be restricted'. Can you believe that, Madam Deputy Speaker? It essentially means that unless a victim, be they a woman or a man, has a black eye, One Nation want to push their children back into the hands of the perpetrator. In doing this they are showing absolute disregard for the welfare of children, all for the sake of some headlines or TV interviews. Nearly 26,000 offenders breached protection orders last year—26,000 offenders. How many children involved in those situations would be forced back under One Nation's policy?

Diwali

Mr LEESER (Berowra) (10:09): The triumph of good over evil, hope over despair and darkness, knowledge over ignorance—these ideals were the cause of celebration in the Indian-Australian community last week as part of Diwali, or the festival of lights, celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists. There are around 600,000 Australians of Indian heritage, and I have 6½ thousand of them living in the Berowra electorate. They play an active role and make a much valued contribution to our community, and I wish I had more Indian-Australian constituents.

As the Chair of the Parliamentary Friends of India, Diwali is my favourite festival on the multicultural calendar. Diwali is a time of joy when family and friends come together. The Hindu story of Diwali tells of the return of Lord Rama and his family after 14 years of exile during which he defeated the demon king Ravana. To honour Lord Rama's return and his victory, the villagers lit diyas to illuminate their path and celebrate the belief that good ultimately triumphs over evil. To symbolise this, every year on Diwali homes are filled with light. Diyas and candles are lit, children play with sparklers and fireworks are set off in celebration. People open their doors and windows to welcome Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, fortune and prosperity and ask her for blessings for a good year ahead.

The Sikh version of the festival, Bandi Chhor Divas, is held at the same time as Diwali commemorations and notes the release of the Guru Hargobind Ji and his arrival in Amritsar on the eve of Diwali in 1619. He was imprisoned by the Mogul emperor Jahangir and won his release with 52 fellow prisoners. When he arrived in Amritsar, the people lit up the whole city with candles and lamps. Bandi Chhor Divas is a time for family and is celebrated with feasts, gift giving and the lighting of homes.

Diwali also marks the end of the Hindu year. I attended Hindu New Year celebrations for 2074 and the festival of Annakut at BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir. The highlight of the festival is the offering of Annakut, a mountain of food traditionally arranged in tiers or steps in front of the altar, resulting in a spectacular display.

I particularly would like to acknowledge the people who organised the various Diwali celebrations I attended, including Mohit Kumar, the President of the Council of Indian Australians, and Shubha and Aksheya Kumar from the India Club at Castle Hill where I did a famous bangara dance, which has gone viral, to the tune of Dil Ka Maamla Hai Dilbar. Let me acknowledge the highly talented and very patient Mona Grover, my dance teacher. I also acknowledge Professor Nihal Agar from the Hindu Council, where I spoke in Hindi, Harbir Bhatia from the Turramurra Gurudwara Sydney, where I participated in worship services and feasted on vegetarian food, and Darshan Desai from the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Rosehill for Annakut, where I tried out my Gujarati. I appreciate the encouragement and support I have received from the community in Berowra and more broadly around the country. I wish all the people in the Indian-Australian community a very happy Diwali. May this Diwali bring joy and prosperity. Shubh Diwali. Dhanyavaad.

Ballarat Electorate: Artober

Ms CATHERINE KING (Ballarat) (10:12): Earlier this month I was given the wonderful opportunity to launch Artober in Daylesford, a beautiful town within my electorate of Ballarat. Since being launched in 2014, this arts program has stood as a centrepiece of the Daylesford region's busy arts calendar. The events of Artober are a truly unique opportunity to experience art in all of its forms and in different environments. Throughout Artober, you can not only attend large-scale events such as the Daylesford Art Show, which is still going strong in its 33rd year and showing many works from over 100 local artists, but also enjoy smaller experiences, such as visiting workshops, open studios or community events. It is hard to enter any of these sites, look at the work produced by some of the most talented within our community and emerge without having been inspired by their artistic creations. It is experiences like this that bring thousands back to Daylesford and this event each year.

In just the short time I've been able to spend at Artober so far, I've been able to enjoy the works of Brian Nash and the words of Warren Maloney at their exhibition, Villages of Hepburn. These two men from the local area have been engaged in a project visiting the small towns and villages dotted around Hepburn to paint the landscapes and write down the stories of this wonderful place. For anybody who has had the joy of visiting this region, they will know just how beautiful it is. Brian and Warren have truly done these towns justice with their paintings and beautiful words.

Once again, the Artober event is being run as a not-for-profit, meaning that not only do visitors get to enjoy the works on display but we can do so knowing that all funds raised will support the region, the community and beyond. We know that it is events like this which bring together our local artists in a cooperative effort that ensures regional artistic communities both survive and thrive. I want to congratulate all of the artists who have been involved in Artober. I particularly acknowledge the work of the volunteers and the service community who put on the art show and have been doing so for a long period of time, ensuring its continuity. Daylesford and the Hepburn shire is an incredibly beautiful part of the world. I would encourage members to visit.

Artober is nearly finished as we head out of the month of October, but I want to thank the artists, the volunteers and the organising committee for again putting on such a terrific event. We know that tourism is a vital part of the economy in our part of the world, and certainly this event contributes substantially to the many, many suites of events that are available across the

calendar year and makes sure that our economy continues to thrive both through the Hepburn shire and the Greater Region of Ballarat.

Armistice Centenary

Ms LEY (Farrer) (10:15): As this will be my last opportunity to speak before Remembrance Day next month, I would like to pay tribute to the many community groups across my electorate of Farrer who go to so much effort to ensure this day is a special one in the calendar. From Wentworth to Walla Walla, Greater Hume to Griffith, Remembrance Day is attentively marked to ensure this and future generations remember the effort and sacrifice so that we can enjoy the freedoms that each of us experiences today.

Of course, the red poppy has become synonymous with this day. During the First World War, red poppies were amongst the first plants to spring up in the devastated battlefields of Northern France and Belgium. The poppies soon became widely accepted throughout the Allied nations as the flower of remembrance to be borne on Armistice Day. The Australian returned soldiers and sailors league first sold poppies for Armistice Day in 1921, and that continues today to raise funds for its vital welfare work. While this coming 11th of the 11th will be observed as solemnly as ever, the commemoration in 2018 strikes importantly on the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day. In fact, my father was born in 1918. He is turning 100 next year. His two older brothers went to war and did not return.

The call has gone out to knitters from around Australia to help create 60,000 poppies to carpet part of the grounds at the Australian War Memorial for those commemorations. Each poppy knitted will represent an Australian life lost in World War I, with the Great War remaining the costliest conflict to Australia in terms of deaths. One of my local CWAs at Jindera is taking on the challenge. The ladies at Jindera, led by my dear friend Mrs Helen Glachan, are already experienced in this field. Three years ago they knitted 2,000 poppies to adorn the local service at the start of the Anzac Centenary. Seven CWA members at Jindera want to make as much of a contribution as possible to that very important and symbolic scene that we will witness here next year in Canberra. With each poppy taking about an hour to assemble, this is no small effort, and I thank them in advance for their special efforts to remember the fallen.

Another way that communities can participate is through the Australian government's Armistice Centenary Grants Program. Applications for grants will open next month to support projects or activities in our region to commemorate the end of the war. To acknowledge this historic day, \$7.5 million has been allocated through the Armistice Centenary Grants Program, allowing total funding of about \$50,000 to each of Australia's federal electorates. One-off grants from \$3,000 are available, and I encourage anyone in Farrer who wants to contribute to this significant moment in our nation's history to submit an expression of interest through my office.

Aged Care

Ms McBRIDE (Dobell) (10:18): It is our turn to care. Tony and his wife, Sheelagh, migrated to Australia from Liverpool, England, and raised three sons. When Sheelagh suffered a heart attack 17 years ago, Tony stopped work to care for her. A few years later, she was diagnosed with frontal lobe dementia. Tony managed as Sheelagh's health gradually deteriorated, but, when her leg was amputated two years ago, doctors advised that she should

move into an aged-care home. The fees and charges were complex and difficult to understand, leaving the family struggling to meet full-fee payments and missing out on a place for Sheelagh in the aged-care home of her choice. Despite the move being caused by the loss of her leg, not dementia, Sheelagh was placed with other dementia patients, many very advanced. She became isolated and lonely. Tony said:

In January last year we celebrated our golden wedding anniversary. I asked my wife what very special present I could give her. She replied, "Tony, please take me home".

So he bought a hospital bed, lifter and commode, modified their home and Sheelagh came home. Tony had applied for in-home care, but the waitlist was long and it was many months before a package was finally approved. After a year Sheelagh's needs were beyond home care, and she moved permanently into an aged care home, but an administrative bungle by the Department of Human Services, which lost her income and asset assessment, meant a delay of 10 weeks and financial strain for Tony. At each step in the process the government failed to provide the support and dignity we expect for Tony and Sheelagh. This system is broken. It needs to be fixed.

Last week the Health Services Union launched their Our Turn to Care campaign in Lake Haven in my electorate. Their survey of aged care workers showed that 58 per cent believed they were unable to provide the care their residents deserved and they wanted to give. Eighty-one per cent blamed short staffing. People like Sheelagh and Tony can't receive the care they deserve until there are enough staff to care for them.

The increasing demand for aged care is driven largely by our ageing population and the increasing prevalence of dementia. Over the next eight years an extra 55,000 aged care workers are needed to keep up with demand. Aged care workers are dedicated, but many burn out due to high workloads and low wages. This, combined with poor resourcing of My Age Care and an alarming lack of in-home services, is hurting older people when they are most at risk. The aged care system should support decent care for older Australians, but as Marta, who came to Australia in 1983 from Chile, told members at the HSU launch last week, 'I love Australia. This is my home, but I didn't think Australia would treat their elderly like this.'

Illicit Drugs

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Maranoa) (10:21): I rise to bring attention to the scourge of drug addiction, particularly in rural and remote communities like those I represent in the electorate of Maranoa, which covers nearly 43 per cent of the state of Queensland. Recently I held a number of ice forums, because I became increasingly aware of the concerns of citizens across my electorate about the impact the drug ice was having. In these small communities in the electorate of Maranoa the effects are far more visible than they are in metropolitan areas. They tear away at the very fabric of that community because it is so prevalent. You see the pain and anguish of those families. I have to admit that before I became the member for Maranoa I was ignorant of the effects of drugs on families and individuals. It wasn't until I sat and listened to the harrowing stories of some of the families and the addicts themselves about the impact it has had on their lives and the way it has destroyed families, destroyed their financial status and destroyed these communities. It took a toll on me and made me realise that we had to take action.

This government proudly put in place \$300 million for tackling ice, but it became apparent to me, as the local member, that we needed to make sure that those funds were put at a

grassroots level and that it was actually impacting those people not just in larger metropolitan areas but also in those smaller communities. As I heard when I went around having these ice forums across rural and regional Australia, there is a small window of opportunity when people reach out for help, and unless there's someone there to grab them in that hour of need, invariably they fall back into their old ways.

It became apparent that we were being underrepresented in terms of clinical workers on the ground. I am proud to say that as a result of these ice forums that we've had we now have, for the first time, a clinical worker in Chinchilla, a community of nearly 4,000 to 5,000 people. For the first time we have someone in Kingaroy. We are bolstering services in Kingaroy as well as Dalby, Goondiwindi and Warwick, and for the first time in Roma and now St George.

Only in the last couple of weeks you would have heard of the raids by the Queensland Police Service, where they laid charges on 44 people. There were 214-odd charges laid against these people in that community and I have to congratulate the Queensland Police Service, Detective Inspector Paul Hart and the local St George police, Senior Sergeant Paul Tabrett and liaison officer Adam Osborne. They are true country coppers who care about their community, making it a better place and not walking past anything they would not accept. These are true people that care about their community and about making a difference to the lives of the young people in that community, so that they will have a way forward and can live in a community with safety and pride. Members, I implore you all to tackle this together as a community.

Workplace Relations

Ms CHESTERS (Bendigo) (10:24): It's been a big 24 to 48 hours in the workplace relations area in regards to the Registered Organisations Commission, or 'ROC', as it has been nicknamed, and in regards to the Minister for Employment. It may come as a surprise to people if they have been fixated on Senate estimates that there also has been a break in the case with the locked-out Tieri miners. They have been locked out now for 112 days and counting. Many people in this place have stood up and criticised the Oaky North coalminers who have been locked out of their workplace. They have said many things in this place which have since been found to be untrue, but what they have not done is come in here and criticise Glencore, although on Monday the Fair Work Commission actually found, as an *AFR* article reports:

... Glencore had breached the good faith bargaining requirements of the Fair Work Act by operating a "... quasi military" surveillance project, by delivering 26 workers disciplinary notices for alleged misbehaviour on picket lines and on social media, and by forcing union members to change their normal workwear to ensure that the union logo was not worn at the mine.

The commission 'slapped down' Glencore for engaging quasi-military security—because they had been following their workers outside of work hours. They had been surveilling them in their homes. They had been surveilling them when they dropped their children off to school. Tieri is a small mining town, and people notice when a quasi-military group is taking photos of their neighbours. We haven't yet seen anybody on the government side slap down Glencore for their behaviour. All we have seen, all we continue to see, from this government are repeated attacks on workers and repeated attacks on union members.

There are other questions that this government still needs to answer. Will the immigration minister say no to INPEX? They want to bring in foreign workers to work on our offshore gas

facilities. The AWU, again, are saying, 'We have unemployed workers willing to do that work.' Will the immigration minister stand by those workers and ensure that Australian workers get those jobs first? We also have another case where the CFMEU has had a win against—

Proceedings suspended from 10:27 to 10:40

Ms CHESTERS: In conclusion, earlier this month the Fair Work Ombudsman proved that 457 visa workers in this country have been unlawfully discriminated against because of their nationality and race. There are serious issues going on in Australian workplaces and with employers. This government is not doing enough to crack down on them.

Groom Electorate: Family Week

Dr McVEIGH (Groom) (10:40): In late 2005 a number of business and community leaders met with the goal of developing and promoting Toowoomba as a caring and supportive environment for families. Out of this meeting an organisation called Toowoomba Supports Families was formed. The Family Week activity is an initiative of theirs, with the main strategy of promoting the Toowoomba region as a great place for families to live. Its goals include businesses, clubs and individuals organising initiatives, activities and other events which recognise the importance of families in our region as the basis of our community. It's about celebrating all of the wonderful qualities that make families special and helping to support and strengthen families on the Darling Downs.

Over the years, Family Week has enjoyed amazing support from the Toowoomba community, with thousands of people participating in activities and events right across our city. Participants include: leading business people; community organisations; leaders at local, state and federal government levels over the years; faith community leaders; and, of course, our mayor, Paul Antonio, in particular. The support this activity receives right throughout our community, particularly from these leaders, is magnificent. Just this morning there was an official Family Week breakfast, which attracted 150 family groups and leaders to the University of Southern Queensland's refectory to hear a number of speakers on the topic of 'Family as the basis of our society'.

Family Week is very much about celebrating family, obviously, and building community through that focus. Being a part of Family Week has been so easy for many people over the years in Toowoomba: inviting friends, family members or neighbours over for barbecues and so forth, or organising for those at work to enjoy picnics and other family based activities in workplaces right across our city. School fetes and the Come to the Table event are other ways for students and families to attend Family Week, and for community to be developed. Many early childhood centres use Family Week as a great opportunity to celebrate families in the community, and that is certainly a feature of the activity.

This week recognises that every generation has a role in building this community activity—young and old. For many people as they age, life can become isolating. Helping a neighbour, inviting them over for a cuppa or lending a hand can make such a difference and build that sense of community for everyone. This week runs from 21 October to 29 October, so we're right in the middle of it. I applaud those behind Family Week in Toowoomba. We are one of the most recognised family-friendly cities in Australia.

BILLS**Australian Grape and Wine Authority Amendment (Wine Australia) Bill 2017****Second Reading**

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr HART (Bass) (10:44): The intent of the Australian Grape and Wine Authority Amendment (Wine Australia) Bill 2017 is to mitigate some of the unfortunate consequences of the Turnbull government's decision to reduce the wine equalisation tax—the WET—rebate in their 2016 budget. In the 2016 budget, the Turnbull government announced two major changes to the WET: the reduction of the rebate cap from \$500,000 to \$350,000 and a declaration that only wine producers with a financial interest in a winery can claim the rebate.

Reformation of the WET was long overdue. There was evidence that the system was being rorted by bulk and unbranded operators and creative entity structuring in order to access the rebate. The Winemakers' Federation of Australia said that it was compromised on three fronts: firstly, the ability of brokers, intermediaries and uncommercial arrangements to access the entitlement; secondly, the role of the rebate in delaying the correction of the supply and demand imbalance by underpinning the conversion of uncommercial grapes into bulk wine and ultimately low-equity cleanskins and home brands; and thirdly, the ability of New Zealand entities to access the entitlement on unfair preferential terms.

Reducing the perceived rorting of the WET rebate is something that certainly required attention. Unfortunately for the industry, the Turnbull government also saw it as an opportunity for a revenue grab—a tax grab that has hit the bottom line of winemakers very hard. The government initially planned to pocket \$300 million from the first reform proposal that was put forward. Following significant industry backlash and expressions of concern from Labor, the government backed down and went back to the drawing board. This legislation is the result. The government still plans to pocket \$160 million as a result of the reforms and the implementation of this industry support package.

The bill does a number of things. Firstly, it will formally change the name of the authority previously responsible for industry regulation, the Australian Grape and Wine Authority, to Wine Australia. It will also enable Wine Australia to implement all program activities under the Export and Regional Wine Support Package, including for the purposes of cider and international wine tourism. It will enable Wine Australia to administer grant programs for wine, including the cellar door grant. The grant programs are necessary to enable transition for wine, including from the previous scheme, but those programs may not be enough for transition. The wine support package and the cellar door grant were announced by the government in an attempt to allay fears from the industry to assist them in transitioning to their reforms of the WET. The wine support package will allocate \$50 million for an export and regional wine support package. The program will allow entities with below \$20 million annual turnover to claim 50 per cent of their promotional activities up to a cap of \$50,000.

This fund unfortunately is limited, and the money will be allocated on a first-in best-dressed basis. It is also limited to marketing promotion in China, Hong Kong, Macau and the United States. There will be \$10 million allocated for a wine tourism and cellar door program. This is a cash grant program allocated in part on the amount of sales at the cellar door. It is

also capped and, if oversubscribed, every successful applicant's grant will be reduced by the proportion necessary to bring all applicants under the cap.

This WET legislation is of particular significance to my home state of Tasmania. I consider myself most fortunate not only to live in my electorate of Bass but also to represent an area of northern Tasmania that has a focus on wine, food and tourism. The Tasmanian wine industry is unique within Australia; 100 per cent of the product is premium product. That attention to detail—that focus on premium product—and the cellar door experience have also infected or transferred to the craft beer industry. I know there is a real and sensible link between the production of craft beer and tourism, but I think most people concede that the cellar door experience, particularly a cellar door experience in Tasmania, provided much of the inspiration for the potential represented by craft beer.

My electorate is blessed with some of the best sparkling wine in Australia, if not some of the best sparkling wine in the world, potentially. This has been recognised by some of the oldest producers of sparkling wine in Europe, who have chosen to establish or acquire vineyards in northern Tasmania. The acclaim for Tasmanian wine is widespread. For example, James Halliday, in the 2014 *Australian Wine Companion*, said that the best sparkling wines are now predominantly sourced from Tasmania. Anthony Rose, in the *Independent*, from the United Kingdom, said that Tasmania is rapidly becoming Australia's 'little Champagne'. Nevertheless, most of the producers within Tasmania are small producers. Some of the largest Australian wine producers do operate within Tasmania, but all of their product that is grown within Tasmania is premium product.

Whilst Labor recognises and supports the necessity for amendments within this legislation, particularly the changes made to the WET, it is very important, particularly for the premium producers of wine within my home state of Tasmania, to acknowledge and recognise that a disproportionate burden is imposed on the small premium producers as a consequence of this legislation. Eighty per cent of Tasmanian product derives from approximately 20 producers. The small producers in particular, as I said, will be hit very hard. There is a disproportionate effect of a reduction of the rebate for a small producer. While it might be the case that a very large producer of wine can absorb the reduction in rebate, notwithstanding that there is some financial effect across the whole industry, it is obvious, as a matter of financial necessity, that a small producer will be disproportionately disaffected.

While the government seeks to ameliorate the effect of the reduction of assistance with the introduction of these grants programs, this in turn requires the parliament to take the government on trust that the grants program will be effectively run with the stated aim of supporting regional producers. These programs need to be well designed and money must be allocated on a merits basis. Labor will be watching this process closely.

I can tell you that there has been considerable disquiet in the industry as a result of this process. Quite appropriately, the industry has asked whether the elements of this package align with the strategic focus of Wine Australia. That question has yet to be answered. The peak representative wine bodies within the states of South Australia, New South Wales, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia have submitted a joint response to the draft grant guidelines. The organisations have been actively involved in discussions and consultation regarding the changes and are very keen to ensure that the grants programs are successful and

that they support the long-term repositioning of their members in the Australian wine sector more broadly. This is essential for the premium wine industry of Tasmania.

The cellar door and wine tourism grants are good in principle. However, the state wine organisations are very concerned about the impact of the proposed grant processes on organisational cash flow and the overall profitability of wine businesses. The potential impact on a wine business is that it would lose up to \$150,000 from the bottom line immediately following the rebate reduction in 2018-19; yet it will not be able to access any additional top-up grant of \$100,000 until November 2019. That is, of course, assuming the administration of the grant program will be effective and efficient.

In addition to this, there is uncertainty over the potential for over-subscription, which must create additional pressure on financial planning and performance of the small businesses. Put another way, the grant programs which are designed to support regional producers need to recognise the potential effect of the withdrawal or reduction of the rebate and the potential difficulties in replacing at least a portion of that funding through the grant program. Again, the Export and Regional Wine Support Package is good in principle, but, as a response to the financial effect of the reduction of the rebate, the effect is still to be determined. The intention is that this will be restricted, and the competitive grants program is designed to support a collaborative, strategic approach towards attracting and maximising international wine tourism.

The various state wine organisations have specific strategies and priorities which have been developed in partnership with their respective members and, I understand, the regional associations. The state wine associations may be in the best position to determine what will be the appropriate activities to support their members in their regions, particularly where these regions are negatively impacted by these and other changes. It is obvious, therefore, that any grant oversight and/or assessment process, to be effective and responsive, will need to have very good and clear insight into the views of the state wine organisations. The various state wine organisations are not-for-profit and are supported, in the main, by wine producers. As a consequence there may be difficulty with the proposed co-contributions which are proposed within the draft grant guidelines. I urge the government to work with the state wine organisations to ensure that the state wine organisations are able to access the funds which are intended to support their members for trade and tourism outcomes which are for the benefit of the wider industry and, of course, our regional communities. The proposed wine export grants are likely to be very quickly exhausted, according to industry feedback. It will be most appropriate that the government put in place real-time updates with respect to approved and pending applications so that the individual businesses can determine whether it's appropriate or not to submit a particular application.

As I indicated earlier, Tasmania produces high-value wines, and when sold domestically they are taxed on their value at 29 per cent. The change to the WET rebate disproportionately affects Tasmania's wine producers, dominated by small premium producers. The state's wine industry has projected that production could triple over the next five years. I've been speaking with producers in my electorate who have had to question decisions on expansion and hiring plans as a direct consequence of this government's decision. The small to medium wineries, as I indicated earlier, will be most impacted by this. Rebecca and Tim from Holm Oak Vineyards in the Tamar Valley have put their expansion plans on hold. Shane and Fran from

Delamere Vineyards, who have six full-time staff, have raised a number of concerns with respect to maintaining their current staffing levels.

Tasmania is proactive in marketing itself as a place to invest in the wine industry, particularly at the premium end. My home state enjoys and celebrates a national and international reputation as a leading producer of premium cool climate wines. The state consistently wins high praise, not to mention an array of medals from wine judges and critics alike. Industry and government need to work together to facilitate the expansion of the industry and further develop our reputation in wine and food tourism. The industry is seen as a priority sector with excellent growth prospects. Successive Tasmanian governments have consistently argued the case for securing value-added investment within the state.

Taxation measures, like these taxation measures, often affect behaviour of consumers and businesses, and these measures are no different. The initial proposal for the reduction of the rebate was, quite correctly, rejected. The two funds created as part of the rebate reforms—the \$50 million Export and Regional Wine Support Package and the \$10 million Wine Tourism and Cellar Door Grant program—are both necessary and appropriate. Labor supports them. It is, nevertheless, essential that the government does the hard work, in consultation with the industry at the national and state levels, to ensure that the administration of the grant program is effective. This is necessary to ensure that those who are disproportionately affected by the changes to the rebate receive appropriate assistance in transitioning to the new regime.

The premium wine industry in my state of Tasmania is now part of the identity of Tasmania. It has built a well-deserved reputation for excellence and innovation. The small producers need to have their voices heard through the state-based wine organisation—in this case, Wine Tasmania—and their interstate counterparts. It is also most important that the strategic focus of the grant program is aligned with the strategic focus of Wine Australia so that there is no inconsistency between the application of funds and the strategic interests of the industry as a whole.

This is very important legislation, particularly as it affects my home state. As I've said on a number of occasions, we have a predominantly premium based industry made up of small wine producers. Those small wine producers need an effective transition program. The transition program might not be so effective if those grant programs are not administered correctly. The government must continue to talk to the wine industry organisations at both state and national levels. It's essential for the reputation of Wine Australia that these programs are effective in transitioning to the new WET regime. This industry is too important in my home state to fail. It is a focus of industry expansion for the future. These taxation measures can't put any limitation on those expansions.

Ms BRODTMANN (Canberra) (10:58): I welcome this opportunity to speak on the Australian Grape and Wine Authority Amendment (Wine Australia) Bill 2017. The bill will enable the authority to implement all program activities under the wine support package; it will enable the authority to administer grant programs for wine, including the cellar door grant; and it will change the name of the authority from the Australian Grape and Wine Authority to Wine Australia.

I've got a significant interest in wine, not just because I like to imbibe it but also because my sister is an internationally renowned winemaker—she is Australia's first female Master of Wine—and there are fabulous wineries in the capital region around Canberra. Now, it's a

relatively young wine industry. While South Australia and Victoria were already established as wine regions by the end of the 1800s, Canberra had a few small, fairly unremarkable vineyards planted near Yass. Our fortunes changed when we had the great honour of our CSIRO scientists and other academics getting involved in the local wine industry. Dr Edgar Riek, a pioneer of the region, planted vineyards in 1971. He had a distinguished academic background, as many of the founders in the capital region wine district had, and he saw the potential in the region as a premium wine-growing area. He started the Canberra District Vignerons Association and instigated the National Wine Show, which is arguably the country's most important wine show.

After Riek's initial plantings at Lake George in the early 1970s, others soon followed. International award-winning scientist John Kirk established Clonakilla in 1971. Ken and Judith Helm started their vineyard and winery in 1973—the famous Helm Wines. Like Kirk and Edgar Riek, Ken Helm has been instrumental in putting Canberra district, capital region, wines on the map with the cool-climate international riesling challenge that he conducts every year. It draws hundreds of people from all around the country and also from all around the world to the Canberra region. It is a very prestigious competition. Ken Helm has been the driving force behind it. We have a cool climate here, and we specialise in cool-climate wines. This is why Ken Helm has been a major driver of the riesling challenge and cool-climate wines more generally.

In 1978, Sue and Dave Carpenter planted vines at Lark Hill winery at Bungendore. A decade later, Mount Majura's first vines were planted. In 1997, inspired by Riek, Jim Lumbers established Lerida Estate at Lake George, adjacent to Riek's original vineyard. There are many other winemakers in Canberra who are now producing wines. Bryan Martin, who was an assistant winemaker at Clonakilla estate, has used his expertise to establish Ravensworth at Mawson. Microwinery Eden Road shot to fame in 2009, winning the Jimmy Watson Trophy for its 2008 Hilltops Shiraz and the Best New Winery at the inaugural *Sydney Morning Herald's* Good Wine awards in 2010. Guiding Eden Road wines is winemaker Nick Spencer. As many here in the chamber would know, Nobel Laureate and Vice-Chancellor of the Australian National University—none other than Professor Brian Schmidt—has established his vineyard, Maipenrai, at Sutton. His pinot noir has wowed the fans. Mount Majura was established in 1991 by winemaker Frank van de Loo, who has also been producing award-winning wines, particularly chardonnays, ever since.

As I said, Canberra is well-known now around the world for producing internationally-renowned, award-winning wines—award-winning cool-climate wines. We are very proud of the winemakers here in the capital region. It is yet another reason to come to Canberra. As we heard this week, there are many reasons to come to Canberra. I've always known that Canberra is the best place in the world. I've always known that it is the best place in Australia to visit. We had that confirmed this week with Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2018 nominating Canberra as one of the top three cities to visit in the world in 2018. I am not saying that it should be limited to 2018. I am saying: come on down to Canberra any year, because it is the best place in the world. Unfortunately, we came behind Seville and Detroit. In my view, we should have been ranked No. 1. That said, this ranking is the highest that has ever been achieved by an Australian city.

Lonely Planet's travel experts compile the top cities list based on strict criteria including topicality, excitement, X factor and unique experiences. For Canberra, next year is such a unique and exciting year, and the events our city will host include the 100th anniversary of the World War I Armistice, at the Australian War Memorial, which will be an extraordinary commemoration; and the first cricket test match at Manuka Oval. Both of these venues are in my wonderful electorate of Canberra.

We're claiming to be one of the coolest little capitals, and we are the coolest little capital because we offer a rich history; amazing world-leading design elements that are based on the principles of democracy, transparency and openness; culture and entertainment; world-class national institutions; and something for every type of traveller. The Lonely Planet website rightfully states that Canberra is 'criminally overlooked' and 'packs a punch' for the small city that we are.

Canberra boasts expansive open spaces, as we know, with those huge, gorgeous skies that are blue and beautiful even when it is about minus 10 degrees. Unlike other cities where it's grey in summer and grey in winter, it is blue sky for a lot of the time here in Canberra, even in winter. So we have these beautiful open spaces overlooking the Brindabellas, the ranges that you can see from every corner of our wonderful city. We have popular attractions, including this very building—this beautiful, iconic, Giurgola-designed building. We've got Questacon, Floriade and the Old Bus Depot Markets. The list goes on and on.

Countless new and modern places to eat and drink have followed the revitalisation of areas like Braddon and New Acton, and these suburbs add to the establishment of our hip and contemporary style. As we are talking about imbibing, I just want to mention we also are home to craft beers BentSpoke, Pact, Capital and Tortured Gum; craft beer taverns and breweries, as in the Wig & Pen; and craft gins and spirits, with Underground Spirits and the Canberra Distillery. Most of these breweries and distilleries are in my electorate. I want to give a shout-out to BentSpoke, who recently made it into the top 10 of GABS Hottest 100 Aussie Craft Beers. There is also Zierholz, in Fyshwick.

This announcement by Lonely Planet adds further hopes of connecting Canberra internationally and encouraging tourists to visit Canberra, our nation's capital, which has so much to offer. Like all Canberrans, I cannot wait to welcome the world to our fabulous nation's capital.

Finally, as I mentioned earlier in my speech, my sister Meg is Australia's first female Master of Wine, an extraordinary achievement and one of which I am very proud. She's a winemaker who has travelled all around the world for the last 25 years, since she graduated with her degree from Roseworthy. She brought to my attention, when she was here just recently, the significant challenges that women in the wine industry still face. We know that women are increasingly moving into the wine industry. Women make up 50 per cent of winemaking and viticulture graduates, but women comprise only 10 per cent of the Australian wine industry workforce. So, even though 50 per cent of the graduates in this area are women, women are only 10 per cent of the workforce. With Australian wine exports now topping \$2.3 billion, at June 2017, and the wine industry providing a major source of employment, particularly in regional and rural Australia, this is simply unacceptable.

A survey of women in the wine industry by wine identity Jane Thomson last year revealed that 42 per cent of women knew or believed they were being paid less than their male

counterparts. Two-thirds of women replied that they'd experienced sexist behaviour in the workplace, and one in four women had endured unfair treatment in regards to pregnancy, sick children or maternity leave. A quarter of the respondents believed that they did not have equal career opportunities in their workplaces. I know that my sister Meg and a number of women are getting together now to bring these shocking statistics to people's attention—because they are quite shocking, given the fact that women make up 50 per cent of graduates in this area but only 10 per cent of the actual wine industry workforce.

The wine industry has to change. That starts with shining a light on the lack of diversity. That is why this survey Jane Thomson has conducted is especially useful. We need to be asking the questions: why is female representation so much better overseas than in Australia? Why the lack of national and international recognition and exposure of Australian female winemakers? Why is there no critical mass of women on wine-judging panels? Why the dramatic attrition rate? We are talking about this extraordinary attrition rate just from graduation. Why the limited career paths? Why the perception that winemaking is a male industry?

We need to institute change, and that's why I welcome the Australian Women in Wine Awards that were held last month at Australia House in London. I commend the women who took out those awards. I'll just quickly run through a few of them. Winemaker of the Year was Virginia Willcock from Vasse Felix. Viticulturist of the Year was Jennifer Doyle from Jansz. Owner/Operator of the Year was Sarah Collingwood from Four Winds Vineyard. Workplace Champion of Change was Professor Eileen Scott from the University of Adelaide. Cellar Door Person of the Year was Jasmine Morgan from Caudo Vineyards. Researcher of the Year was Dr Christine Bottcher from CSIRO. Marketer of the Year was Ebony Tinkler from Usher Tinkler Wines.

These awards are a great way of shining a light on the achievements of female winemakers from Australia and on the fact that so many women are going overseas. We have got a huge brain drain in female talent here, because the opportunities and exposure just aren't here. The acknowledgement is just not here. That is why it is important that the Australian Women in Wine Awards are highlighting these achievements and focusing attention on the issue of the lack of diversity in this industry and the fact that we have so many women leaving Australia to go and work overseas. My sister was a classic example. As I said, she spent most of her early career working in France, Germany, South America, the UK and Eastern Europe. That was because the opportunities, particularly as a young graduate, just weren't there. She became what is known as a 'flying winemaker'. These awards are fantastic. They are acknowledging the achievements of Australian winemakers. It is unfortunate they actually have to take place overseas.

But what is happening at the domestic level also needs to be acknowledged. My sister has joined with a number of women from the Yarra Valley wine area to set up Yarra Valley Wine Women. Again, it is designed to highlight the achievements of women in this area. We've got more than 150 wine brands, 85 cellar doors and 65 wine production facilities. Within this pool is a group of women winemakers challenging the statistics of the industry average. Fortunately, there seems to be a critical mass there. This group manage 12 per cent of those 150 wine brands and have a collective 200 years experience in the industry. I say to those in the wine industry: I am watching, I will be calling this out and I will be shining a light on this

issue. This is not the last conversation I will be having about the lack of diversity in the Australian wine industry.

Mr HARTSUYKER (Cowper—Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister) (11:13): The Australian Grape and Wine Authority Amendment (Wine Australia) Bill 2017 amends the Australian Grape and Wine Authority Act 2013 to facilitate wine and cider tourism and cellar door development activities. These amendments are part of the reforms to the wine equalisation tax, WET, to bring greater integrity to the WET debate. As part of these reforms, the government is investing in a \$50 million Export and Regional Wine Support Package and a \$10 million investment in the Wine Tourism and Cellar Door Grant scheme. These were changes originally driven by industry. The government has consulted extensively with the wine and cider industries through the national and state wine associations on the development of the WET rebate reforms, the wine support package and the cellar door grant scheme.

The bill enables the authority to administer and fund all aspects of the wine support package and the cellar door grant scheme. The bill will also enable industry to refocus greater attention on the export and tourism markets, both internationally and domestically, through cellar door sales, which offer it the greatest opportunity for growth and sustainability. The bill also changes the name of the authority from the Australian Grape and Wine Authority to Wine Australia. The bill is important to industry and it is important that the parliament supports the industry in its endeavours to increase wine exports and international wine tourism.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Ordered that this bill be reported to the House without amendment.

Fisheries Legislation Amendment (Representation) Bill 2017

Second Reading

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr HOWARTH (Petrie) (11:16): It is great to rise today to speak on the Fisheries Legislation Amendment (Representation) Bill 2017, because I have great childhood memories when it comes to fishing. Growing up in the northern outskirts of Brisbane on the doorstep of Moreton Bay, my father, Ron, would often take me out fishing. He developed a love of fishing in me from a very young age. My father had an eight-foot punt and a 12-foot punt with small engines on the back, so we had flat-bottom boats. We would often get up Saltwater Creek, the Pine River, Cabbage Tree Creek and Nundah Creek. We would go mudcrabbing and fishing for bream and flathead—great childhood memories. Sometimes we would get out the front around Scarborough reef, or out in Bramble Bay and around Woody Point.

One day, when I was about 12, we went out and caught a massive flathead of about 70 centimetres—this was before you let them go; this was when there were plenty of them around—a stingray, a grey nurse shark, which we let go, and a whole lot of whiting. Great childhood memories. We would come home and have a bit of a feed. I love eating seafood. We would also camp up on the banks of Saltwater Creek, which is now all a state green zone to allow crabs and fish to breed up and repopulate. We would camp up there and go crabbing

for a couple of days. Great childhood memories. As a father of three boys myself, it is important to me that my sons can also enjoy fishing when they choose, as they get older.

Aussies are a nation of seafood lovers. We consume some 14 kilos of seafood every year. That is below red meat, which is about 31 kilos, and chicken, which is 21 kilos, but I think we would eat more seafood if there was more of it and it was a little bit cheaper. Seafood, generally, is health for you. Fish is. It is a good thing to eat. Throwing another shrimp on the barbie is not only a part of our national identity but an important part of our economy, too, even though that phrase was used for a tourism campaign in America. We call them prawns here. Currently in Australia, the fishing industry is worth \$2.8 billion and employs over 14,000 people. We want to ensure that the fishing industry continues to grow—not just recreational fishing but commercial fishing as well, which is very important.

The bill before the House today seeks to amend the Fisheries Management Act 1991 and the Fisheries Administration Act 1991 to recognise and give a greater voice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander fishers and recreational fishers in the management and decision-making process related to our Commonwealth waters. Other minor amendments include increasing the size of the Australian Fishing Management Authority board from seven people to 10 people and extending the eligibility criteria to ensure that those appointed have expertise in matters relating to recreational Indigenous fishing.

Extending the board will allow a broader range of views and ensure the committee has an appropriate mix of skills, knowledge and experience to fulfil its role. It has also taken steps to ensure that the Australian Fishing Management Authority is completely independent. This will only strengthen the integrity of our fishing industry. We are proposing that no person who holds an executive position on a fishing representative organisation be allowed, which I think is important, because they can be biased. If you have someone just representing a board of recreational fishers, some of those people want to close down commercial fishing, which I think is wrong. So, they need to be independent, with independent skills. We further propose that no person holding an executive position in a fishing industry association be allowed to be appointed as an Australian Fishing Management Authority commissioner.

These amendments will give a greater voice to and recognition of all parties involved in fishing practices. Currently, there is little input from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander fishers in fisheries management. We believe that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customary fishing should be incorporated into fisheries management systems.

To quickly explain what we mean when we are talking about Commonwealth waters, it is the waters that surround Australia from three nautical miles to 200 nautical miles out to sea. It accounts for only six per cent of our commercial fishing, which I think is a bit of a shame. I think we could do a lot better in that space. New Zealand, which has waters a lot smaller than ours, has output that is much bigger. Part of that is because the fish down there are fed better and grow better, apparently, and the environment is better for them to repopulate quickly. But I still think that in commercial fishing Australia isn't doing enough. Australians want to eat fresh Australian seafood, and not everyone wants to go out and catch it themselves.

All of the eastern side of my electorate of Petrie is on the waterfront—the Moreton Bay area, Bramble Bay and Deception Bay. Over the Christmas period in 2014 I went out on the *Marvin*, a prawn trawler that works in state waters but not in Commonwealth waters. Gee, those guys work hard. I went out about 6 pm and came back at about 8 am the next morning.

You set the nets at about 8 pm and it trawls, and at 10 pm you have to pull up the nets and sort the catch. The net is immediately dropped back out, at 10, so by the time you finish sorting the catch, which takes about an hour-and-a-half, you have half an hour before the net comes in again and you have got to do it all again—no sleep, right through the night. They work extremely hard. We were catching bay prawns, tiger prawns and sand crabs. A lot of the bycatch is thrown overboard. There isn't a lot of bycatch. There were a few small whiting and small crabs. Interestingly enough, the dolphins are down at the back of the boat knocking off the part of the bycatch that goes back, and sharks underneath that get the crabs. It was an interesting night, and I encourage members from all parties who have local trawlers—I know the member for Solomon would in his electorate—to ring them up and go out with them for a night. It is extremely interesting. You see how hard they work and you develop a better understanding of commercial fishing.

There are a few little things—red tape—that frustrate commercial and recreational fishers. The boat I was on had two licences, a 45-foot licence and a 30-foot licence, and they were using, I think, the 30-foot licence that night. They are not using the 45-foot licence because they don't have a 45-foot boat at the moment. They wanted to lease their licence out to another 30-foot boat, but they couldn't do it under the 45-foot licence. It just doesn't make sense that a smaller boat couldn't use the larger boat's licence—it has to be exactly 45 feet. A lot of the boats are older. There isn't a standard 45-foot new boat—you have to have one custom-made and it costs millions. I mention that because red tape can be an issue. That is a state government issue in Queensland, but we need to think about that federally, as well.

There are three types of fishing. With Indigenous fishing, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are allowed to catch fish, turtles, dugong and whatever it is they catch for their own consumption. I think that is appropriate, as long as it is not sold commercially ongoing. It is for only what they can eat.

As I said, recreational fishing is extremely important—thousands of jobs; people like to do it. I went out fishing in commercial boats on the Coral Sea with my father in my early 20s. I have been fishing up in the electorate of the member for Solomon, on Melville Island, at the fishing lodge on Indigenous land up there. It's a great thing, recreational fishing, and we need to allow Australians to fish in Australian waters. We need to make sure we have appropriate rules that enable it to be sustainable for generations to come.

Commercial fishing is also important, and I don't think parliamentarians do enough to make sure that we can support them. We have the third-largest fishing waters in the world, yet we are 60th in productivity, which goes to my point about commercial fishing. Queensland I think is also lagging behind, because we make up only 11 per cent of commercial fishing in Australia. If you look at somewhere like Tasmania, they have a lot more commercial fishing than we do, but partly that is because they have a lot of aquaculture down there, which is great; we all like to eat Tasmanian salmon. But I think Queensland should also be trying to look at how we can improve aquaculture in our state and make the most of it. Not everyone wants to eat cheap Indonesian basa or Vietnamese fish. We want to be able to go and buy Australian fish, and it's very difficult, if you go to the local fish and chip shop, to get it.

We've also done a little bit with green zones. In November 2012 the previous, Labor, government expanded the marine protected area to some 3.2 million square kilometres. Following considerable concern from communities around Australia—recreational fishers

who would have been locked out and commercial fishers who would have been locked out—part of our election commitment in 2013 was to review it. There were a lot of keen consultations. It was robust, comprehensive and scientific. The Director of National Parks is currently preparing management plans for Australia's marine parks following two public consultation periods, and these plans will soon be provided for government's consideration.

The coalition government is investing a substantial amount of money into marine parks for conservation, for fishing and for recreation. We've allocated \$56 million to implement new zoning, and we'll wait for the formal advice. We have increased the proportion of the estate that is under a higher level of protection from 60 to 63 per cent. My understanding is that the actual conservation side of it will increase from 60 to 63 per cent. We maintain the number of high-value ecological features protected at 331, and we've significantly increased the number of ecological features protected on the sea floor from 192 to 265. The plans cut the impact to business in half, which I think is important when compared with the previous zoning, from 8.21 million to 4.1 million. Eighty per cent of the estate is open to commercial fishing, compared with 64 per cent under Labor. I'm not being political when I say that; I'm just saying that we need to make sure we are looking after commercial fishers as well. The draft plan also restores access for recreational fishing.

The bill has received widespread support from peak industry bodies, including the Commonwealth Fisheries Association and Seafood Industry Australia. These amendments were not considered lightly. The various bodies consulted on the amendments were the Australian Fisheries Management Authority, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Department of Finance, the Australian Public Service Commission, the Office of Parliamentary Counsel, the Commonwealth Fisheries Association, the Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation, the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation's Indigenous Reference Group, and the Prime Minister's Indigenous Advisory Council. I wonder how we get anything done when we consult that widely, quite frankly. I mean, that's a lot of consultation. If we have to go through that for everything, then, yes, I do have concern, once again, regarding red tape. That's a lot of consultation. I think we need to be much better at reducing red tape. A number of bodies representing recreational and Indigenous fishers made comments on the inquiry—the Victorian Recreational Fishing Peak Body and the Tasmanian Association for Recreational Fishing—but, once again, I can see nothing from Queensland there. So I would say to those in this place that recreational fishing is important, and this bill gives them a voice on the board.

I know the member for Solomon has established a group here, the Parliamentary Friends of Recreational Fishers, to support recreational fishing. But I still think we should be focusing on commercial fishing as well. We can have a great environment, make sure we have good breeding grounds and make sure there is a certain bag limit, but, please, whoever's in government: let's look after commercial fishing as well. Our population will only get bigger. We want to eat clean seafood, and most Australians do not have the time to go and throw a recreational line in or go out fishing. We need to make sure they can buy it at a reasonable price. More thought needs to be given to aquaculture as well.

It is important that governments continually revise their legislation to ensure they are looking after Australia's needs. Recreational fishing is becoming more and more prevalent in Commonwealth waters as boats and so forth improve. It's important that the interests of

recreational fishers are considered in Commonwealth fisheries management, but not at the expense of commercial fishing, which also should be encouraged. I do support this bill.

Mr GOSLING (Solomon) (11:31): I rise to support the government's changes contained within the Fisheries Legislation Amendment (Representation) Bill 2017, and I will make some other comments as well that are relevant to the topic. Indigenous and recreational fishing issues are really important to people in my electorate, which covers Palmerston and Darwin, the northern capital of Australia. But in fact these issues, as the member for Petrie mentioned, are important to people Australia-wide. I've been very fortunate to enjoy fishing in the Territory, with first nations friends, and in other magical parts of Australia—and not only in the member for Petrie's electorate. Last night I caught up with my brother-in-law, who lives in the member for Franklin's electorate now, and we've thrown a line in down there in the Derwent. But previously, when he was living in north-east Arnhem Land, in the member for Lingiari's electorate, we've pulled in some barra down at East Woody Beach, and seeing first nations people fishing on their country is a special thing, a sacred thing. It is one of the many reasons we support this legislation, because it's important that there is a stronger voice for them and for recreational fishers in general. We recognise the cultural and family importance of fishing as well as the importance of protecting our marine environment and resources. It's important to rec fishers but it's obviously incredibly important to first nations peoples.

A couple of weeks ago I went fishing, again in the member for Lingiari's electorate, with some first nations friends to a beautiful place in the Top End called Bynoe Harbour. I want to put on the record my thanks to the extended Clarke family for that opportunity. We did all right. We caught a couple and we got some muddies. It was a great feed and a great experience to be out on country with them. To Indigenous Australians, fishing is a source of joy and helps forge family bonds. It also results in a great feed of fish—normally; you can have some slow days.

As the member for Petrie mentioned just a little while ago, it's for some of these reasons that we established, on the member for Hunter's suggestion, the Parliamentary Friends of Recreational Fishers group. It is a multiparty group, and one thing we've done in recent weeks, on 15 October, was to go on Gone Fishing Day. Well done to the national rec fishing body, which had a great activity down on Sydney Harbour, but for Gone Fishing Day I went fishing locally in my electorate at the mouth of Rapid Creek. I was joined by David Ciaravolo from the Amateur Fishermen's Association of the Northern Territory—he's the executive officer there—and also by my good friend Kenny Vowles, the NT government's Minister for Primary Industry and Resources. It was a great morning. We had many members of the community come down with their kids and throw in a line, and both AFANT and my office presented—and will do when I get back to my electorate—just small tokens for those families who took their kids out fishing. Through AFANT, the amateur rec fishers of my electorate and the broader Northern Territory have a voice. But this legislation is important because we make sure that that voice has a proper place in the discussion of issues around that balance of marine protections, enabling the commercial fishermen to make a living and provide fish for those who can't go fishing and get their own feed of fish; but also that enables fishing stocks to be sustainable, so that rec fishers, including first nations fishers, can continue to enjoy that pastime.

Through all these experiences that I've outlined I had the opportunity to hear Indigenous and rec fishers' concerns with the current legislative framework and processes around the management of Commonwealth fisheries. They've been unhappy with the lack of representation or genuine engagement avenues available to them. I think that is fair to say. Indigenous and rec fishers are particularly concerned with the process undertaken to allow supertrawlers to fish in Australian fisheries, due to the fact that there was no formal process by which they, rec fishers and first nations fishers, could have their say. Recreational and first nation fishers obviously deserve the opportunity for better engagement with government. Rec and first nations fishers are entitled to a genuine say in key decisions about access to and management of key fisheries.

Therefore, as I've stated, Labor is supporting this bill, because it does provide for explicit recognition of recreational and first nations fishers in Commonwealth legislation. I welcome the fact that these amendments will require the Australian Fisheries Management Authority to ensure that the interests of all fishers are taken into account in Commonwealth fisheries management decisions. I also welcome that other minor amendments in the bill allow for increased opportunities for membership of AFMA advisory bodies and extend the eligibility criteria for serving on the Australian Fisheries Management Authority Commission to include expertise in matters relating to recreational and first nations fishing.

In practice this bill will require the Australian Fisheries Management Authority to take reasonable steps to ensure it has received adequate advice on relevant recreational and first nation interests, in addition to commercial fishing and environmental interests and scientific expertise, prior to making management decisions for Commonwealth commercial fisheries. Let me be clear that, while we support these changes, Labor will ensure that the consultation and opportunities for engagement enabled by this bill actually do occur.

The member for Petrie mentioned the need to support commercial fisheries that are doing the right thing. That is very true. As I said a little while ago, Indigenous and first nations and recreational fishers are particularly concerned with the process undertaken to allow supertrawlers to fish in Australian fisheries due to the fact that there was no formal process by which they could have their say. So, owing to the potential impacts that industrial fishing processes, such as supertrawlers, can have on fish populations in the marine environment far beyond where they actually operate, it's important the Australian community, particularly Indigenous and recreational fishers, are afforded the opportunity to scrutinise the proposals.

There are many instructive examples from our region of what can happen if industrial practices are allowed to occur without adequate oversight. In Timor-Leste, a near neighbour of my electorate of Solomon, boats of Chinese fishing companies have been found with massive numbers of sharks on board. The effect that this has on the economy and wellbeing of fishers in Timor-Leste, with the economic cost and health cost of taking away that food source, is a very serious issue. This is in our region, to the north of our country. A joint operation was conducted at dawn on 9 September this year by the marine conservation group Sea Shepherd Global with the Timor-Leste National Police, which resulted in the capture of the Hong Long Fisheries Pingtan Marine Enterprises fishing fleet at anchor off the coast of Com in Timor-Leste. Com is one of the most beautiful places in the world. It is on the north-east side of the half-island of Timor-Leste. That is where that joint operation occurred. At the request of the Timorese police, Sea Shepherd's patrol vessel, *Ocean Warrior*, approached

these foreign fishing vessels. Once those vessels were secured by the Timorese police, the Sea Shepherd crew members assisted in documenting the catch on board, confirming suspicions that the fleet were targeting sharks as opposed to engaging in broad-scale fishing.

I want to commend the Timorese national police force and the other organisations involved in the operation. In particular, I want to commend the Australian Federal Police on the capacity-building work that they do with the Timorese national police, including in areas of investigations and enforcement operations. The Timorese police force were aided by the Australian Federal Police. It is very important work for the Australian Federal Police to be doing, I'm sure members would agree. The Australian Defence Force's Defence Cooperation Program is also working very closely with the Timor-Leste Defence Force, doing great work with the navy and army over there in Timor-Leste. I commend them on that work they are doing also. Inconveniently, fish do not abide by international boundaries. This highlights the importance of acting together with our regional partners to protect fish stocks and our marine environment.

On a more local level, these examples highlight the potential impact that industrial-scale fishing practices can have on marine ecosystems well beyond the area in which the fishing occurs. We need to be acting together. Something I want to raise with my colleagues is that we need to look further into ways to ban these supertrawlers and industrial-scale fishing practices for good from the Small Pelagic Fishery. On 7 September 2015 the Senate referred the following matter to the Senate Environment and Communications References Committee for inquiry, to report by 30 April 2016:

The environmental, social and economic impacts of large-capacity fishing vessels commonly known as 'Supertrawlers' operating in Australia's Marine Jurisdiction.

Let it be noted that the reference was opposed by the Liberal and National coalition senators.

This is a problem. It's a problem in this country and not only for amateur recreational fishes. It's not just a problem for first nations fishers. It is a problem for commercial fishers. One of the committee's recommendations was that the Australian government ban all factory freezer mid-water trawlers from operating in the Commonwealth Small Pelagic Fishery. The coalition—those opposite—rejected that recommendation. Labor, having listened to ongoing concerns from the community and across the country, proposed this inquiry in August 2015 to examine the environmental, social and economic impacts of large capacity factory trawlers in Australia's marine jurisdiction, and in government Labor ensured appropriate consideration was given to the impact of large capacity factory trawlers on Australia's fisheries by amending the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. Our amendment guaranteed Australia's waters were adequately protected from risks associated with the use of large capacity factory trawlers.

Labor remains committed to preventing the operation of large capacity factory trawlers in Australian waters unless a thorough assessment against the most up-to-date science can verify that such operations will not undermine small pelagic fisheries and recreational fishing spots. I have used the example of Timor Leste. If the Timorese allowed foreign vessels to take everything away, that would wreck a sustainable fishing industry for that developing country, which is unacceptable. I support this bill to give a greater voice to first nation and rec fishers.

Ms KEAY (Braddon) (11:46): I've risen from my sickbed to speak on the Fisheries Legislation Amendment (Representation) Bill because recreational fishing in my electorate is

highly important. I apologise if I struggle, but I will do my best. It won't be pretty but we'll give it a go. On this side of the House we welcome this legislation, although I will suggest later in my contribution that the government could go further. More than 85 per cent of Australia's population lives within 50 kilometres of the ocean. Fishing in Australia is a cultural pastime embraced by all Australians. There have been many attempts to quantify the value of recreational fishing and none yet agreed upon. The Australia Institute of Marine Science's December 2016 report contained an analysis of the value of Australia's marine industry. Contained within that report was information that recreational fishing contributed almost \$2.2 billion directly to the economy in the 2013-14 years. It also stated that a further \$1.5 billion was indirectly contributed to the economy, giving a total value of \$3.7 billion. These are significant figures, but they do not take into account the value of repairs, maintenance, marinas and other infrastructure or tourism activity. AIMS do not attribute the value of these sectors between the recreational and commercial sectors. It would be fair to say, though, the conservative \$3.7 billion figure demonstrates how big recreational fishing is. Tasmania's peak recreational fishing body, TARFish, is currently in discussions with other bodies in the Commonwealth to finalise an agreed methodology to properly determine the value of recreational fisheries.

The AIMS figures are also interesting when compared to the commercial sector. AIMS state that the value of Australia's recreational fishery in 2013-14 was more than twice the value of Australia's commercial wild fisheries and four times the value of marine based aquaculture. In my state and nationally there continues to be significant growth in aquaculture, but on these figures the commercial sector has some way to go in terms of its economic value. The AIMS data in itself demonstrates a clear need to strengthen the engagement of recreational fishers in Commonwealth legislation and decision-making. In my state and my electorate the recreational fishing sector will welcome this legislation. In some ways it mirrors Labor's national recreational fishing policy that we took to the last federal election.

Recreational fishing is part of Tasmania's social and economic fabric. As an island state, Tasmania actually has a longer coastline than either New South Wales or Victoria. Our inland waters are home to Tasmania's world-class trout fishery. This fishery is estimated to make an economic contribution of around \$50 million per annum to Tasmania's economy. It attracts visitors from interstate and overseas who wish to be challenged by some of the best site fishing opportunities for trout in our pristine inland waters, many of which are contained within the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

Our marine waters are home to world-class game fishing, a stunning rock lobster fishery and the best inshore flathead fishing in Australia. Catching a feed of flathead is one of the great Tasmanian pastimes, which can be enjoyed all year round. It's been estimated that around 115,000 Tasmanians, or one in four people, enjoy recreational fishing. I remember as a child going to my local port, to the wharf—when you used to be allowed onto the wharf—and fishing for flathead. Nowadays it's a bit hard to do that on our wharves. Still, it's such an important pastime that generations of Tasmanians have enjoyed.

Marine and Safety Tasmania, or MAST, has stated that Tasmania has the highest level of recreational boat ownership of any state or territory in Australia, at one in 17. For the 2016-17 year, over 30,000 boats were registered in Tasmania. It has also been established that 90 per

cent of all registered boats are used for recreational fishing. Conservative estimates place the value of Tasmania's recreational fishery in excess of \$200 million. Tasmania's Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies, IMAS, has just commenced a survey of the Tasmanian population to determine the number of persons who go fishing and their demographic make-up. IMAS previously researched the major drivers of recreational fishing in Tasmania, and it states:

Overall, Tasmanian recreational fishers assigned the highest importance to non-catch related motives – "being outdoors" and "relaxing/unwinding" – followed by catch-related motives – "catching fish for food" and "for enjoyment/sport". Social motives – "spending time with family" and "spending time with friends" – were next in importance.

Given the value of recreational fishing, it is somewhat extraordinary how the fishery has been treated by this government when it comes to the debate over large-scale factory freezer trawlers that operate in Commonwealth waters. The public record states that this government has been and continues to support supertrawlers, initially in the *Margiris* and then the *Geelong Star*.

When Labor was in government we stopped the supertrawler, but once the coalition assumed office there was no greater champion of supertrawlers than the former assistant minister from Tasmania, Senator Colbeck. In 2015 Labor tried to ban the *Geelong Star* but was stopped by the coalition. Labor still holds genuine concerns about the impact of industrial-scale fishing operations in the small pelagic fishery. It is true that the fishery operates under a scientifically assessed quota management system. Equally true is that there have not been sufficient scientific studies to give the wider community confidence that large-scale harvesting of fish stocks from a single area would not have a long-term impact on the overall fishery. Localised depletion is a genuine concern for recreational fishers, particularly those from Tasmania. Tasmania's peak recreational fishing body, TARFish, believes there is a lack of knowledge on the rates of movements of species within the fishery, a lack of knowledge on the time it will take for local populations to recover from industrial-scale fishing and a lack of knowledge on one particular species, the jack mackerel, on the east coast of Tasmania. The jack mackerel is a particularly important species as a source of food for our tuna populations. It is also an important species for the recreational tuna sector.

A real contrast exists between the precautionary approach of this side of the House when it comes to supertrawlers and the approach of the other side. I do welcome that this legislation contains some provisions from the Senate Environment and Communications Committee inquiry into factory freezer trawlers. It may be that another *Margiris* or *Geelong Star* could be avoided in the future with a new requirement for AFMA to consider recreational fisheries in its decision-making process, as recommended by the Senate inquiry. Perhaps if this legislation had been in place a few years ago this entire debate could have been prevented.

There is no doubt the coalition has suffered political damage in my state with their blind support of supertrawlers. At the Tasmanian level the Liberal Party's ignorance could never be more stated than by having a passing glance at the actions of the Hodgman government. For a long period they were happy to stay silent and let their federal colleagues do the running. But in an effort to minimise the political damage inflicted by their federal colleagues, and with an election less than 12 months away, the Hodgman government introduced legislation to ban

trawling in state waters—a political stunt if there ever were one, because trawling has been banned in Tasmanian waters for decades.

At the commencement of my contribution I mentioned that Labor will be supporting this legislation. I also mention that on this side we believe things could be still done in a way that complements this legislation. At the last election Labor had a policy to establish a national recreational fishing council that would give our recreational fishers a seat at the decision-making table. Chaired by the agriculture, fisheries and forestry minister, the council would include representatives of both recreational fisheries and relevant government departments. The council would tackle issues like small pelagic fisheries management, boating and fishing infrastructure, conservation, access to national marine parks, and other issues of concern to recreational fishers. In effect, this body would have been the national peak body at government level for recreational fishers. It would have given recreational fishers a direct say in management decisions.

Having perused the explanatory memorandum for this legislation, I would be interested in hearing from the opposite side as to whether recreational fishers will have that direct say in future AFMA management decisions. For example, will there be a recreational fisheries representative on AFMA's management advisory committees, or will this legislation just be lip service? I hope one of the government's speakers can clarify this point, as it is very important to Tasmania's recreational fishers.

This legislation is well overdue and I know recreational fishers from my state and electorate will welcome it. The proof, as they say, will ultimately be in its implementation. I look forward to seeing it becoming a reality and to recreational fishers being placed in national fisheries management decision-making.

Mr JOSH WILSON (Fremantle) (11:58): Like my colleagues from Braddon and Solomon, I am glad to speak on the Fisheries Legislation Amendment (Representation) Bill 2017, which we support, while recognising what it does in terms of fisheries management—there is bigger question of fisheries management and ocean protection—is relatively minor. It must be seen against the background of other actions or inactions that are the responsibility of this government that don't help in putting Australia on the path to sustainable fisheries and a properly protected ocean environment. There's no doubt that careful, clear-eyed and rigorous management of Australia's fisheries is critical as part of the wider task of protecting our oceans. We are the only continental island nation and as such we have one of the largest and most important responsibilities when it comes to the stewardship of the sea. We should never underestimate the significance of that role.

Australia has the sixth-largest land mass but the third-largest exclusive economic zone. That is because we take responsibility for a large area of sea. So Australia, among all nations, should understand that the ocean is the lifeblood of our planet. It's the once great primordial soup of the earth's biodiversity which now suffers species depletion and habitat loss through our neglect. It is the largest source of protein on the planet, but its potential as a food source is threatened by overuse. It is a significant factor in shaping our climate, as well as a clear medium through which the effects of climate change can be felt and measured. For all those reasons, Australia has to approach fishery and ocean management with the utmost seriousness and the utmost care.

There is no doubt that we have the potential to be a leading influence in modelling and practising the highest standard of ocean protection and sustainable use. We have been a leader at times in the past, especially in relation to Antarctica. We have both a national interest and an international responsibility to look after our oceans. Sensible and sustainable fisheries management is core to that work. Fishing is central to the social and economic life of communities around Australia and, certainly, in my electorate of Fremantle. I will say a little bit more about that in a minute.

There is, of course, an economic use aspect to sound fisheries regulation, but there is also an essential ocean protection aspect. Ultimately, ocean protection is paramount. Ocean protection has to be the overarching concern, because, if you don't preserve marine ecosystems, fisheries will inevitably deteriorate and eventually collapse. So when it comes to good fisheries management, the false dichotomy between economic use and conservation has to go straight out the door. There is no fundamental conflict between economic use and conservation. They are really one and the same.

The value of Australia's wild-caught fisheries is considerable. In 2014-15 it was \$1.6 billion. Within the Commonwealth fisheries, which is principally what we are concerned with, it was \$350 million, and that doesn't include bluefin tuna, which is caught in the Commonwealth Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery and towed to mariculture pens in South Australia to be grown out. The value of that fishery is a further \$120 million. While we manage our fisheries, particularly in Commonwealth waters, reasonably well by international standards, we don't have a perfect record. It is salient for us to reflect on the fact that, of the 93 fish stocks managed solely by the Commonwealth, in 2015 three were classified as being subject to overfishing and a further 11 were classified as being uncertain with regards to fishing mortality.

I mentioned before that fishing is a big part of life in my electorate of Fremantle. Recreational fishing is a significant pastime for people in Western Australia across the board. In Fremantle we have the beautiful Indian Ocean as our coastline, and the Swan River as well, and fishing is something that thousands of people in my electorate enjoy as part of their birthright. Fremantle has a significant commercial fishing tradition and industry. There are over 400 fishing vessels that currently operate out of Fremantle. It is an industry that started at the turn of the century. It was largely created by Greek and Italian migrants who, in 1947, created the Fremantle Fishermen's Cooperative. The industry continues to be a very vital social and economic part of my community. In fact, this coming Sunday I will march as part of the annual blessing of the fleet, which is a distinctive ritual in Fremantle that is devoted to the safety and wellbeing of the fishing fleet and all of the fishing men and women who are engaged in it.

WA does have a history of commitment to sustainable fisheries and it has made some new ground in that area in the 21st century. In fact, I think it is right to say that the Western Rock Lobster Fishery was the first fishery in the world to be certified by the Marine Stewardship Council, in 2000, and it has maintained that certification ever since—for 17 years, which is incredibly laudable and they are to be congratulated for that. Western Australia's Peel-Harvey Estuary Blue Swimmer Crab Recreational Fishery is the first recreational fishery to be certified by the Marine Stewardship Council, and our South Sea pearl fishery was the first gem fishery to complete that certification. That is something that is worth noting.

This bill, essentially, makes some changes to the way that the Australian Fisheries Management Authority operates. AFMA has a central role in managing our fisheries sustainably. The bill requires that AFMA now take input from, and consider the interests of, all users of fisheries, including recreational, Indigenous and commercial fishers. That is a sensible and welcomed change that the government has brought in, and we support it. It is a change that is not being made before time. It responds to the Senate inquiry into factory freezer trawlers. Other contributors to this debate have made reference to that, and I will come back to it. It also responds to the Productivity Commission's inquiry into marine fisheries and aquaculture. As members may know, the terms of reference of that inquiry were to look at the extent to which fisheries management regimes align with and protect the interests of the wider community, in particular the balance between commercial, recreational and Indigenous fishing, conservation interests and consumer interests.

A key point made in that draft report was that the impacts of recreational and Indigenous customary fishing activity have been largely uncounted in Commonwealth, state and territory fishery management regimes. There needs to be a greater recognition of recreational fishing in fisheries management and there has been relatively poor input from Indigenous people in fishery management. Indigenous customary fishing should be incorporated into fishery management systems. I thank the member for Solomon for speaking about some of those matters in depth.

I do want to put the change in this bill in the wider context of ocean protection because it is impossible to separate them. I guess that goes back to what I was saying about supertrawlers. In the pursuit of effective and sustainable marine protection, Labor continued the work begun by the former Howard government in moving towards a system of national marine protected areas. That was based exhaustively on the science and on extensive consultation. I will take people back to 2012, when the network was settled. The World Wildlife Fund welcomed that reform and congratulated the federal government of Australia on finalising the boundaries and basic layout of what was to be the world's largest network of marine parks. They stated at the time:

This is an historic moment for marine conservation in Australia. The establishment of this national network of marine parks is a world-first at this scale. It's an essential step forward for the protection of Australia's diverse and unique marine wildlife.

Today's announcement is in line with scientific advice and has strong public support. We understand that in this phase, the government received 80,000 submissions which overwhelmingly supported the new marine parks. This latest demonstration of support builds on the waves of enthusiasm from hundreds of thousands of people all around the country over the past couple of years.

I thoroughly agree with that. It was a properly conducted process and it established a new high standard in marine protection, which I think is rightly Australia's role in the world for some of the reasons I've mentioned before.

Since that time, and certainly since the Abbott-Turnbull government was elected in 2013, that reform has been steadily diminished, chipped away at, torn down and undermined. We've had four years of unnecessary delay. The member for Petrie talked about processes that go on forever and the fact that the community gets frustrated when there are interminable delays, endless reviews and so on. In 2012, following on from the work that had occurred under the Howard government and the exhaustive process that took the science as its No. 1 reference

point and took as its next point of reference the submissions of tens of thousands of people in the Australian community, this historic reform was delivered.

So we were there in 2012. We then went into a further unnecessary bureaucratic process, which has taken most of the last four years. Where has it got us to?

It has got us to a moth-holed, shredded, torn-up version of that historic and rigorous marine plan. It has reduced marine protected areas by 50 per cent. It has stripped away 40 million hectares of marine reserves, including reserves that cover the Coral Sea; the deep ocean area known as the Diamantina Fracture Zone; and in my area, the Perth Canyon, one of the very few known feeding zones for the blue whale. One thousand, four hundred and sixty scientists worldwide have signed a petition decrying that backward step, including Dr David Suzuki, who described the vandalism as 'sickening', and I agree.

One of the most disappointing aspects of the government's gutting of Labor's national marine protection network is the removal of huge areas of marine sanctuaries, despite the overwhelming public submission support for that protection. The only apparent logic to this removal in relation to some of these far offshore areas is that, although they don't have any fishing use now, they might have some prospective fishing value. But, as I understand it, and this is based on my close engagement with the fishing industry, including the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council, the only possible fishing value of those areas would be through large trawling vessels with on-board refrigeration—in other words, supertrawlers. So the government have gutted this historic and scientifically supported marine plan in the name of supertrawlers in the future, essentially. They've taken away 50 per cent, or 40 million hectares, of marine protection based on the possibility, at some point, of supertrawlers coming in—which everybody knows, and all the science shows, would be devastating to the marine environment, to fish stocks and to the local fishing industry. That is very, very hard to understand.

Labor members support the bill because it makes some minor but laudable changes to the way that AFMA works. But the bill does nothing to counteract or mitigate the enormous harmfulness of the government's vandalism in relation to marine sanctuaries. In every area, it is a strange pattern: Labor creates; the government tears away. The national marine protection plan; needs based school funding; the NDIS; NBN—they all start with 'n', interestingly: all of these things that Labor comes along and creates, the next lot come in and hollow out and strip away. They find reasons to make them, at best, a far, far weaker version of what was created.

There is a very bitter irony in the fact that this bill we're looking at today puts in place the opportunity for recreational, Indigenous and commercial fishers to have greater input into fisheries management, but that the government's approach to the national marine network completely ignores all of the evidence from the community about its view of Labor's national marine protected area plan. The Department of the Environment and Energy itself has revealed there were 82,000 submissions received on the marine management plan through this further, pointless four-year process—82,000 submissions—and they were overwhelmingly in favour of the plan as Labor had settled it. Ninety-seven per cent of the submissions from recreational fishers supported the plan that Labor put in place in 2013. So 97 per cent of all of the recreational fishers said, 'Leave it as it is,' but this government is intent on ripping it down.

Mr BRIAN MITCHELL (Lyons) (12:13): My electorate has some of the best fishing spots in the country, if not the world. I know colleagues from Queensland and the Northern

Territory, and perhaps my friend the member for Fremantle, may scoff. Jealousy is a terrible thing! From the east coast beaches to the many lakes in the Central Highlands, people travel across the globe to come to Lyons to fish. My state of Tasmania also has a long, enduring and resilient Indigenous culture, and, as you might expect, with a landmass cut off from the mainland for tens of thousands of years, the ocean forms a significant part of that culture. For thousands of years, people have fished the waters off Tasmania for sustenance, and, more recently, for recreation.

I am pleased to support the Fisheries Legislation Amendment (Representation) Bill 2017, as it seeks to strengthen official engagement between recreational fishers, Indigenous fishers and commercial fishers regarding the management of Commonwealth fisheries. For tens of thousands of years, Indigenous Australians managed fisheries, and that is why it is important that their voices are heard and taken into account when decisions are made about Commonwealth waters.

Last year, a study was announced by the Tasmanian Centre for Marine Socioecology to investigate the potential for Indigenous and commercial fisheries to operate as a key economic component in Tasmania's regional communities. The study, titled *'Wave to Plate': establishing a market for Tasmanian Aboriginal cultural fisheries*, is funded by the Australian government's Fisheries Research and Development Corporation, in association with the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment and the CMS. Professor Stewart Frusher, director of the CMS, says that the project has great significance and will begin the journey to understand how Indigenous fishery cultural practices can integrate with and help to build regional economies.

Emma Lee, a Tasmanian Indigenous woman and PhD candidate, recently spent six months in the Basque Country of northern Spain studying the fishing industry to bring that knowledge back to Tasmania. Emma is the first Tasmanian Aboriginal recipient of the Indigenous Fellowship in the prestigious and internationally competitive Endeavour Scholarships and Fellowships program. She sees this study as a way to connect fishing—which boosts communication, self-esteem and connectedness—with land, building pride and self-worth. There is nothing like providing food for one's family to generate a sense of pride and self-respect. Emma says that, if we can harness that positivity, we can transform regions of unemployment into vibrant food-producing regions. The study's end-vision is to incorporate Indigenous culture with Tasmania's growing seafood and tourism market. The Wave to Plate movement is, like the more well-known Paddock to Plate movement, gaining traction in Tasmania as our community and particularly visitors to our great state seek more connectedness with the origins of their food. There are 1,900 businesses involved in the movement, servicing 1.26 million visitors, who spend around \$2.23 billion in Tasmania—and I am confident those numbers will grow.

This legislation will also ensure that the Australian Fisheries Management Authority takes into account the interests of recreational and commercial fishers. Recognition of Indigenous and recreational fishers is not currently explicit in Commonwealth fisheries legislation, which primarily regulates commercial harvest of fish stock. The bill inserts an objective that will require AFMA, the minister and joint authorities to have regard to ensuring that the interests of commercial, recreational and Indigenous fishers are taken into account in the context of managing Commonwealth commercial fisheries.

Other minor amendments in the bill allow for increased opportunities for membership of AFMA advisory bodies and extend the eligibility criteria for serving on the AFMA commission to include expertise on matters relating to recreational and Indigenous fishing.

I am pleased to see recommendations included in this bill that arose from the Senate's inquiry into factory freezer trawlers, but I am disappointed that the legislation does not incorporate the inquiry's key recommendation, which is to ban the vessels. There is simply no place for factory freezer trawlers in Australia. I made it clear during my election campaign that I was opposed to these vessels and that I would be, and I remain, a voice within the Labor Party that wants to see these vessels permanently banned from Australia. I note that the Senate inquiry recommendation to ban these vessels from operating in Commonwealth waters was reached with the full support of Labor senators. Labor stands with recreational fishers against factory freezer trawlers. I do accept that scientific experts contend that our fisheries can accommodate the quotas allocated to such vessels, but that doesn't mean we should accept such vessels as part of our commercial fishing sector. As I have said before, just because a fishery can accommodate a quota being taken from it, it doesn't mean the quota should be taken. By all means, if the expert advice is that a fishery needs to be harvested to head off environmental imbalance or harm then it should be fished. But it may be better to allow a fishery to simply remain in place, unharvested, rather than sell it for peanuts to these factory freezer vessels. Let the fishery grow. I see no harm in allowing fish stocks to grow.

Members may recall the *Geelong Star*, which was given permission by this government to harvest the Small Pelagic Fishery off the south coast of the mainland and the east coast of Tasmania. This vessel was of negligible benefit to the Australian economy. It provided few jobs, certainly none that were ongoing, and its other economic inputs were marginal at best. While here, that vessel killed a number of dolphins and seals, and the fate of the protected whale shark remains unknown. There were no tears shed in Tasmania when the *Geelong Star* headed off over the horizon. In fact, I challenge anyone opposite who supports factory freezer trawlers to point out any community in the world where these vessels have fished that have a happy story to tell. The only people who benefit from factory freezer trawlers are the corporations that own them.

Australia's commercial fishing sector is best served by Australian flagged commercial trawlers, crewed by Australians, home porting in Australia, being maintained in Australia and processing and exporting from Australia. Commercial management of our fisheries should examine not only what can occur but what should occur and, when determining whether quotas are allocated, the community benefit should be weighed alongside the private benefit. Our fisheries belong to all of us, not just a handful of international shipping corporations.

As members might expect, Tasmania has a thriving recreational fishing sector. Indeed, it has the highest participation rate of any state or territory of the Federation—115,000 Tasmanians fish, which is about one in five Tasmanians, and there are 30,000 registered recreational vessels. Unfortunately, we can only guesstimate the economic value of recreational fishing to Tasmania—we guesstimate it's around a couple of hundred million dollars—because the federal government is dragging its feet on working with the Tasmanian recreational fishing sector and businesses to draw up a detailed economic profile.

Earlier this month, thousands of Tasmanians enthusiastically took part in the second annual Gone Fishing Day calendar of events, with five days of saltwater events and five of

freshwater. We are truly blessed in Tasmania with great fishing. Whether it is in a creek, a lake, a beach or the deep ocean, we have some of the best in the world. We will have the World Fly Fishing Championships in Tasmania in 2019, and we have a burgeoning swordfishing sector off the south-east coast. A three-year research project into the sustainability of swordfish is concluding this year and early indications are very promising for a sustainable fishery ahead. Swordfishing is a sector of the industry that is growing by word of mouth. The chatter has gone through the community like wild fire about how good it is in Tasmania and the fact that in Tasmania it's a daytime experience. You don't have to be out in the dead of night. In fact, the sector is becoming so popular that, without proper management, it does risk becoming—oh, my speechwriter!—a double-edged swordfish. I should read these speeches before I give them! That is why it is important for recreational fishers to have a seat at the table—because they know the issues involved.

Fishing season in Tasmania is just kicking off. I am told squid is a bit quiet and it is a little early for swordfish, but there was very good southern bluefin fishing up until a month ago, which is later than usual. It used to be a three- or four-month season but it is now nine months long. As we know, waters are getting warmer over summer off Tasmania and this is bringing different species down, including albacore and marlin. The warming of Tasmania's coastal waters does of course have significant implications for fishery management, and the input of recreational and Indigenous fishers will be invaluable in developing appropriate mechanisms to take account of it. That is one of the reasons Labor are happy to support this bill. It is long past time that Indigenous and recreational fishers had a seat at the table in the management of Commonwealth fisheries, and we are very pleased to support the bill.

Mr HARTSUYKER (Cowper—Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister) (12:24): This bill, the Fisheries Legislation Amendment (Representation) Bill 2017, reflects the Australian government's ongoing commitment to the long-term sustainable use and development of Australia's fishery resources for all fishery users—commercial, recreational and Indigenous. As stakeholders in Commonwealth fisheries, it is important that recreational fishers' and Indigenous fishers' interests are identified and taken into consideration by the Australian Fisheries Management Authority, or AFMA.

The bill improves the transparency of arrangements for AFMA, giving consideration to the interests of all fisheries users in its decision-making process. The bill improves recreational fishers' and Indigenous fishers' formal mechanisms for conveying their interests around the management of Commonwealth fisheries. The inclusion of an additional objective in the Fisheries Management Act 1991 and the Fisheries Administration Act 1991 is consistent with representations from recreational and fishing advocacy groups and Indigenous advisory bodies.

Eligibility criteria for appointment of AFMA commissioners will be broadened to include expertise in matters relating to recreational and Indigenous fishers. This will enhance the capacity of the commission to respond to future challenges in fisheries management. Increasing the maximum number of members on AFMA's advisory committee from seven to 10 improves opportunities for representation from all relevant stakeholders, including recreational fishers.

This is welcome legislation that provides significant improvement with regard to the management of our fisheries. It ensures that the interests of Indigenous fishing groups and

recreational fishing groups are appropriately taken into account. I certainly commend the bill to the House.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Ordered that this bill be reported to the House without amendment.

Regulatory Powers (Standardisation Reform) Bill 2016

Second Reading

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Dr ALY (Cowan) (12:27): This is a fairly uncontroversial bill that has bipartisan support. Nonetheless, it is worthwhile to come and speak on some of the aspects of the bill within the broader context of a regulatory reform agenda because the Regulatory Powers (Standardisation Reform) Bill 2016 makes amendments to 15 Commonwealth acts to implement the Regulatory Powers (Standard Provisions) Act 2014. The government introduced an almost identical bill in the Senate in the last parliament, which lapsed upon dissolution of the parliament without being debated.

As part of its regulatory reform agenda, the former Labor government developed a framework for standard regulatory powers across a range of Commonwealth laws. This project, started by Labor, was intended to reduce the volume and complexity of Commonwealth legislation and work across a more consistent approach to regulation. The Labor government's legislation to implement the first stage of this reform lapsed with the dissolution of the 43rd Parliament and was reintroduced by the Abbott government in the 44th Parliament, in 2014. The project was always intended to proceed in several stages. The first stage, the implementation of the act, is only the development of a suite of standard powers.

As I mentioned, the bill makes amendments to 15 Commonwealth acts to repeal current provisions providing for regulatory regimes in those acts. They include the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority Act 2006, the Tobacco Plain Packaging Act 2011, the Defence Reserve Service (Protection) Act 2001, the Greenhouse and Energy Minimum Standards Act 2012, the Weapons of Mass Destruction (Prevention of Proliferation) Act 1995 and the Privacy Act 1998, among others. In most instances, the bill will not alter existing arrangements, because triggering the act will substitute an equivalent provision for existing powers that reflects modern best practice drafting.

Labor supports the bill, which continues the work undertaken by the former Labor government. We are pleased that the Abbott government reintroduced the bill and that Labor supported it. The regulatory powers act formed part of the Labor government's border regulatory reform agenda. It doesn't have a force in its own right. For its standard provisions to be applied, it must either be referred to in new bills or in amendments of existing bills. Labor hopes that the government will continue to build on our regulatory powers. It is indeed good to see that the government is continuing the work that we started. These are all worthy reforms and I commend them to the House.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr HASTIE (Canning) (12:30): I move:

That the Federation Chamber do now adjourn.

Fairfax, Mr Bruce Leslie

Mr HART (Bass) (12:31): I rise today to honour and reflect upon the life and influence one of Tasmania's leaders in education, Bruce Leslie Fairfax, who became tragically lost in bushland this month. There are many debates in this place about the transformative power of education. There is not enough said of, too few words offered for and not enough recognition of the educators who inspire and mould young brains, making learning fun, challenging stereotypes and preparing young people for the wider world and, most importantly, for an uncertain future. Sometimes popular culture goes close to identifying the special relationship and the special responsibility of a great teacher to his or her students. An example might be Robin Williams's performance in *Dead Poets Society*. One thing I can be certain of is that Bruce Fairfax was regarded by all who encountered him as an inspiring teacher for over three decades at Launceston Church Grammar School.

Bruce Fairfax was appointed as Director of Studies at Launceston Church Grammar School in 1988. Prior to that he taught at the Armidale School and Canberra Grammar. He was a master English scholar. He taught religion and philosophy. Like many who excel where others only serve, it was the manner of his contribution and the mastery of his subject and his rapport with his students that distinguished his role as a teacher.

I have a particular personal interest, having served on the board of Launceston Church Grammar School, and my son of the class of 2014 was taught by Bruce Fairfax. I've read many tributes from former students. They have been fulsome in their praise of Bruce Fairfax. I asked my son to collate a few of the observations from his peers in the class of 2014. From Jesse, 'I remember us having really off-topic, heated discussions about so many things, and then thinking we learnt nothing. But then you come to do assessments and realise the questions here and there point the conversation in the right direction and you knew exactly what you were on about'. From Warwick, 'It was quite common to see him not standing at the front the classroom but sitting amongst it or casually leaning on some furniture and listening to us speaking. In hindsight it feels like he spent most of the class listening, very occasionally steering conversation.' From Frances, 'He once out-ran me to the chapel. He would have been 63. He had a holistic approach to teaching which taught us as much about life as it did the topic of our study. Also I remember chatting with him about different running routes, which radio programs to listen to, current affairs, bushwalking adventures, good books and even chocolate slice recipes'. From Steven, 'He knew that learning was not teaching you how to do well in exams or getting honours degrees. He encouraged the pursuit of knowledge in whatever form it came. I also have fond memories of him breaking out into fluent Old English or some medieval language, at various stages.'

He was chief examiner of matriculation TCE English studies, a life member of the Tasmanian debating society, and he coached numerous parliamentary-shield-winning debating teams. Indeed, Bruce Fairfax would probably lament the standard of some of the contributions in this place, given the expectations and standards he often set for his students.

He is fondly remembered as a kindly, friendly man of integrity, always generous and always patient, but remaining spirited. He was directed by an unwavering internal compass, boldly directed towards doing what was right, something that was recognised by his students. These are qualities which are better imparted to others through conduct and observation rather than instruction. Each of us knows instinctively that greatness as a leader comes from being able to bring out the best in everyone. Bruce possessed this quality and used it to inspire all he encountered, whether students, colleagues or friends. It is significant that he remained a mentor to many students beyond their time at the school.

He loved nature. He was a keen bushwalker. He refused to be limited by his Parkinson's disease, which he developed about a decade ago. He worked around and within that limitation. He is survived by his loving wife Louise. They were a remarkable couple, given that Louise is an accomplished orienteer, trail runner, bushwalker and mountain runner. They have two adult daughters, Yelena and Kirsten, and two granddaughters. He was reported missing on a walk to Duckhole Lake, one of Tasmania's 60 great walks. Over 60 people searched unsuccessfully for him. Staff, including the headmaster, of Launceston Church Grammar School, drove overnight to the south of the state to assist in the search.

This was a man who left an indelible imprint on the school he served for over three decades. More importantly, he inspired generations of students, who loved to learn because of him. My deepest condolences are offered to Louise, Yelena and Kirsten. Vale Bruce Fairfax. He was an educator and inspiration to many.

Dougherty, Mr Bill

Page Electorate: Grafton Jacaranda Festival

Page Electorate: Lismore Flood Recovery

Mr HOGAN (Page) (12:36): Next Monday Bill Dougherty is retiring from the board of the Clarence Village. I want to acknowledge Bill and his wife Dot today. Born in 1929 to Tony and Mildred, Bill is the eldest of five children. His siblings are Peter, Barbara, Dee-anna and Susan. Bill married Dot in 1951 and they have had nine children: Mary, Jim, Anne, Cathie, Tony, Mathew, Judith, Paul and young Bill. From there the family has obviously expanded, with a family joke stating that there was a grandchild of Bill and Dot in each class from preschool to year 12 at the local school for quite some time.

Bill's community service is legendary. He has been instrumental in the development of the Clarence Village, which I mentioned he is retiring from the board of. He was a volunteer surf lifesaver with the Yamba club for many years. At 88 years of age, he still swims regularly from the Crown Hotel over to Susan Island. He once swam from Grafton to Ulmarra to raise money for the disability services provider Caringa—and this is quite some swim. He has been integral in the establishment of Dougherty Villa, an aged-care home. The name says it all. He's also done a lot of work ensuring palliative care services are available in the Clarence Valley. He is an active member of the Clarence River Historical Society. He was on the board of the New South Wales bookmakers co-op and was a local bookmaker.

His faith is also very important to him. He is involved with the Catholic parish in Grafton. He's been involved with the diocesan superfund and very involved with St Vincent de Paul and other Catholic entities. Every Sunday he visits the local hospital to chat to patients. In

business he began Westlawn Finance with his brother Peter in the 1960s. This is a significant local finance company which employs hundreds of people.

There is more I could say, but I think you get the point. As his son once told me, he's a hard act to follow. Bill and Dot, it is very obvious to all of us how much you love our community. Let me say this: your community loves you and thanks you for everything you have contributed over many decades of selfless giving.

It's an exciting time in Grafton at the moment, with a sea of purple blossoms from the jacaranda trees. With that comes the Jacaranda Festival. Part of that is the crowning of the Jacaranda Queen and Junior Jacaranda Queen. The queens will be announced this Saturday evening at the official queen crowning ceremony. I wish all the candidates the best. This year's Jacaranda Queen candidates are Brielle Lentfer, Jozee Adamson, Bridgett Mawhirt, Alana Gordon, Emilee Wall, Erika Honnery and Rachael Noakes. The 2017 Matron of Honour is Patricia Hewitt. The Junior Queen candidates are Tahlia O'Hara, Kailee Rose, Madeleine Howell, Madison Nicholl, Holly Blundell, and Leah Hallam. Good luck, and well done to all of you for entering.

Thousands of people turned out to see international rugby descend on Crozier Field in Lismore this week as the international Barbarians took on the Classic Wallabies. The twilight fixture saw the international Barbarians play outside of a capital city for the first time in their history. This is one of only two games that these two teams are playing in New South Wales, and all of the proceeds from the match will be going to assist the flood recovery effort in the Lismore area. While they were here, the Classic Wallabies helped many of the local clubs with a free coaching clinic. Locals who played in the Classic Wallabies were Jake Douglas, Matt and Alex Gibbon and Wollongbar-Alstonville's Bill Johnston—Bill, I would have given you game time. Despite their efforts, the valiant Classic Wallabies were narrowly defeated, 27-24. Perhaps they needed the support of Yamba's Kane Douglas, who was intending to run on but got called up for the Wallabies squad instead. I thank everyone involved for making this happen.

Broadband

Dr LEIGH (Fenner) (12:41): On a warm spring evening nearly 100 Canberrans gathered at the Belconnen Community Centre recently to discuss with Tara Cheyne MLA and me ways they use broadband and the challenges many of them are facing in getting a decent connection. In days gone by, fast internet was a luxury, but it's becoming a necessity. We don't just stream videos; we use fast internet to watch university lectures and for grandparents and their grandkids to stay in touch. Speedy internet is like water and electricity: a utility that we expect to be there when we need it.

Yet there were many troubling stories. One constituent said that when their child's internet was too slow to do their homework it meant that the child had to stay up late to finish it and sometimes ended up falling asleep in class the next day. A parent of a university student told us:

My daughter drives into university at night because our home connection is too slow. I worry about her returning to a deserted campus in the late hours and spending long periods alone in computer labs, but it's the only way she can get the speed she needs to get the core coursework done.

Another constituent said:

I'm trying to build a cyber security start-up, but it's hard to do it from home when we don't have a stable broadband connection.

A constituent who lives in Spence wrote to me after the forum, apologising for not being able to make it but telling the story of her three young children, two of whom have type 1 diabetes and rely on continuous blood glucose monitors. The constituent wrote:

... however due to the horrifically slow internet at our new house in Spence these devices have patches where they are useless. When connected to the home wifi (which we pay a lot for) there are moments when the internet isn't fast enough to get the data we need for the medical devices.

The constituent included images—screenshots from continuous glucose monitors—and said:

The horrible red band at the top shows "there seems to be an issue with your internet" and we see this altogether too much! Just below it shows NO DATA! Our worst nightmare, particularly through a long night of lows.

The constituent contrasted that to using their phone, which alerts the parent to 'potentially fatal hypos'. She writes to me:

Gaps in data are life threatening.

When Labor announced the building of the National Broadband Network we said we would aim to connect nine out of 10 Australian premises with fibre to the home. The advantage of fibre is that light signals travel through glass cables. As scientists develop better compression algorithms, the signal can speed up. We saw the transformative potential of this at a launch event at the Gungahlin Library, where students from Harrison School who are studying Japanese engaged in a high-definition videoconference with a partner school in Japan. They were able to communicate as though they were on either side of an HDTV screen and greatly add to their communication.

But the Abbott-Turnbull government's second-best model—meaning that the glass cables stop at a box in the street and the signals then travel down on copper cables—is hurting Canberra. A survey that my office has done, of a couple of hundred Canberrans, paints a picture of some of the challenges Canberrans are facing. Naturally with a couple of hundred respondents you don't necessarily get a full picture of the electorate. However, when we asked, 'Do you consider you receive the internet speeds that you are paying for?' 28 per cent said never and 12 per cent said rarely. When we asked constituents, 'How satisfied are you with your internet service?' 21 per cent said very dissatisfied and another 22 per cent said dissatisfied. When asked, 'What types of internet issues have you experienced in the past 12 months?' 33 per cent said slow internet speeds, 26 per cent said drop-outs or unreliable service and eight per cent said poor customer service.

Canberrans simply want what the rest of Australians are demanding from the Abbott-Turnbull government—do it once, do it right, do it with fibre. Under Labor there would be more fibre and less copper. Malcolm Turnbull has promised that all Australians will be connected—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Coulton): Order! The member will refer—

Dr LEIGH: The Prime Minister has promised that all Australians will be connected to the National Broadband Network by the end of 2016, but for many Canberrans that's just another broken promise from the Liberals. Whether they're in Belconnen or other parts of the

electorate, my electors want to see a better National Broadband Network than they were promised by this government.

Employment

Mr HOWARTH (Petrie) (12:46): We saw some great news in relation to jobs and growth last week—some 371,500 more people employed, more jobs, than there were just 12 months ago. That's a 25-year record. At the last election the coalition government made jobs and growth an election commitment. This commitment is becoming a reality right now, and it benefits people in my electorate of Petrie. When I'm out and about talking to people in the electorate, job creation locally is often brought up—permanent jobs but also casual, part-time and subcontract positions. We have jobs of the future—where do people go with the changes in technology—and financial education is also important. I don't think we do enough of that. This is great news locally. I want to thank the local schools for what they're doing in relation to jobs for the future and financial education. I've been out in a number of different schools in my electorate and spoken to them about that.

Our plan is focused mainly on the advanced defence manufacturing plan, and NISA—the National Innovation and Science Agenda. There are our free trade agreements, and with a population of 24 million or so free trade exports are really important for us when we can export to Asia, where there are billions of people, and then there is reducing company tax and the benefits of that. Reductions in company tax are now in place for businesses with up to \$25 million in turnover, which means that after dividends are paid and after expenses are covered and after assets are bought, whatever money is left in the business is only taxed at 27.5 per cent—it will go down to 25—rather than 30 per cent, which means there's more money left for them to re-invest. The instant asset tax write-off is of great benefit to many businesses in my electorate. In Petrie over 2,900 businesses have taken advantage of the instant asset tax write-off in the last financial year. That means that local solar companies win, because businesses are investing in solar on their roof, which is important given that most businesses use their energy during the day, when solar energy is being created. Also, the purchase of any second-hand or new vehicle under \$20,000 is instantly written off. IT and computer systems can be instantly written off. You might want a new coffee machine for the office—I guess Harvey Norman benefits, or other retailers. This is great news because those 2,900 businesses in Petrie that are using the instant asset write-off are spending locally with these different businesses. It's all part of the 371,500 jobs created in the last 12 months alone—and over 300,000 of those have been full time.

We know that the defence manufacturing plan is now under construction. It includes nine future frigates, which haven't started yet, 12 Future Submarines, which haven't started yet, 21 Pacific patrol boats, which are under construction now, and 12 offshore patrol boats that start next year. The 21 Pacific patrol boats have now started in Western Australia. They're underway right now, which is fantastic. That is a \$306 million spend. There are local people working on those. They are using Australian steel. They are being built locally. We also know that a couple of hundred billion dollars will be invested in defence capability over the next 10 years, but the Pacific patrol boats have started since the election. Companies in my electorate are also benefiting from defence procurement. Pacific Health Solutions has a \$320,000 contract with the Department of Defence for medical waste.

Free trade agreements are really taking off. We've seen the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement and the Japan-Australia Economic Partnership Agreement, and the Indian agreement is being worked on. We've seen sales of skimmed milk powder go up 99 per cent, sales of bottled wine increase 86 per cent in the last 12 months and sales of hay and chaff increase by 50 per cent. There's a whole lot happening there. The other week I had Assistant Minister Craig Laundry up looking at the National Innovation and Science Agenda and awarding some grants. It is great news for Petrie.

Domestic and Family Violence

Ms BRODTMANN (Canberra) (12:51): On average one woman is killed every week by a current or former partner. One in three women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence perpetrated by someone known to them. One in five women over the age of 18 have been stalked in their lifetime. Domestic violence is the principal cause of homelessness for women and their children. These figures are confronting and they should be.

On 28 February 2015 Canberra's Tara Costigan was killed by her former partner with an axe as she held her eight-day-old baby girl. Both of Tara's sons were powerless to stop the attack and her 18-year-old sister and boyfriend were injured as they fought off the attack. This tragedy saw the creation of the Tara Costigan Foundation in her honour. Each year thousands of Canberrans get together at Lake Burley Griffin as part of Tara's Walk for Change. This walk has been going for three years. I've proudly taken part in each walk over the three years. I've joined thousands of other Canberrans who have sent the strong message that they have zero tolerance for family and domestic violence.

Domestic violence is one of Australia's most pressing issues and the numbers that prove it are alarming. For every woman who comes forward there are so many who won't have their story heard. They suffer in silence. A recent report published by the Women's Centre for Health Matters found that here in the ACT most women experiencing domestic violence are staying in their homes post crisis and not accessing the crisis system. This means that they're not accessing homelessness services and do not have access to the support systems available to others. Many of these women are middle-income earners and are employed full time. They are not able to access financial assistance and support because they don't qualify for hardship provisions or loans. So it's not just a case of women being afraid to leave; in these circumstances they can't leave, because there's nowhere for them to go.

Our culture needs to change. Not only should we call out domestic violence when we see it but we need to empower women with the tools to be able to leave a violent relationship. That means providing them with the support systems, and that means providing them with housing assistance. The 2015 Australian of the Year, Rosie Batty, said, 'We shouldn't be happy to live in a community where the prospect of returning to violence is better than having nowhere to go.' That's what so many of these women face.

One fearless woman in the Canberra community, Juliet Moody, is leading the way for change. Last year she launched the Fearless Comedy Gala as part of her Fearless Initiative. We know domestic violence isn't a laughing matter, but Juliet tackles the issue through comedy. She puts the spotlight right on the issue when sometimes the community is too afraid to speak out. Juliet is the survivor of a violent relationship of more than a decade ago and uses her annual Fearless Comedy Gala to raise crucial funds for services here in Canberra. This year, the gala's second year, the gala raised nearly \$40,000, almost \$10,000 more than last

year. That's nearly \$40,000 going to the Domestic Violence Crisis Service and Toora Women right here in Canberra. I want to thank Canberrans for getting behind the Fearless Initiative in such a strong way and at such an early stage, and for supporting it in so many different ways.

Sexual violence is an important issue that I've been strongly advocating against in the broader Women, Peace and Security agenda of the United Nations. Like domestic violence here in Australia, we should be speaking out about sexual violence and we should be holding perpetrators to account, no matter where they are, which is why I'm such a strong advocate of the 'Prosecute; don't perpetrate campaign'—getting those foreign fighters back here and getting them prosecuted under sexual violence and conflict legislation and norms.

In 2008, Dassi Erlich and a number of other students at the ultraorthodox Jewish girls school Adass Israel in Melbourne disclosed that they'd been sexually abused by Malka Leifer, the school principal. Leifer almost immediately fled to Israel, with the assistance of the school board. She was later charged in Victorian courts with 74 counts of sexual assault and rape. In 2014, the Australian government applied for Leifer's extradition to Australia to face these charges, but so far she's managed to avoid them. So I'm calling on the Israeli government, the Israeli Minister of Justice and the Israeli judicial system to consider a fair, independent evaluation of the accused so that she can be returned to Australia to face these charges.

Trade with Azerbaijan

Local Council Elections: Western Australia

Mr IRONS (Swan) (12:56): Azerbaijan is a country that we don't know a lot about, but I'm pleased to inform the House of the success of the first trade delegation from Australia to Azerbaijan last week. Twenty-seven delegates, including Marcel Hilmer from my electorate of Swan, representing 20 Australian companies travelled to Baku to look at the opportunities for trade and business. As you would imagine from a private sector delegation, meetings took place with the private business sector as well as with individual companies and the necessary government agencies. The companies represented sectors that included hospitality, wine, dairy, health, mining and many more. The opportunities included trade deals, and even the establishment of businesses for buying a share of businesses that already exist in Azerbaijan.

This delegation was a very positive step forward for both countries. I understand that a number of contracts are now being drawn up, and they will result in improved economic activity within and between the two nations. These contracts are just the start of a strengthening business relationship, and I look forward to hearing of Australian businesses opening offices in Azerbaijan, and I hope to hear about Azerbaijani businesses coming here, opening businesses and employing Australians. I don't need to tell the members of this place that more jobs are good for Australia—and, of course, more jobs are also good for Azerbaijan.

Interestingly, the business relationship between our countries is not new, of course. A company called Incat in Tasmania built a large ferry for Azerbaijan several years ago, and, just recently, Austal Ships built its sister ship in Western Australia for Azerbaijan. These are both companies that I dealt with through my business before I came to this place. The ships are there to support the oil and gas industry on the Caspian Sea. So, already, Australians have benefited from jobs based on Azerbaijan's demands. I also note that WorleyParsons is very active in Azerbaijan, and of course there are many Australians already employed in the commodities sector in Azerbaijan.

There is every reason to be positive about this developing relationship between our countries, as success of the private sector means successful outcomes for this government and for all Australians. I look forward to future developments and positive outcomes for both our nations arising out of this first, historic trade delegation to Azerbaijan.

I would now like to take the opportunity to update the House on the outcome of local government elections in my electorate of Swan last weekend. As we know, local government is a very important part of the democratic process. People often say it's the closest part of the democratic process to the people. There are five local government authorities that reside in my electorate of Swan, and they are the City of Belmont, the City of Canning, the City of Kalamunda, the City of South Perth and the Town of Victoria Park. I would like to congratulate all those who were elected on the weekend to represent their local communities.

From the City of South Perth, I would like to congratulate Glenn Cridland and Tracie McDougall on being elected to the Como ward; Blake D'Souza on being elected to the Manning ward; my lovely wife on being re-elected to the Mill Point ward; and, lastly, Greg Milner on being elected to the Moresby ward. For the Town of Victoria Park, I congratulate Karen Vernon and Ronnhda Potter on being elected to the Banksia ward; and Bronwyn Ife and Brian Oliver on being elected to the Jarrah ward. From the City of Belmont, I'd like to congratulate Bernie Ryan on being re-elected to the East ward; Janet Powell and Jenny Davis on being elected to the South ward; and George Sekulla and Lauren Cayoun on being elected to the West ward. From the City of Canning, only the Beeloo and Mason wards fall within my electoral boundaries—they also fall within the electoral boundaries of Tangney and Burt. I'd like to congratulate Graham Barry on being elected to Mason ward, and Sara Saberi to the Beeloo ward. The City of Kalamunda is to the east of my electorate, and only one of the wards falls within my electoral boundaries. I'd like to congratulate Dylan O'Connor and David Almond on being elected to the North West ward.

From one elected member to another—as we in this place all we know—the privilege of representing your community is one of the most important aspects of your job, no matter what level of government you are elected to. As in this House, the hours are not just nine to five, Monday to Friday. My wife attended a meeting last night and left the council chambers at 11.35 last night. That is the type of work that we as elected representatives do. We're expected to be on call at all times to help, whether a member of parliament, a councillor or the president of the local cricket club. You are there because the people have put their faith in you to represent them, and the one piece of advice I can give all of you is to ensure you never breach that faith. I'd like to also thank those who previously served as councillors but were not re-elected and those who put their hand in the race to represent their community. It is the dedication of people like you that makes our community what it is.

Question agreed to.

Federation Chamber adjourned at 13:01