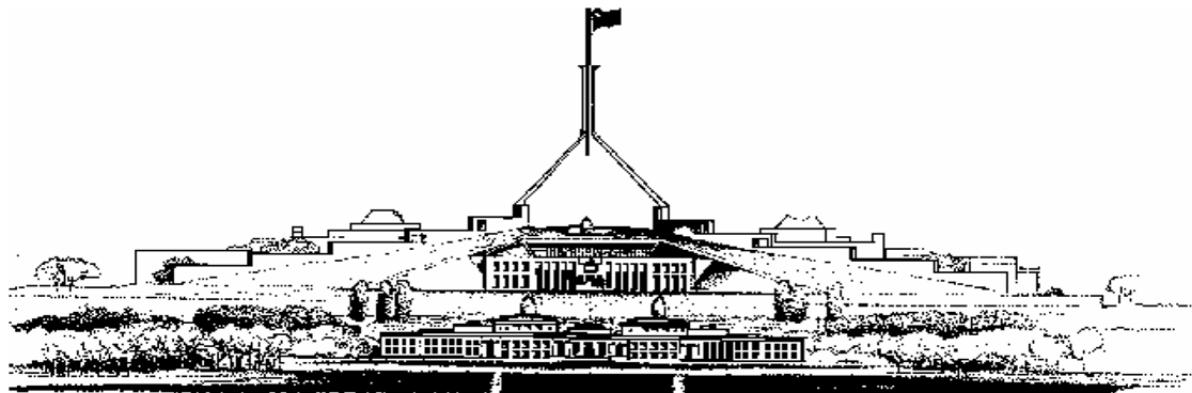




COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



House of Representatives

Official Hansard

No. 165, 1989
Monday, 6 March 1989

THIRTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—FOURTH PERIOD

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

THIRTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION—FOURTH PERIOD

Governor-General

His Excellency the Honourable William George Hayden, Companion of the Order of Australia and Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia.

House of Representatives Officeholders

Speaker—The Honourable Joan Child

Chairman of Committees—Mr Leo Boyce McLeay

Deputy Chairmen of Committees—Mr John Neil Andrew (from 23 May 1989),

Mr Cecil Allen Blanchard,

Mr David Bruce Cowan, Mrs Elaine Elizabeth Darling,

the Honourable James Donald Mathieson Dobie, Mr Ronald Frederick Edwards,

Mr John Barry Milden, Mr Percival Clarence Millar,

Mr John Graham Mountford, Mr Allan Charles Rocher and Mr Philip Maxwell Ruddock
(to 29 May 1989)

Leader of the House—The Honourable Kim Christian Beazley

Leader of the Opposition—The Honourable Andrew Sharp Peacock (from 9 May 1989),
The Honourable John Winston Howard (to 9 May 1989)

Deputy Leader of the Opposition—The Honourable Wallace Clyde Fife (from 29 May 1989),
The Honourable Andrew Sharp Peacock (to 9 May 1989)

Manager of Opposition Business—The Honourable Wallace Clyde Fife

House of Representatives Party Leaders

Leader of the Australian Labor Party—The Honourable Robert James Lee Hawke, AC

Deputy Leader of the Australian Labor Party—The Honourable Lionel Frost Bowen

Leader of the Liberal Party of Australia—The Honourable Andrew Sharp Peacock (from 9 May 1989), The Honourable John Winston Howard (to 9 May 1989)

Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party of Australia—The Honourable Wallace Clyde Fife (from 29 May 1989), The Honourable Andrew Sharp Peacock (to 9 May 1989)

Leader of the National Party of Australia—Mr Charles William Blunt (from 9 May 1989),
The Right Honourable Ian McCahon Sinclair (to 9 May 1989)

Deputy Leader of the National Party of Australia—Mr Bruce Lloyd

Members of the House of Representatives

Member	Division	Party	Member	Division	Party
Adermann, Hon. Albert Evan	Fairfax, Qld	NP	Free, Ross Vincent	Lindsay, NSW	ALP
Aldred, Kenneth James	Bruce, Vic.	LP	Gayler, John	Leichhardt, Qld	ALP
Anderson, John Duncan	Gwydir, NSW	NP	Gear, George	Canning, WA	ALP
Andrew, John Neil	Wakefield, SA	LP	Goodluck, Bruce John	Franklin, Tas.	LP
Baldwin, Peter Jeremy	Sydney, NSW	ALP	Gorman, Russell Neville Joseph	Greenway, NSW	ALP
Beale, Julian Howard	Deakin, Vic.	LP	Grace, Edward Laurence	Fowler, NSW	ALP
Beazley, Hon. Kim Christian	Swan, WA	ALP	Griffiths, Alan Gordon	Maribyrnong, Vic.	ALP
Beddall, David Peter	Rankin, Qld	ALP	Hall, Raymond Steele	Boothby, SA	LP
Bilney, Gordon Neil	Kingston, SA	ALP	Halverson, Robert George, OBE	Casey, Vic.	LP
Blanchard, Cecil Allen	Moore, WA	ALP	Hand, Hon. Gerard Leslie	Melbourne, Vic.	ALP
Blewett, Hon. Neal	Bonython, SA	ALP	Harvey, Elizabeth Robyn	Hawker, SA	ALP
Blunt, Charles William	Richmond, NSW	NP	Hawke, Hon. Robert James Lee, AC	Wills, Vic.	ALP
Bowen, Hon. Lionel Frost	Kingsford-Smith, NSW	ALP	Hawker, David Peter Maxwell	Wannon, Vic.	LP
Braithwaite, Raymond Allen	Dawson, Qld	NP	Hewson, Dr John Robert Hicks, Noel Jeffrey	Wentworth, NSW	LP
Brown, Hon. John Joseph	Parramatta, NSW	ALP	Holding, Hon. Allan Clyde	Riverina-Darling, NSW	NP
Brown, Hon. Neil Anthony, QC	Menzies, Vic.	LP	Hollis, Colin	Melbourne Ports, Vic.	ALP
Brown, Hon. Robert James	Charlton, NSW	ALP	Howard, Hon. John Winston	Throsby, NSW	ALP
Brumby, John Mansfield	Bendigo, Vic.	ALP	Howe, Hon. Brian Leslie	Bennelong, NSW	LP
Burr, Maxwell Arthur	Lyons, Tas.	LP	Humphreys, Hon. Benjamin Charles	Batman, Vic.	ALP
Cadman, Alan Glyndwr	Mitchell, NSW	LP	Jakobsen, Carolyn Anne	Griffith, Qld	ALP
Cameron, Donald Milner	Moreton, Qld	LP	Jenkins, Henry Alfred	Cowan, WA	ALP
Cameron, Ewen Colin	Indi, Vic.	LP	Johns, Gary Thomas	Scullin, Vic.	ALP
Cameron, Ian Milne Dixon	Maranoa, Qld	NP	Jones, Hon. Barry Owen	Petrie, Qld	ALP
Campbell, Graeme	Kalgoorlie, WA	ALP	Jull, David Francis	Lalor, Vic.	ALP
Carlton, Hon. James Joseph	Mackellar, NSW	LP	Katter, Hon. Robert Cummin	Fadden, Qld	LP
Charles, David Ernest	Isaacs, Vic.	ALP	Keating, Hon. Paul John	Kennedy, Qld	NP
Charlesworth, Dr Richard Ian, AM	Perth, WA	ALP	Kelly, Hon. Roslyn Joan	Blaxland, NSW	ALP
Child, Hon. Joan	Henty, Vic.	ALP	Kent, Lewis	Canberra, ACT	ALP
Chynoweth, Robert Leslie	Dunkley, Vic.	ALP	Kerin, Hon. John Charles	Hotham, Vic.	ALP
Cleeland, Peter Robert	McEwen, Vic.	ALP	Kerr, Duncan James	Werriwa, NSW	ALP
Cobb, Michael Roy	Parkes, NSW	NP	Klugman, Dr Richard Emanuel	Denison, Tas.	ALP
Cohen, Hon. Barry	Robertson, NSW	ALP	Lamb, Anthony Hamilton	Prospect, NSW	ALP
Connolly, David Miles	Bradfield, NSW	LP	Langmore, John Vance	Streeton, Vic.	ALP
Courtice, Brian William	Hinkler, Qld	ALP	Lavarch, Michael Hugh	Fraser, ACT	ALP
Cowan, David Bruce	Lyne, NSW	NP	Lee, Michael John	Fisher, Qld	ALP
Crawford, Mary Catherine	Forde, Qld	ALP	Lindsay, Eamon John, RFD	Dobell, NSW	ALP
Cross, Manfred Douglas	Brisbane, Qld	ALP	Lloyd, Bruce	Herbert, Qld	ALP
Cunningham, Barry Thomas	McMillan, Vic.	ALP	McArthur, Fergus Stewart	Murray, Vic.	NP
Darling, Elaine Elizabeth	Lilley, Qld	ALP	McGauran, Peter John	Corangamite, Vic.	LP
Dawkins, Hon. John Sydney	Fremantle, WA	ALP	McHugh, Jeannette	Gippsland, Vic.	NP
Dobie, Hon. James Donald Mathieson	Cook, NSW	LP	MacKellar, Hon. Michael John Randal	Phillip, NSW	ALP
Downer, Alexander John Gossé	Mayo, SA	LP	McLeay, Leo Boyce	Warringah, NSW	LP
Dubois, Stephen Cairfield	St George, NSW	ALP	Macphee, Hon. Ian Malcolm	Grayndler, NSW	ALP
Duffy, Hon. Michael John	Holt, Vic.	ALP	Martin, Stephen Paul	Goldstein, Vic.	LP
Duncan, Hon. Peter	Makin, SA	ALP	Mildren, John Barry	Macarthur, NSW	ALP
Edwards, Dr Harold Raymond	Berowra, NSW	LP	Miles, Christopher Gordon	Ballarat, Vic.	ALP
Edwards, Ronald Frederick	Stirling, WA	ALP	Millar, Percival Clarence	Braddon, Tas.	LP
Fatin, Wendy Frances	Brand, WA	ALP	Milton, Peter	Wide Bay, Qld	NP
Fife, Hon. Wallace Clyde	Hume, NSW	LP		La Trobe, Vic.	ALP
Fischer, Timothy Andrew	Farrer, NSW	NP			
Fisher, Peter Stanley	Mallee, Vic.	NP			
Fitzgibbon, Eric John	Hunter, NSW	ALP			

Members of the House of Representatives—*continued*

Member	Division	Party	Member	Division	Party
Moore, Hon. John Colinton	Ryan, Qld	LP	Shipton, Roger Francis	Higgins, Vic.	LP
Morris, Allan Agapitos	Newcastle, NSW	ALP	Simmons, David William	Calare, NSW	ALP
Morris, Hon. Peter Frederick	Shortland, NSW	ALP	Sinclair, Rt Hon. Ian Mc-	New England, NSW	NP
Mountford, John Graham	Banks, NSW	ALP	Cahon		
Nehl, Garry Barr	Cowper, NSW	NP	Smith, Warwick Leslie	Bass, Tas.	LP
O'Keefe, Neil Patrick	Burke, Vic.	ALP	Snow, James Henry	Eden-Monaro, NSW	ALP
O'Neil, Lloyd Reginald Terr-	Grey, SA	ALP	Snowdon, Warren Edward	Northern Territory	ALP
ance			Spender, John Michael, QC	North Sydney, NSW	LP
Peacock, Hon. Andrew Sharp	Kooyong, Vic.	LP	Staples, Hon. Peter Richard	Jagajaga, Vic.	ALP
Porter, James Robert	Barker, SA	LP	Sullivan, Kathryn Jean	Moncrieff, Qld	LP
Pratt, Michael Philip	Adelaide, SA	LP	Taylor, William Leonard	Groom, Qld	LP
Price, Leo Roger Spurway	Chifley, NSW	ALP	Theophanous, Dr Andrew	Calwell, Vic.	ALP
Prosser, Geoffrey Daniel	Forrest, WA	LP	Charles		
Punch, Hon. Gary Francis	Barton, NSW	ALP	Tickner, Robert Edward	Hughes, NSW	ALP
Reith, Peter Keaston	Flinders, Vic.	LP	Tuckey, Charles Wilson	O'Connor, WA	LP
Robinson, Hon. Ian Louis	Page, NSW	NP	Uren, Hon. Thomas	Reid, NSW	ALP
Rocher, Allan Charles	Curtin, WA	LP	Webster, Alasdair Paine	Macquarie, NSW	LP
Ruddock, Philip Maxwell	Dundas, NSW	LP	West, Hon. Stewart John	Cunningham, NSW	ALP
Saunderson, John	Aston, Vic.	ALP	White, Peter Nicholson	McPherson, Qld	LP
Sawford, Rodney Weston	Port Adelaide, SA	ALP	Duckett, MC		
Scholes, Hon. Gordon Glen	Corio, Vic.	ALP	Willis, Hon. Ralph	Gellibrand, Vic.	ALP
Denton			Wilson, Hon. Ian Bonython	Sturt, SA	LP
Sciaccia, Con	Bowman, Qld	ALP	Cameron		
Scott, John Lyden	Hindmarsh, SA	ALP	Woods, Dr Robert Leslie	Lowe, NSW	LP
Scott, Leslie James	Oxley, Qld	ALP	Wooldridge, Dr Michael	Chisholm, Vic.	LP
Shack, Peter Donald	Tangney, WA	LP	Richard Lewis		
Sharp, John Randall	Gilmore, NSW	NP	Wright, Keith Webb	Capricornia, Qld	ALP

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

ALP—Australian Labor Party; LP—Liberal Party of Australia; NP—National Party of Australia

Third Hawke Ministry

(To 6 April 1989)

- *Prime Minister
*Deputy Prime Minister, Attorney-General and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Commonwealth-State Relations
*Leader of the Government in the Senate and Minister for Industry, Technology and Commerce
*Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade
*Treasurer
*Minister for Finance
*Minister for Transport and Communications
*Minister for Employment, Education and Training
*Minister for Defence, Vice-President of the Executive Council and Leader of the House
*Minister for Primary Industries and Energy
*Minister for Social Security and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Social Justice
*Minister for Administrative Services
*Minister for Community Services and Health
*Minister for Trade Negotiations, Minister Assisting the Minister for Industry, Technology and Commerce and Minister Assisting the Minister for Primary Industries and Energy
*Minister for the Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories
*Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Public Service Matters and Minister Assisting the Treasurer
*Minister for Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Manager of Government Business in the Senate
Minister for the Arts and Territories, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister and Minister Assisting the Minister for Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs
Minister for Science, Customs and Small Business
Minister for Justice
Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Minister for Housing and Aged Care
Minister for Employment and Education Services
Minister for Defence Science and Personnel
Minister for Local Government and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women
Minister for Resources
Minister for Telecommunications and Aviation Support
Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister Assisting the Treasurer for Prices
Minister for Land Transport and Shipping Support
*Minister in the Cabinet
- The Honourable Robert James Lee Hawke, AC
The Honourable Lionel Frost Bowen

Senator the Honourable John Norman Button

Senator the Honourable Gareth John Evans, QC

The Honourable Paul John Keating
Senator the Honourable Peter Alexander Walsh
The Honourable Ralph Willis
The Honourable John Sydney Dawkins

The Honourable Kim Christian Beazley

The Honourable John Charles Kerin
The Honourable Brian Leslie Howe

The Honourable Stewart John West
The Honourable Neal Blewett
The Honourable Michael John Duffy

Senator the Honourable Graham Frederick Richardson
The Honourable Peter Frederick Morris

Senator the Honourable Robert Francis Ray

The Honourable Allan Clyde Holding

The Honourable Barry Owen Jones
Senator the Honourable Michael Carter Tate
The Honourable Benjamin Charles Humphreys
The Honourable Gerard Leslie Hand
The Honourable Peter Richard Staples
The Honourable Peter Duncan

The Honourable Roslyn Joan Kelly
Senator the Honourable Margaret Reynolds

Senator the Honourable Peter Francis Salmon Cook
The Honourable Gary Francis Punch
Senator the Honourable Nick Bolokus
The Honourable Robert James Brown

Third Hawke Ministry

(From 6 April 1989)

- *Prime Minister
The Honourable Robert James Lee Hawke, AC
- *Deputy Prime Minister, Attorney-General and
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for
Commonwealth-State Relations
The Honourable Lionel Frost Bowen
- *Leader of the Government in the Senate and
Minister for Industry, Technology and Com-
merce
Senator the Honourable John Norman Button
- *Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate
and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade
Senator the Honourable Gareth John Evans, QC
- *Treasurer
The Honourable Paul John Keating
- *Minister for Finance
Senator the Honourable Peter Alexander Walsh
- *Minister for Transport and Communications
The Honourable Ralph Willis
- *Minister for Employment, Education and Train-
ing
The Honourable John Sydney Dawkins
- *Minister for Defence, Vice-President of the Ex-
ecutive Council and Leader of the House
The Honourable Kim Christian Beazley
- *Minister for Primary Industries and Energy
The Honourable John Charles Kerin
- *Minister for Social Security and Minister Assist-
ing the Prime Minister for Social Justice
The Honourable Brian Leslie Howe
- *Minister for Administrative Services
The Honourable Stewart John West
- *Minister for Community Services and Health
The Honourable Neal Blewett
- *Minister for Trade Negotiations, Minister Assist-
ing the Minister for Industry, Technology and
Commerce and Minister Assisting the Minister
for Primary Industries and Energy
The Honourable Michael John Duffy
- *Minister for the Arts, Sport, the Environment,
Tourism and Territories
Senator the Honourable Graham Frederick
Richardson
- *Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister Assist-
ing the Prime Minister for Public Service Mat-
ters and Minister Assisting the Treasurer
The Honourable Peter Frederick Morris
- *Minister for Immigration, Local Government and
Ethnic Affairs, Minister Assisting the Prime
Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Man-
ager of Government Business in the Senate
Senator the Honourable Robert Francis Ray
- Minister for the Arts, Tourism and Territories,
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister and
Minister Assisting the Minister for Immigration,
Local Government and Ethnic Affairs
The Honourable Allan Clyde Holding
- Minister for Science, Customs and Small Busi-
ness
The Honourable Barry Owen Jones⁽¹⁾
- Minister for Justice
Senator the Honourable Michael Carter Tate
- Minister for Veterans' Affairs
The Honourable Benjamin Charles Humphreys
- Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
The Honourable Gerard Leslie Hand
- Minister for Housing and Aged Care
The Honourable Peter Richard Staples
- Minister for Employment and Education Serv-
ices
The Honourable Peter Duncan
- Minister for Telecommunications and Aviation
Support
The Honourable Roslyn Joan Kelly
- Minister for Local Government and Minister
Assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of
Women
Senator the Honourable Margaret Reynolds
- Minister for Resources
Senator the Honourable Peter Francis Salmon Cook
- Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister As-
sisting the Treasurer for Prices
Senator the Honourable Nick Bolokus
- Minister for Land Transport and Shipping Sup-
port
The Honourable Robert James Brown
- Minister for Defence Science and Personnel
The Honourable David William Simmons
- * Minister in the Cabinet
- ⁽¹⁾ Minister for Science, Customs and Small Business and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Science and Technology from 9 May 1989.

THE COMMITTEES OF THE SESSION

FIRST SESSION: FOURTH PERIOD

STANDING COMMITTEES

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS—Mr Snowdon (*Chairman*), Mr Blanchard, Mr Burr (to 1 June 1989), Mr Ian Cameron, Mr Campbell, Mr Cross, Mr Gayler, Mr Miles, Mr Smith (from 1 June 1989), Mr Tickner, Mr Webster.

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS—Mr O'Keefe (*Chairman*), Mr Blunt (to 29 May 1989), Mr Braithwaite (from 29 May 1989), Mr Cadman, Mr Connolly, Mr Dubois, Ms Fatin, Mrs Harvey, Mr Johns, Mr Katter, Ms McHugh, Mr Sciacca, Mr Wilson.

EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING—Mr Brumby (*Chairman*), Mr Cowan, Ms Fatin, Mr Free (to 11 May 1989), Mr Gear, Mrs Jakobsen, Mr Johns, Mr Price, Mr Prosser, Mr Ian Robinson, Mr Sawford (from 11 May 1989), Mrs Sullivan, Dr Woods.

ENVIRONMENT, RECREATION AND THE ARTS—Mr Milton (*Chairman*), Mr Burr (from 1 June 1989), Dr Charlesworth, Mr Chynoweth, Mr Dobie, Mr Ronald Edwards, Mr Peter Fisher, Mr Jenkins, Mr Lamb, Ms McHugh, Mr MacKellar (to 1 June 1989), Mr Sharp, Mr Webster.

FINANCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION—Mr Martin (*Chairman*), Mr Braithwaite, Dr Charlesworth, Mr Cobb, Mr Courtice, Mr Ronald Edwards (from 12 April 1989), Mr Gear, Mr Jenkins, Mr McArthur, Mr Saunderson, Mr Shipton, Mr Simmons (to 12 April 1989), Mr Wilson.

HOUSE—The Speaker, Mr Dobie (to 1 June 1989), Mr Goodluck, Mr Hollis, Mr Katter, Mr Martin, Mr Price, Mrs Sullivan (from 1 June 1989).

INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY—Mr Beddall (*Chairman*), Mr Baldwin, Mr Cunningham, Mr Grace, Mr Hawker, Mr Lloyd, Mr McArthur, Mr Mildren, Mr Allan Morris, Mr Nehl (from 29 May 1989), Dr Theophanous, Dr Wooldridge.

LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS—Mr Griffiths (*Chairman*), Mr Adermann, Mr Cadman (from 15 June 1989), Mr Charles, Mr Cleeland, Mr Kerr, Mr McGauran, Mr Moore, Mr Ruddock (to 15 June 1989), Mr Scholes, Mr Smith, Mr Tickner, Mr Wright.

LIBRARY—The Speaker, Mr Cross, Mrs Jakobsen, Mr Pratt, Mr Ian Robinson, Mr Smith, Mr Wright.

MEMBERS' INTERESTS—Dr Klugman (*Chairman*), Mr Adermann, Mr Donald Cameron, Mr Kent, Mr Lindsay, Mr Ruddock, Mr John Scott.

PRIVILEGES—Mr Gear (*Chairman*), the Leader of the House or his nominee, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition or his nominee, Mr N. A. Brown, Mr Donald Cameron, Mr Campbell, Mr Cleeland, Mr Kerr, Mr Millar, Mr Reith, Mr Tickner.

PROCEDURE—Mr Mountford (*Chairman*), Mr Donald Cameron, Mr Ewen Cameron, Mr Ronald Edwards, Mr Lamb, Mr Lindsay, Mr Millar, Mr Scholes.

PUBLICATIONS—Mr Jenkins (*Chairman*), Mr Blanchard, Mr Brumby, Dr Harry Edwards, Mr Nehl, Mr Sawford, Mr Taylor.

SELECTION COMMITTEE—Mr Leo McLeay (*Chairman*), Mr Donald Cameron, Mr Ewen Cameron (to 1 June 1989), Mr Cunningham, Mr Downer (from 1 June 1989), Mr Hicks, Mr Lamb, Mr MacKellar, Mr Millar, Mr Mountford, Mr Snowdon, Mr Tickner.

TRANSPORT, COMMUNICATIONS AND INFRASTRUCTURE—Mr Saunderson (*Chairman*), Mr Blunt (to 29 May 1989), Mr Ewen Cameron, Mr Downer, Mr Tim Fischer, Mr Gorman, Mr Halverson (to 1 June 1989), Mr Hollis, Mr Jull, Mr Langmore, Mr O'Neil, Mr Price, Mr John Scott, Mr Sharp (from 29 May 1989).

JOINT STATUTORY COMMITTEES

AUSTRALIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE ORGANIZATION—Senator Morris (*Presiding Member*), Mr Cross, Mr McGauran, Mr Milton, Mr Wright, Senator Durack, Senator Macklin.

BROADCASTING OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS—The Speaker (*Chairman*), the President, Mr Ronald Edwards, Mrs Harvey, Mr Hicks, Mr Jull, Mr John Scott, Senator Michael Baume, Senator Childs.

NATIONAL CRIME AUTHORITY—Mr Cleeland (*Chairman*), Mr Dubois, Mr McGauran, Mr MacKellar (to 1 June 1989), Mr O'Keefe, Mr Spender (from 1 June 1989), Senator Alston, Senator Cooney, Senator Hill, Senator Jones, Senator Macklin.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS—Mr Tickner (*Chairman*), Mr Aldred, Mr Fitzgibbon, Mr Langmore (from 3 May 1989), Mr Martin, Mr Nehl, Mr Prosser, Mr Ruddock (to 1 June 1989), Mr Scholes, Mr Les Scott, Dr Woods (from 1 June 1989), Senator Bishop, Senator Giles, Senator McKiernan, Senator McMullan (from 3 May 1989), Mr Sawford (to 3 May 1989), Senator Watson.

PUBLIC WORKS—Mr Hollis (*Chairman*), Mr Gear, Mr Halverson, Mr Millar, Mr Mountford, Mr Taylor, Senator Burns, Senator Devereux, Senator Sheil.

JOINT COMMITTEES

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY—Mr Langmore (*Chairman*), Mr Anderson, Mr Goodluck, Mr Scholes, Mr Uren, Senator Aulich, Senator Hill, Senator McMullan, Senator Reid, Senator Sanders.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE—Mr Bilney (*Chairman*), Mr Baldwin, Mr Campbell, Mr Charles, Mr Cross, Mr Halverson, Mr Hicks, Mr Jull, Mr Katter, Mr Kent, Dr Klugman, Mr Langmore, Mr Lindsay, Mr MacKellar, Mr Nehl, Mr Ruddock, Mr John Scott, Mr Shipton, Dr Theophanous, Senator Childs, Senator Crichton-Browne, Senator Hill, Senator Jones, Senator MacGibbon, Senator McLean (from 6 March 1989), Senator Macklin (to 6 March 1989), Senator Maguire, Senator Morris, Senator Schacht, Senator Tambling, Senator Valentine.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEES

ELECTORAL MATTERS—Mr Lee (*Chairman*), Mr Blunt (to 23 May 1989), Mr Cobb (from 23 May 1989), Mrs Jakobsen, Mr Lavarch, Dr Wooldridge, Senator Beahan, Senator Harradine, Senator Jenkins, Senator Schacht, Senator Short.

NEW PARLIAMENT HOUSE—The President and the Speaker (*Joint Chairmen*), the Minister for Administrative Services, Mr Dobie, Mr Dubois, Mr Tim Fischer (from 23 May 1989), Mr Lee, Mr MacKellar (from 1 June 1989), Mr Leo McLeay, Mrs Sullivan (to 1 June 1989), Senator Michael Baume, Senator Colston, Senator Devlin, Senator MacGibbon, Senator Reid, Senator Schacht.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEES

CORPORATIONS LEGISLATION—Mr Ronald Edwards (*Chairman*), Mr Peter Fisher, Mr Kerr, Mr Lindsay, Mr Smith, Senator Alston, Senator Cooney, Senator Macklin, Senator McMullan, Senator Short.

MIGRATION REGULATIONS—Dr Theophanous (*Chairman*), Dr Charlesworth, Mr Cobb, Mr Ruddock, Mr Sciacca, Mrs Sullivan, Senator Collins, Senator Jenkins, Senator McKiernan, Senator Teague.

TENURE OF APPOINTEES TO COMMONWEALTH TRIBUNALS—Dr Klugman (*Chairman*), Mr Bilney, Dr Harry Edwards, Mr Nehl, Mr John Scott, Senator Aulich, Senator Cooney, Senator Dunn, Senator Durack.

VIDEO MATERIAL—Dr Klugman (*Chairman*), Mr Adermann, Mr Charles, Ms Crawford, Mrs Jakobsen, Mr Jull, Senator Collins, Senator Harradine, Senator Jenkins, Senator Walters, Senator Zakharov.

PARLIAMENTARY DEPARTMENTS

SENATE

Clerk of the Senate—H. Evans
Deputy Clerk of the Senate—A. Lynch
Clerk-Assistant (Table)—J. Vander Wyk
Clerk-Assistant (Management)—C. J. C. Elliot
Clerk-Assistant (Procedure)—P. O'Keeffe
Clerk-Assistant (Committees)—M. Cornwell
Usher of the Black Rod—R. Alison

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Clerk of the House—A. R. Browning
Deputy Clerk of the House—L. M. Barlin
First Clerk Assistant—I. C. Harris
Clerk Assistant (Procedure)—B. C. Wright
Clerk Assistant (Committees)—J. W. Pender
Clerk Assistant (Table)—I. C. Cochran
Clerk Assistant (Administration)—M. W. Salkeld
Serjeant-at-Arms—B. L. Simons

PARLIAMENTARY REPORTING STAFF

Principal Parliamentary Reporter—J. M. Campbell
Assistant Principal Parliamentary Reporter—B. A. Harris
Leader of Staff (Committees)—K. Shearwood
Leader of Staff (House of Representatives)—M. A. R. McGregor
Leader of Staff (Senate)—K. B. Ryder

LIBRARY

Parliamentary Librarian—H. de S. C. MacLean

JOINT HOUSE

Secretary—M. W. Bolton

Monday, 6 March 1989

Madam SPEAKER (Hon. Joan Child) took the chair at 2 p.m., and read prayers.

ELECTORAL DIVISION OF GWYDIR

Issue of Writ

Madam SPEAKER—I inform the House that I have today issued a writ for the election of a member to serve for the electoral division of Gwydir in the State of New South Wales in place of the Hon. Ralph James Dunnet Hunt. The dates in connection with the election are fixed as follows: close of the roll, Monday, 13 March 1989; date of nomination, Friday, 17 March 1989; date of polling, Saturday, 15 April 1989; date of return of writ, on or before Thursday, 1 June 1989.

MINISTERIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Mr HAWKE (Wills—Prime Minister)—I inform the House that the Minister for Science, Customs and Small Business, Mr Barry Jones, left Australia on 3 March to attend an environmental conference and for associated discussions in London. He will return to Australia on 15 March. In his absence, the Minister for Industry, Technology and Commerce, Senator Button, has assumed Mr Jones's portfolio duties and the Minister for Trade Negotiations, Mr Duffy, is representing the Minister in this chamber.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS: SALE OF AIRCRAFT

Mr BLUNT—My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Communications. Was an F28 aircraft owned by the Minister's Department disposed of without public tender? Was this aircraft acquired by a company of the Ansett group and was it immediately resold overseas for a profit of millions of dollars? Did the procedure adopted by the Department for this sale comply with the finance regulations of the Department of Administrative Services? If not, why not?

Mr WILLIS—I suggest that the honourable member put the question on notice.

WAGE-TAX TRADE-OFF

Mr MOUNTFORD—Can the Prime Minister advise the House of the principles being used to determine the Government's approach to the wage-tax trade-off in the forthcoming April economic statement?

Mr HAWKE—The tax cuts that my Government will provide from 1 July will recognise that those in receipt of average, or around average, earnings have borne the greater part of the burden of restraint. In the event, our tax cuts will be concentrated on low to moderate income earners because it is the case that they have earned the tax cuts and they will get them. We will provide those tax cuts in the context of an economically responsible wage-tax trade-off. In explaining that tax cut in the context of our economic responsibility, I say it is well known that that sort of economic responsibility is not a strong suit of those opposite. We see that honourable members opposite are now contemplating trying to slide out of detailing the spending cuts that they would make to fund their tax cuts. One could well ask who said this of the coalition's tax policy:

I have said all along that the timetable for policy release is by August 1988... is going to be adhered to.

That was said by the Leader of the Opposition. As against what is happening on the Opposition's side, it is well known that this Government has never shirked the responsibility of explaining to the Australian community just where the money to finance tax cuts is coming from. In that context, Madam Speaker, you could well ask who, in a confidential memo to the preceding Leader of the Opposition, the honourable member for Kooyong, said:

We will be very vulnerable if Labor can successfully put the tag of 'Where's the money coming from' on our election offerings.

That was what the honourable member for Bennelong said to the then Leader of the Opposition: that they would be vulnerable if they could not say where the money was coming from. I say to the honourable member for Banks, and through him and the House to the Australian community: The community will be left in no doubt—as far as we are concerned on this side of the House—as to where the money is coming from to finance the tax cuts of this Govern-

ment. What you will find on the other side, Madam Speaker, is no indication whatsoever at this stage. Now there is an indication that the Opposition will slide out of that responsibility altogether.

Finally, I ask this House to contrast what is said in 'Futile Diversions' on this score. In 'Futile Diversions' on page 3 the Leader of the Opposition said:

... politicians . . . have glossed over the truth when it has been too difficult for them to cope with its consequences and made unrealistic promises which have built up false expectations of what can be achieved.

What we are witnessing at this stage in regard to the Opposition's so-called tax and fiscal policy is exactly described by the Leader of the Opposition's own statement on page 3. As we go through this year, Madam Speaker, you will continue to see this contrast: absolutely explicit indications by this side of the House as to where the tax cuts will be coming from; as far as the Opposition is concerned, no indication whatsoever.

INFLATION

Mr PEACOCK—I address my question to the Treasurer. I remind him that on 9 September last he said in an address to the Economic Planning Advisory Council:

The wage/tax trade-off we will implement will secure a further fall in inflation to around three to four per cent in 1990.

Does the Treasurer still stand by this prediction? If not, what is his revised assumption for inflation for the calculation of the Forward Estimates for next year?

Mr KEATING—I addressed all these matters publicly a couple of weeks ago in a press conference—which I have and the honourable member does not have.

Mr Tuckey—What about the Parliament?

Madam SPEAKER—The honourable member for O'Connor will not interject.

Mr Tuckey—We don't want to know what he said out there.

Madam SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member for O'Connor will not argue with the Chair.

Mr KEATING—I refer the honourable gentleman to the transcript.

SOVIET DIPLOMAT

Mr BILNEY—I direct my question to the Prime Minister. I refer to the rather feverish allegations by the shadow Minister for foreign affairs about our policy towards the Soviet Union. Is it the case, as alleged by the shadow Minister, that our policies towards the Soviet Union have been influenced in any way by the alleged clandestine activities of Mr Valery Zemskov?

Mr HAWKE—I am indebted to the honourable member for this question. It is well established practice, not only under this Government but under all preceding governments, that the Government does not comment on security and intelligence matters, and I do not intend to depart from that practice. Within that constraint there are, however, some aspects of the allegations made by the shadow Minister for foreign affairs on which I am able to comment and which should not be allowed to pass without comment. The allegations made in the media release of 3 March by the shadow Minister are amongst the most shabby, despicable and unsubstantiated to have come from the Opposition in recent memory. In particular, they represent a grossly unfair attack upon a particular Australian official who has served and continued to serve his country with diligence and with dedication. The unambiguous purport of the shadow Minister's media release is that there was a sinister relationship between Mr Hayden's former principal private secretary, who is now an acting deputy secretary in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Mr Michael Costello, and the Soviet official.

Mr Spender—Do I have to sit here and listen to this man misrepresent me? The Prime Minister is misrepresenting what I have said.

Madam SPEAKER—If the Prime Minister is misrepresenting anyone the honourable member will have a chance by way of personal explanation to reply.

Mr Sinclair—I rise on a point of order, Madam Speaker. Under our Standing Orders it is not in order for one member, be he the Prime Minister or anyone else, to make any sort of an inference against another member unless on a substantive motion. The suggestion just made by the Prime Minister that

there was something sinister in a press release suggests that the honourable member for North Sydney had entirely improper motives. I would put it to you, Madam Speaker, that the nature of that response by the Prime Minister is entirely out of the bounds of our Standing Orders and I suggest he either withdraw the remark or rephrase his answer.

Madam SPEAKER—The Prime Minister will take note of the standing order which states one should not impute improper motives to any member of this House.

Mr HAWKE—I repeat that the unambiguous purport of the shadow Minister's media release is that there was a sinister relationship between Mr Hayden's former principal private secretary——

Mr Sinclair—I rise on a point of order, Madam Speaker. To be more specific on the earlier point of order, I would suggest that the Prime Minister's use of the word 'sinister' to describe motives of any member of this House is entirely improper and I suggest that the remark be withdrawn.

Mr Beazley—I rise to speak to that point of order, Madam Speaker. We have all been in Question Time here over many years now. In the cut and thrust of Question Time, obviously both in questions that are asked of the Government and in answers that are given, there is a reasonable degree of latitude. There is no suggestion in anything that the Prime Minister has said that he is in some way impugning the propriety of the honourable member opposite. The suggestion that there is something particularly sinister about a relationship does not go to any behaviour of the honourable gentleman opposite. It is a perfectly reasonable statement in the context of an answer to a parliamentary question.

Madam SPEAKER—The Chair accepts the statement but again tells the Prime Minister to ensure that he does not in any way impugn the motives of any member of this House.

Mr HAWKE—Madam Speaker, there was not the slightest foundation given in the statement by the shadow Minister for the serious attack that has been made on a senior Australian career diplomat. In making the allegation the shadow Minister refers only

to a *Canberra Times* report on 5 February. His press release says:

It may also be a cause for particularly grave concern that according to the *Canberra Times* of 5 February, 1989, Zemskov developed a close relationship with Mr Hayden's former Principal Private Secretary who is now a Deputy Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade . . .

That is the only support he has in making that allegation. He suggests that the relationship between the Australian official and Zemskov is a cause for particularly grave concern. I ask you, Madam Speaker, and all reasonable members of this House to note that the shadow Minister neglected to say that the very same report in the *Canberra Times* from which he was quoting says:

. . . there was never any suggestion of impropriety. The report says:

It was natural enough that Mr Costello should know Zemskov in view of his professional responsibilities in the Department for Australia's relations with the Soviet Union.

That is from the report of the *Canberra Times*. But it becomes worse when we consider the fact that on the following day the same paper printed a piece headed 'Zemskov: Clarification', which said:

The *Canberra Times* reiterates that its original story did not suggest Mr Costello's conduct was anything but appropriate, professional and necessary to the execution of his duties.

The honourable member having based his allegations on the newspaper's report but neglecting, obviously deliberately, even to mention these clear and unequivocal statements by the *Canberra Times*, I believe the conclusion is unavoidable that there has been a malicious and unfounded attack upon an individual. It is an exercise in McCarthyism which is to the immense discredit of the shadow Minister and the entire Opposition.

The shadow Minister compounds his mistake by going on to suggest that developments in Australia's relations with the Soviet Union, in particular the conclusion of a consular agreement, can be traced to the allegedly sinister relationship between Zemskov and the Australian official. That is preposterous. Moreover, the shadow Minister may or may not be interested, but I am sure the House will, to know that the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation had no difficulties from its perspective with the

conclusion of that agreement and was thoroughly involved in the interdepartmental consideration of it.

Let me say in conclusion that the Government totally rejects the allegations which have been made. I say here on the floor of the House that we affirm without qualification our complete confidence in the loyalty and integrity of Mr Costello. Mr Costello emerges with his very substantial standing and reputation for competence and integrity untarnished, and, if it is possible—and I doubt it—the shadow Minister emerges from this disgraceful episode even more an object of contempt than he was before.

SOVIET DIPLOMAT

Mr SPENDER—My question is addressed to the Prime Minister. In view of the fact that the Prime Minister has now gone behind the screen to tell us what the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation thinks, will the Prime Minister tell us why, after ASIO had advised his Government and his Foreign Minister on the day before Mr Zemskov left Moscow that he had been identified by M15 as a Soviet agent and a member of the special reserve, that same individual was allowed to come to this country and remain in this country for three years when it was known that he was a Soviet spy?

Mr HAWKE—I am certainly aware of the media reports and the reports to which the honourable gentleman refers. I will repeat what I said at the outset of my previous answer, that, in accordance with practice—not merely the practice of this Government but a longstanding practice of successive governments—the Government will not comment in detail on reports relating to intelligence and security matters. I do not intend to breach that principle that was followed by the coalition Government when it was in office and by successive governments. I can assure honourable members that this Government obviously takes very seriously indeed its responsibilities in the area of national security and will continue to do so.

Mr Spender—I seek leave to table a document marked 'Cabinet in Confidence' and 'Secret', two pages, directed to Mr Hayden from Mr A. D. Campbell, Deputy Secretary to the Department, dated 11 March 1986. It sets out in detail the matters to which I have

referred. That will allow the Prime Minister to refresh his memory.

Leave not granted.

PUBLIC SECTOR BORROWING

Mr GEAR—My question is addressed to the Treasurer. Can the Treasurer advise the House what role reduced public sector borrowing is playing in combating Australia's balance of payments difficulties? Furthermore, what evidence is there of support for this approach?

Mr KEATING—The reduction in the public sector borrowing requirement from the 7 per cent of gross domestic product which existed when this Government came to office to this year's zero figure in prospect is a central part of the economic policy of the Government arrayed against Australia's economic problems, particularly the current account deficit—that is, to free up savings within Australia by a program of public sector dis-saving to allow those funds to go where Australia needs them most, and that is investment in the import-competing and exporting sectors. As I have said in the House before, we are now presiding over the largest investment phase since records were first kept, which was 1948.

The other part of the question asks whether there is political support for the Government's policy approach. We have bipartisan support because today we discovered that the shadow Treasurer has endorsed the Government's fiscal policy. He has promised that a Federal coalition government would aim to have a sufficient Budget surplus after tax cuts to offset all Commonwealth and State borrowings; that is, he is arguing for, and promising, under a coalition government, a zero public sector borrowing requirement. That is what we will have in prospect this financial year—a zero one for the first time in 35 years.

Let me contrast that statement with the high drama of a week ago. The Opposition was going to come into the House and give the Government a torrid time. There was a censure motion moved against the Prime Minister. The essence of the Opposition's argument was that this Government had not adjusted policy sufficiently to meet Australia's balance of payments problem. On page

24 of *Hansard* of 28 February the shadow Treasurer said in the debate:

The Government has given up on fiscal policy—so that is out of the way. It will not act on that, but we will.

I emphasise the words 'but we will'. The next day he asked a question of me. He referred to an address I gave to the Economic Planning Advisory Council in which I said:

We will not hesitate to adjust policy . . .

He went on to say:

In view of that undertaking, why has the Treasurer failed to adjust economic policy?

On Tuesday he said that the Opposition would adjust policy; he then by inference asked me why we had not adjusted policy. After all of that he comes out and says that basically it is all bets off; the Opposition endorses the Government's fiscal policy. He endorses the Government's fiscal policy. In other words, we find out a week later, after all this hubbub, that the Opposition's fiscal policy objective will be exactly the same as that of the Government. All the high drama and contrived urgency have evaporated and we have the shadow Treasurer endorsing the Government's fiscal policy. He is laughing. Does he deny it? He goes on to say this—

Mr Peacock—Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Regrettably, the Standing Orders do not permit a response at this point, but the Treasurer has asked a question. I will simply say that I am foreshadowing, under the Standing Orders, that—

Madam SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member does not have a point of order. He will resume his seat. He does not have the call; he does not have a standing order.

Mr Peacock—Madam Speaker, I take a point of order. In circumstances in which a Minister is basing an answer on an edited transcript, it is possible, at the end of Question Time, to set him correct, is it not?

Madam SPEAKER—I will put the honourable member on my list for personal explanations.

Mr KEATING—I will be interested to see the honourable member deny Mr Hadler's story, if that is what he proposes to do. The fact of the matter is that the Opposition, in a matter of the most important policy, is

advocating no alternative policy strategy to that of the Government. That is what the interview means. That is what the claim means. The Opposition says it will tighten fiscal policy, cut outlays, do all of these things, but when pressed it endorses Government policy. Honourable members opposite have such a great policy plank that they are actually endorsing the Government's basic economic strategy. They are hoping to present themselves as an alternative at the next election campaign but their shadow Treasurer has committed them to the Government's economic policy. Apparently, by implication from the Leader of the National Party of Australia, we will have the device often employed by the coalition of denying its words and denying journalists' stories. We will see where it stands.

I said last week and I will say it again: it is time that the shadow Treasurer appeared at a press conference to be questioned on these issues. It is not simply for the Prime Minister, my colleagues and me to appear—good news or bad—at press conferences. The Opposition should appear at press conferences. Despite all the huffing and puffing, we find now that the shadow Treasurer in the alternative government endorses as his policy the policies of the existing government.

HEALTH FUNDS

Mr SHACK—My question to the Minister for Community Services and Health is based on a page 1 story appearing in today's Melbourne *Herald* headed 'Health Funds Facing Giant Losses'. I quote briefly a couple of paragraphs. The article states:

Minister for Health Dr Blewett has called an emergency meeting with HBA Health Insurance to discuss the company's ability to meet its financial commitments.

Further on, it states:

'Tomorrow we'll be asking HBA for a detailed game plan on how they're going to improve their situation' a spokesman for Dr Blewett said today. 'The Minister has been watching HBA and several other companies closely because they've dropped below the two months of reserves required by law.'

Does the Minister stand by the comments attributed to his spokesman? Why did the Minister not answer the question I put to him last Thursday when I asked, in part, whether he would advise the House whether or not all health funds are currently meeting

the statutory reserve requirement? Finally, in the light of the story, I now ask the Minister again: how many funds are operating below the two-month reserve provision; how many are continuing to operate under the exemptions from this provision; and for how long have they been doing so?

Dr BLEWETT—I would have hoped that, in the interests of the private health funds themselves, this issue would not have been canvassed in the rather irresponsible way it has been both in the press and in this House. First of all, let me explain to the honourable member for Tangney the operation of the two-month rule which he has referred to. My Department is responsible under the National Health Act to monitor the financial operation of these funds. The Act requires that health funds maintain reserves equal to two months of break-even contribution income. Where a fund cannot comply with this requirement at any time, there is provision for an exemption to be granted, and such an exemption is granted under controlled conditions and where demonstrable corrective action is being taken. Let me point out that the two-month period is simply a guideline and is used as a guideline to monitor funds where there may be some problem. Indeed, large funds can vary around that guideline without any serious financial difficulties, as they do not face the same degree of concern about sudden heavy drawing as do the small funds.

There has been, as I say, some irresponsible speculation about one particular fund, and we have been having discussions with that fund. However, I am advised that that fund certainly has sufficient reserves to meet any claims on it by contributors. So contributors need not be alarmed by some of the sensationalist reporting that has taken place. As I say, this issue has been sensationalised in a way that is not in the interests of the private health funds themselves. Let me say that there is no emergency meeting, as was claimed today in the *Melbourne Herald*. It is part of ongoing discussions that we have been having with this fund. All I say at this stage is what I said the other day in this House: I give the honourable member for Tangney the assurance that this Government will ensure that the contributors of any fund will not be put at risk.

SOCIAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Mr SNOWDON—Is the Minister for Social Security aware of the Australian Institute of Family Studies report entitled *Families and Tax in 1989*? Can the Minister inform the House of the relevance of the report to social policy development?

Mr HOWE—The report is a theoretical study of the effects of the tax transfer system; that is, the interaction of tax on the social security system. I think it is important to make the point that the analysis is no more than that. The report makes it clear that it is referring to hypothetical couples earning around average weekly earnings (AWE). It is important, when one is discussing income distribution and income transfers, to take account of social wage measures that are not taken into account in the Institute's document, for example, the impact of Medicare. If a family has children, clearly it needs health insurance. Medicare is worth about \$21 a week for a family earning around AWE. In relation to superannuation, this Government, with the Australian Council of Trade Unions, has made superannuation widely available to ordinary families. Under the 3 per cent arrangements that is worth \$14.40 a week for an AWE family. In the area of education, we do not need to refer only to the increase in the retention rates, from 35 to 65 per cent, under this Government—nearly 30 per cent more are staying to year 12—but more precisely, an AWE family with one year 11 student and two younger children will receive about \$32 a week from Austudy.

So, taking just those three social wage measures together and comparing them with the Institute of Family Studies alleged tax loss, we are talking about a gain of \$67 or its equivalent, compared with the alleged AIFS tax loss of \$27 to \$34 a week. I think it is important to say that social policy is not built, and will never be constructed, on hypothetical examples. One of the problems with the Opposition's preoccupation with what it calls the typical family—that is, a single income couple with two children—is that that so-called typical family represents something like 7 per cent of all income units. In other words, rather than being typical over the whole distribution, it is in fact quite atypical. The Institute of Family Studies sup-

ports and indeed indicates the quite significant gains that have been made with respect to low income families. For example, it talks about a couple with two children aged less than 13 years on half AWE, which is in fact \$18 a week, being better off in tax terms than it would have been under the 1976-77 conditions.

When we see the announcement of policy by an important group such as the Institute of Family Studies—it is an important study—it is not long before the Opposition jumps on to the bandwagon. Mr Howard, who has apparently been quite sceptical about the Institute, said he thought its work was valuable and he was not sceptical any more. That reminded me that there was some scepticism on the part of the Government at the time of the last election, when a policy was released by the Opposition which purported to deliver massive gains to middle income families. I think it would not be untrue to say that those gains were described as massive. But as the debate unfolded, as the Government gave consideration to the detail of that policy and took it away from being a hypothetical policy, into a policy which would have to be costed and presented to the Australian people as real, there was found to be some double counting of the order of \$1½ billion. Before the Opposition jumps on to the bandwagon with this document and adopts it as policy and says, 'That is what we are going to throw up at the next election—'

Mr Tuckey—Madam Speaker, I raise a point of order. I refer you to your own point of order which you raised on 9 September 1981, when you said:

I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker. I draw your attention to the *Hansard* of 27 August. You ruled, 'The Minister will answer the question and not engage in irrelevancies, such as contrasting the Government and the Labor Party'.

If this Minister were as generous with his money as he is with his words, no-one would be living in poverty. He has been going for five minutes and he should cease.

Madam SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member has raised his point of order. I call the Minister for Social Security in conclusion.

Mr HOWE—Let me come very much to the point. No doubt the proposal of the

Institute of Family Studies is very attractive to the Opposition, a concept so attractive that no longer is the Leader of the Opposition sceptical. In fact the AIFS was out in its costing by more than \$1 billion, so that what was presented as a \$5.6 billion proposal was in fact a \$6.6 billion proposal.

I conclude by saying that it may occur to the Opposition—there was some reference to this in the *Australian Financial Review* this morning—that perhaps we can go to the election without all the agony of costing, without the calculations of the replacement for the honourable member for Mackellar; that we could go on attitudes. The Government does not operate on the basis of attitudes. We operate on the basis of producing policies which are fair for families. I refer to the whole cross-section of families. Secondly, we operate on the basis of policies which give greater opportunities, particularly to low income families and—

Mr Rocher—I take a point of order, Madam Speaker. The terms of your ruling were that the Minister should conclude. It is taking him an inordinately long time to do so. I think you will agree that it is unreasonable and that he should be asked to sit down.

Madam SPEAKER—The Minister has been asked to conclude his remarks. I now draw his attention to the request from the Chair.

Mr HOWE—I conclude by saying that, secondly, our policies are about giving to low income families—who were excluded by the failed policies of the Opposition—a leg-up and an opportunity to get back into the mainstream. Finally, unlike the Opposition's family reforms of 1976—which, despite what Senator Chaney says, proved to be unsustainable—the reforms that we bring about for families will prove to be sustainable and responsible fiscally, and, frankly, we cost them accurately.

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMISSION

Mr MILES—I direct my question to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and refer him to his statement to the House of 21 December 1988 in relation to his meeting with State and Territory Aboriginal affairs Ministers the previous month that:

for the first time at any of these meetings, we had unanimous decisions between the Commonwealth and the States on every issue raised there.

How does the Minister reconcile his statement to the Parliament with the fact that the minutes of the meeting of the Australian Aboriginal Affairs Council to which he referred clearly showed that the Queensland Minister for Community Services, Mr Bob Katter, made clear the Queensland Government's implacable opposition to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Bill? Furthermore, is it not a fact that a proposal to hold a summit on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Bill was opposed by the majority of the Council members from the States and Northern Territory? In light of these facts, how does the Minister explain misleading the House on 21 December 1988?

Mr HAND—Firstly, the minutes referred to, and which have been agreed to by all State Ministers present at the most recent meeting, are draft minutes. Secondly, there was a decision taken in terms of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) which was a unanimous decision.

Mr Peacock interjecting—

Madam SPEAKER—The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has already been asked twice to cease interjecting.

Mr HAND—That decision on ATSIC was that I would agree to communicate with all Ministers of the various States to make arrangements for a briefing on ATSIC by departmental officers and I would agree to meet with the Ministers prior to the introduction of the legislation. Interestingly enough, from memory, only one Minister responded to that—Mr Katter certainly did—and he sought a day long meeting with me to discuss his concerns about ATSIC. Following that, a further meeting was held here in Canberra to discuss the findings of the Muirhead Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, at which a number of the States requested that a meeting be held of State Ministers and me prior to the introduction of the legislation into the Senate. That was agreed to by me and arrangements for that meeting are currently being made. The difficulty we are having is in getting all the Ministers available on the one day. But

the meeting certainly will be held. I cannot recall the second part of the question, but I will take it on notice and provide a response.

Mr Miles—The second part of the question related to the tied vote.

Mr HAND—There was a tied vote. Therefore the vote lapsed. There was a unanimous decision that I would write to them and I would communicate with them. Therefore it was unanimous.

WHEAT MARKETING ARRANGEMENTS

Mr COURTICE—My question is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries and Energy. Can the Minister advise the House of the reasons for the Government's proposed changes to wheat marketing arrangements and whether the Government will change its proposals in response to the arguments being raised by the Opposition?

Mr KERIN—I thank the honourable member, particularly for asking for the reasons for the Government's policy. It may be instructive to the Opposition. Let us just go through them. The first reason is to allow the Australian Wheat Board to have enough power to catalyse changes in storage, transport and handling, to give farmers cost savings off-farm on an ongoing basis. The second reason is to allow the Australian Wheat Board to be more effectively involved commercially in domestic trading, thus allowing it to compete with private firms and traders under the permit system. Since the Government has announced this policy a lot of good things have been happening and there is a lot of change under way in the Australian grain sector. For example, the Queensland Government has come out with a Green Paper that virtually duplicates what the Commonwealth is trying to do, but of course it wants to lock up Queensland as a State as far as wheat is concerned.

The New South Wales Government has been doing the right thing in respect of its Grain Handling Authority. The Victorian Government has been able to negotiate a lower freight rate for the Australian Wheat Board this year. The cotton industry in Queensland is moving to a private approach to the marketing of cotton, away from boards. The Queensland Barley Board is moving to

a permit system. There is a court case under way on section 92 with respect to State grain boards. A lot is happening, but the Opposition cannot see that. It fought the status quo last time at the behest of the Australian Wheatgrowers Federation; now it wants to fight the status quo this time, five years on. All that we are proposing is a little bit of what the Wool Corporation has been doing very successfully since 1974.

Let us look at some of the other reasons. We also want to place the Australian Wheat Board in a position to trade in other grains so that it can assist some of the smaller industries and get away from the nonsense of many of the small State grain marketing boards when it is sensible to do so. The fact is that the growers of grain legumes can assemble small cargoes but not large cargoes, and we are producing more grain legumes. Another reason is to prepare the Australian Wheat Board to be more pro-active in international grain marketing. The fact is that because of restrictions on the Wheat Board we have missed many opportunities in international markets over the years. Another reason is that we want to prepare the grains industry for the mental leap from the wheat-sheep belt to a growing livestock-grain sector, and that is happening. Another reason is that we want to allow the development of additional export industries, such as starch export and food manufacturing, thereby expanding wheat production in this country.

We also want to institute general efficiency gains for the cropping sector by not overencouraging one grain at the expense of others. There are other reasons, and of course all this is opposed by many honourable members opposite—mainly because the Grains Council of Australia is opposed and that organisation is split, Liberal versus National. To do these things, because of the reasons I have just set out to the House, we have decided to retain the Board's export monopoly on milling and industrial wheat, to remove the sunset clause so that any future John Elliott Liberal government—Roger Shipton should resign in about 2016—or any future government will need an Act of Parliament to remove that monopoly; to make the Board more commercial, particularly allowing it to trade in cash on the domestic market, including in competition with pri-

vate traders; and to align the underwriting arrangement more closely with market signals while maintaining high first advances to growers.

As a result of these changes growers will, for the first time, have an effective choice in who they sell their wheat to. They can sell to the Board's pools, they can sell to the Board's cash trading arm or they can sell to private traders. At present the Board has been effectively restricted from doing that. We hear a lot about competition, deregulation and choice from honourable members on the other side, but in this new competitive environment all market participants—the Board, the transport and handling authorities and the private traders—will need to maximise their efficiency. They will need to keep charges to growers as low as possible or they will simply not get any grain.

That is why these changes will benefit growers. Their costs will be lower. This saving will more than outweigh the small effect on domestic prices as domestic prices more accurately reflect market developments and market realities. But none of this impresses National Party members. They have no policy formation machinery; they just wander around the landscape, agreeing to whatever case is put to them by the farmers. Senator McGauran has lied not only about the Government's intentions but also about the position of those in the Liberal Party who recognise—

Madam SPEAKER—The Minister will withdraw that comment.

Mr KERIN—I withdraw. Senator McGauran has misrepresented the Government's intentions and also the position of the Liberal Party, which recognises the value of what we are doing. Of course, he has received no reprimand from his leader.

The Leader of the Opposition has grandly announced that the coalition will vote the same way on the issue. But which way will that be? Will the National Party once again kick the Liberal Party off its favoured turf of protecting the agricultural status quo? Every time that the Liberals—who, I might add, have as many members in this Parliament representing rural seats as the National Party, although not as many as the Labor Party—try to influence rural policy, they

meet the most vehement reaction from the National Party. It goes back decades. McEwen blackballed McMahon because he actually had the gall to face up to what was wrong with National Party policies. It has taken the Liberals 20 years even to begin to contemplate shrugging off the legacy of that piece of blackmail at that time. Once again we are facing the political blackmail of the National Party. The National Party is corrupt and undemocratic in Queensland; it cannot help itself in northern New South Wales; it is brawling in Victoria and Western Australia; but there is hope for it, as it received 1.6 per cent of the vote in the Australian Capital Territory election and Joh is to lead Grey Power. That is the record of the Nationals. Let me spell it out clearly to the Opposition: the Government's proposals will benefit wheat growers. The Opposition will have to make up its mind during the first half of this year. We will not give it an extra 12 months to sort out its own splits, misrepresentations and nonsense.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

Mr BEAZLEY (Swan—Leader of the House)—Papers are tabled as listed in the schedule circulated to honourable members earlier today. Details of the papers will be recorded in *Hansard* and the *Votes and Proceedings*.

The schedule read as follows—

The National Museum of Australia—Annual Report 1987-88—including the Auditor-General's Report—section 38 of the National Museum of Australia Act 1980 and section 63M of the Audit Act 1901.

The working of the protection of movable cultural Heritage Act 1986 and the administration of the National Cultural Heritage fund—Annual Report 1987-88—including the Auditor-General's Report—section 47 of the Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act 1986.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

Mr SPENDER (North Sydney)—Madam Speaker, I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Madam SPEAKER—Does the honourable member claim to have been misrepresented?

Mr SPENDER—Yes.

Madam SPEAKER—The honourable member may proceed.

Mr SPENDER—This afternoon the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke), in answer to a prepared question, made an attack on me. I could not hear everything that he said but, amongst other things, he said that I had engaged in a serious attack—I believe those were his words—on Mr Costello; that I had been grossly unfair; that I had imputed a sinister relationship. Quite simply, that is nonsense. I have not questioned the personal propriety, motives or general professionalism of that gentleman. I have questioned, and I question most profoundly, any kind of non-official relationship between any senior official in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade or, indeed, any other department, and a known KGB spy who, due to the lunatic policies of this Government, is allowed to come here and stay here for three years—

Mr Beazley—I raise a point of order. The honourable member has gone outside the framework of personal explanations. He is debating the matter.

Madam SPEAKER—The honourable member has shown the House where he has been misrepresented. He will not move outside the ambit.

Mr PEACOCK (Kooyong)—Madam Speaker, I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Madam SPEAKER—Does the honourable member claim to have been misrepresented?

Mr PEACOCK—I do.

Madam SPEAKER—The honourable member may proceed.

Mr PEACOCK—I refer to an answer given by the Treasurer (Mr Keating) during Question Time today in which he alluded to a very interesting article written in today's *Australian* by Mr Robert Hadler, a gentleman for whom I have great respect and who, because of the interview, kindly provided me with a copy of his reporter's transcript. In the nature of many reporters' transcripts, the transcript, which I have in my office, is not held out to be full and detailed. Mr Hadler's reporter's transcript reads:

Q. . . . would you still aim to have a sufficient surplus to produce . . . a zero net PSBR?

A. That would be our aim, as it is the Government's aim. But in fact the Government on the very

figures I've given you . . . will not be able to achieve their aim, they won't be able to do it.

There the answer in the reporter's edited transcript ends. The full transcript goes on:

I mean, just to take into account the figures I've given you, puts them in position where their aim, that Keating constantly talks about and practice can point to will be destroyed and we will be in a better position because we are addressing public expenditure.

So much for bipartisanship on fiscal policy because there are as you would know, Madam Speaker, different components in achieving any form of public sector borrowing requirements, taxes, borrowing and expenditure. I addressed public expenditure and have indicated clearly that the Government could not.

Mr KEATING (Blaxland—Treasurer)—Madam Speaker, I wish to make a personal explanation.

Madam SPEAKER—Does the Minister claim to have been misrepresented?

Mr KEATING—Yes, I do.

Madam SPEAKER—Please proceed.

Mr KEATING—I would never have attempted to misrepresent the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the honourable member for Kooyong (Mr Peacock), on such an important matter. Let me refer to the quote he refers to. The question is:

. . . would you still aim to have a sufficient surplus to produce a net, a zero net PSBR?

Answer:

That would be our aim.

That is, it would be the Opposition's aim to have a zero net public sector borrowing requirement. He goes on to say—

Mr Tuckey—On a point of order, Madam Speaker. The Treasurer is now arguing.

Madam SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member will resume his seat. The Chair is hearing a personal explanation from the Treasurer.

Mr Tuckey—That is right and I am on a point of order.

Madam SPEAKER—Go ahead.

Mr Tuckey—My point of order is that the Treasurer is now commencing to debate his personal explanation, and he should be told to stop.

Madam SPEAKER—The Chair has given a certain latitude to both sides of the House on this matter. It is sometimes very difficult, as I have pointed out before, when honourable members are quoting from a newspaper or when they are rebutting a point, to be as succinct as the Chair would like.

Mr Tuckey—On a further point of order, Madam Speaker. Just before you took the point of order from the Leader of the House and before our spokesman on foreign affairs immediately ceased his particular remarks, the remarks that the Treasurer was making as I got to my feet had nothing to do with the press release. He then started to argue the case, and it is a pretty poor one.

Madam SPEAKER—The honourable member will resume his seat. The honourable member for North Sydney had indicated to the Chair that he had completed his personal explanation.

Mr KEATING—The transcript goes on to say:

That would be our aim . . .

Mr Tuckey—Where have you been misrepresented?

Mr KEATING—The honourable member is suggesting that I have misrepresented the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. He is suggesting it. The transcript states:

. . . as it is the Government's aim. But in fact the Government on the very figures I've given you . . . will not be able to achieve their aim . . .

Whether there is any argument about whether the Government achieves it is immaterial. He said, 'It is the Opposition's aim to have a zero net PSBR', which is existing Government policy.

NAMIBIA

Ministerial Statement

Mr HAWKE (Wills—Prime Minister)—by leave—I report to the House on recent events in Namibia and Australia's role in assisting the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 435 of 1978, providing for the withdrawal of South African military forces from Namibia and the holding of elections under United Nations (UN) supervision and control. As announced by the Minister for Defence (Mr Beazley) and the Minister for Foreign Affairs

and Trade (Senator Gareth Evans) on 2 March 1989, a contingent of 300 Australian engineers will leave shortly for Namibia. They will form part of a United Nations peacekeeping force in Namibia that will help bring independence to Namibia after more than 100 years of rule by foreign powers.

The settlement of the long and complex issue of Namibian independence is an important international event. It is an event in which Australia has played, and will continue to play, a substantial part. During my recent visit to India, I noted that there had been much talk during the 1970s and early 1980s about an arc of instability stretching from southern Africa, through the Persian Gulf, through Afghanistan and South Asia and on to Indo-China. We see now, if not an arc of peace, then at least an arc of peace-making. It is a process, facilitated by an improvement in superpower relations and aided by the constructive role of the United Nations, that is finally bringing the treasured goal of independence within sight of the people of Namibia.

My Government recognises that the problems in southern Africa constitute one of the major challenges facing the international community. We have sought, through the United Nations, the Commonwealth and our own diplomatic links with countries in the region, to find peaceful solutions to the complex set of problems that trouble that region. In recent times, there has been little cause for optimism in southern Africa. The offensive doctrine of apartheid remains entrenched in South Africa's social, political and economic life. Civil wars with drastic human consequences continue in Mozambique and Angola. The front line states of southern Africa—including fellow Commonwealth members such as Botswana, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe—continue to be vulnerable to economic and military destabilisation. The question of Namibia, in many ways, encapsulated a number of these problems.

The fact that Namibia is now on the way to independence demonstrates that concerted international action, the determination of the region, and the goodwill of individual players can combine to bring solutions to longstanding problems in the region. For a southern Africa torn by attrition, deprivation and

tragedy, recent moves on Namibia offer a glimmer of hope. The problem of Namibia has been with the international community for close on 70 years. South Africa was appointed mandatory over the former German colony of South West Africa by the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, in circumstances similar to Australia's own mandate over Papua New Guinea. This mandate was confirmed by the League of Nations. After the Second World War, the League of Nations was superseded by the United Nations, and the mandate system by the trusteeship system. Alone of the former mandatory powers, South Africa refused to submit a trusteeship agreement for South West Africa, or Namibia, as it is now known. In 1966, the UN General Assembly resolved that South Africa's role in Namibia should be terminated, and that the responsibility for the territory should be assumed by a UN-appointed Council for Namibia. Despite these decisions, South Africa continued to govern Namibia against the wishes of the United Nations, and claimed sovereignty over it in the face of widespread international condemnation.

South African rule has been opposed from within Namibia since 1957 by the South West Africa People's Organisation, SWAPO. SWAPO commenced an armed struggle in 1966, and was supported in this by Namibia's neighbour to the north, Angola, when it achieved independence in 1975. South Africa responded by supporting an insurgency against the Government of Angola, and by direct attacks against Angolan Government forces inside Angola. Angola sought Cuban involvement and as many as 50,000 Cuban troops have been deployed there at any one time. This involvement, with substantial Soviet backing, became a significant source of East-West tension.

It has taken years to begin to untangle this mess. In 1978 the UN agreed on a plan for a settlement contained in UN Security Council Resolution 435, but intransigence on all sides prevented that plan from being implemented. Then last year, in the context of reduced East-West tensions, the log-jam started to break up. South Africa agreed to withdraw its forces and to allow Namibia its independence, while Angola agreed to the withdrawal of Cuban forces and the removal

of African National Congress camps from its territory. The signing of the Brazzaville Protocol on 22 December last year by South Africa, Cuba and Angola has at last formalised the acceptance by South Africa of the 1978 UN settlement plan.

Last month the UN Security Council agreed that the transition to independence for Namibia would begin on 1 April 1989. Over the 12 months from that date the UN will monitor the withdrawal of foreign forces, oversee the drafting and adoption of a Constitution, and supervise the installation of a new government after general elections. A vital element in this plan is the United Nations Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG). It will monitor the ceasefire and troop withdrawals, supervise elections, and support the maintenance of law and order in Namibia until the new government of independent Namibia is ready to take over. The scale of these tasks is reflected in the size of the force. UNTAG will have civilian, police and military elements. The military element, will consist initially of 4,650 personnel, including three infantry battalions, with scope for expansion to 7,500 should the circumstances demand.

Australia is providing the engineering component of UNTAG. Our contingent of 23 officers and 277 other ranks will provide engineering and construction support to the UN effort. Such support will be sorely needed. Namibia is a large, arid, sparsely populated and underdeveloped country which has been a war zone for many years. Our engineers will build roads, bridges, airstrips and camps for UNTAG. They will have the very serious task of clearing mines which have been laid by the various contending forces along the border between Angola and Namibia. This is, of course, not the first time Australian personnel have been involved with a peacekeeping force in Africa; we participated in the Commonwealth force that monitored Zimbabwe's transition to independence in 1980. In that process, as in others before and since, Australian defence forces played a constructive role in what can be a difficult and sometimes dangerous process. Members of the Australian contingent will serve in Namibia for tours of six months, after which they will be replaced by a fresh contingent from Australia. The UN plans to complete

Namibia's transition to independence within a year, but delays in this complex process are possible, and we may be called upon to stay longer than a year. The bulk of the Australian contingent will be based at Grootfontein in the north of Namibia, near the border with Angola. Elements of the contingent could be required to deploy into neighbouring countries to support UNTAG operations there.

This is a very large and important commitment for Australia, comprising almost half of the Army's construction engineering capability. Careful planning, including the use of reservists, has been required to ensure that high priority engineering tasks closer to home can still be performed. I am pleased to say that it has been possible to minimise the impact of the deployment on support to the operational deployment force, exercise Kangaroo 89, and the defence cooperation program in the South Pacific, where our engineers build wharves, airstrips and other essential infrastructure.

It has to be understood that the political and military situation in the border region where the bulk of our men will be deployed will remain uncertain and outbreaks of fighting cannot be ruled out. Members of the Australian contingent will travel often on minor and remote roads. They will be responsible for the dangerous work of clearing mines throughout the country. Threats are also posed by disease and the harsh environment. Against these dangers should be set the fact that our service personnel are experts in their profession; they are well trained and will be armed for self-defence. I can assure honourable members that the safety of the Australian contingent is uppermost in my mind. To ensure that we are kept fully informed of developments that may affect the well-being of the Australian contingent, the Government has decided to establish a temporary Australian Liaison Office in the Namibian capital of Windhoek for the duration of the 12-month independence process. The office will provide the Government with first-hand reporting on political and military developments in the territory, during what at times is likely to be a difficult process. The office will be headed by an experienced diplomat with many years' background in African affairs.

The Government has also ensured that members of the Australian contingent be adequately compensated for the hardships and dangers they will face through a comprehensive and generous set of conditions of service, including the payment of special allowances. In addition, the Treasurer (Mr Keating) will be seeking an amendment to the Income Tax Assessment Act to exempt the pay and allowances earned by Defence Force personnel while they are on tour with UNTAG. Repatriation benefits appropriate to the tasks and hazards encountered will also be provided.

Our contribution to UNTAG and our involvement in the Namibian settlement makes Australia party to what may be one of the United Nations' most substantial achievements for many years. We have been involved in this process from the start. Australia has been a member of the UN Council for Namibia since 1974. We pledged our support for UNTAG at the inception of the UN plan for Namibia in 1978. Australia also made an important contribution to UN deliberations about Namibia during our recent term on the UN Security Council in 1985-86. Our participation in UNTAG also builds on the constructive role successive Australian governments have played on southern African issues. I pay particular tribute to the achievements of my predecessor Malcolm Fraser in this regard. Our decisive contribution to the attainment of independence by Zimbabwe, Australia's leading role in the Commonwealth on southern Africa affairs, and our bilateral aid support for the member countries of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference, all speak of a firm commitment to peace and stability in that region. Our involvement in the Eminent Persons Group was only one demonstration of our longstanding determination to work constructively to bring about an end to the repugnant policies of apartheid.

I believe that the Namibian settlement, together with the resolution of the Iran-Iraq war and the end of Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan, marks a renewal of faith in the United Nations as an effective participant in international affairs after many years of cynicism and apathy about its role. The United Nations belongs on the centre stage of world affairs, not in the wings, and it is

very encouraging that more and more countries are recognising this. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the efforts of Martti Ahtisaari, the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Representative on Namibia, for his important role, and those of the late Bernt Carlsson, the UN Commissioner for Namibia, who was tragically killed in the Lockerbie air disaster.

I would like to think that Namibia's transition to independence will proceed to plan and that there will be no major setbacks. But such things are never certain. Our effort in Namibia will be the largest peacekeeping commitment in which this country has ever participated. It may also be the most difficult. I am sure that all honourable members of this House and the people of Australia join me in wishing our troops well in their endeavours. We do so in the knowledge that they will make an outstanding contribution to the future peace and prosperity of an independent Namibian people and a more stable region. I present the following paper:

Namibia—Ministerial statement, 6 March 1989.

Motion (by Mr West) proposed:

That the House take note of the paper.

Mr HOWARD (Bennelong—Leader of the Opposition) (3.08)—The statement just made by the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) is, according to any measure of parliamentary statements, a very important one because it confirms the rare event of the dispatch of Australian forces overseas to undertake, on this occasion, a very difficult and a very important peacekeeping role. I say at the outset on behalf of the Opposition that we fully support the action of the Government in dispatching Australian forces to be part of the United Nations (UN) peacekeeping force in Namibia.

As the Prime Minister properly acknowledged, the original decision to commit Australian forces, to the number of some 300 mainly engineering personnel, was taken in 1978 by the former coalition Government. I join the Prime Minister in extending to the Australian forces that are to go overseas the very best wishes for their safety and success from all members of the Opposition. When Australian forces go overseas in the name of, and on behalf of, the Australian people, it is important that they know they have the

total support of both sides of politics. On this occasion I can say unreservedly that they will. The Prime Minister is right to draw attention to the tortured process of achieving the peace arrangement in Namibia. It is 11 years since the provisional settlement was concluded. At times during that process it must have appeared to all participants that it was unlikely that that original agreement would ever be fully consummated. Undoubtedly the general easing of East-West tension and a greater sense of pragmatism about some of the affairs of southern Africa, from both Pretoria and the front line states, have played a role in bringing about a very sensible arrangement.

I share the hope of the Prime Minister that the Australian forces will be there only for the designated period of 12 months. It will not be an easy task. It has to be recognised frankly on both sides of the Parliament that our forces can and will be exposed to physical danger. I would say to the Government that any measures introduced into this Parliament by the Treasurer (Mr Keating) to exempt the pay and allowances of Australian forces from income tax will be fully supported by the Opposition. We will also be looking for the repatriation benefits to be provided appropriate to the task and the hazards encountered. There is no doubt that this very large and important commitment, as the Prime Minister said, comprises almost half of the Army's construction engineering capacity, and careful planning has been required to ensure that high priority engineering tasks closer to home can still be performed.

I hope that the Prime Minister's assurances about the impact of the dispatch of this contingent on the Kangaroo 89 exercise are fulfilled. If they are not, that will inevitably raise serious questions about the level of defence preparedness in Australia. We are second to none in giving total support to the Government for the dispatch of these forces. We do not and will not in any way criticise the Government's decision in relation to that. But that does not prevent, in the proper arena of political debate and conflict in this country, the Opposition pointing out any deleterious consequences on the capacity of the remainder of the Australian defence

forces to play an effective role in other areas of our responsibility.

This announcement today and the dispatch of the 300 Australian servicemen to Namibia for this peacekeeping role continues a long and very honourable tradition of Australian service personnel serving overseas in a variety of peacekeeping and other capacities; and I welcome the fact that this takes place under the auspices of the United Nations. I would have to confess to being somewhat of a sceptic about many of the roles and activities of the United Nations, but I have never demeaned the enormous contribution that the voluntary agencies of the United Nations have made to the relief of suffering. Anybody who has visited the refugee camps in the Gaza and on the border between Thailand and Cambodia will be well aware of the very fine work of those agencies. There have been, as the Prime Minister properly points out, a number of examples in recent years of which this is one, where the persistent work of the United Nations has brought about a rational solution. It is true that changes in attitude by the great powers and other participants have played a part, but I do not wish on this occasion to be churlish in denying the role that has been played by the United Nations.

Let me say again that this decision by the Government fulfils the original commitment made 11 years ago by the Fraser Government. It has our support and I join the Prime Minister in extending, in the fullest possible sense of the word, bipartisan good wishes for those Australian service men and women who will be making a very significant contribution to bringing about a greater measure of security, peace and stability in what has been and remains a very troubled part of the world.

Mr BEAZLEY (Swan—Minister for Defence) (3.15)—I would like to make a number of remarks on the statement of the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke). First, I express our gratitude to the Opposition for its support. We did rather expect that it would be forthcoming and there was no surprise in that regard. Nevertheless, it is gratifying to have it. I want to make two general points on the impact of the commitment outlined by the Prime Minister on the operations of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and some of

the salient features of the tasks that it will be performing.

A substantial commitment has been made in terms of the impact of the operations on the section of the Army from which this contingent is drawn. A very substantial component of our engineering capability is involved. We will be able to perform this task to some degree because of the changes we placed in our policy on reservists, and I will talk a bit more about that later. But, in the fullness of time, there will be a substantial involvement of some of our Army Reserve people in this commitment, and that is only proper. One of the reasons that we introduced the call-out legislation relating to reservists was to give the Army Reserve an opportunity to play a role in the total Army.

A second feature I draw attention to is the status that is going to be accorded the participants in relation to benefits and more will be said about that by the Minister for Defence Science and Personnel (Mrs Kelly). I would like to say something about the reason for that. This is a different peace-keeping operation from those with which we have been associated in the past. It is on the basis of that difference that determinations have been made. Unlike the situation in Zimbabwe, the current situation associated with the separation of forces from the Iran-Iraq war or the personnel involved in Lebanon, this will be an armed force. It will be deployed in anticipation that it may from time to time experience trouble. This is not expected, but there is that possibility and, hence, it will be a force that carries arms. It will, of course, also directly confront problems which will endanger the lives of the personnel concerned. For example, it has as one of its tasks the clearance of minefields.

Australian servicemen have been serving as observers and peacekeepers continuously since 1947 in Indonesia, the Middle East, Kashmir and Zimbabwe. Today we have 28 Army officers in the Middle East serving with the United Nations truce supervision organisation and with the United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group. Our largest peacekeeping commitment until now was in Zimbabwe, where about 150 Australian servicemen monitored the disengagement of opposition forces in Zimbabwe's civil war. The 303 members of our United Nations

Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG) deployment are, therefore, by a large margin our biggest peacekeeping effort yet, and it is probably our most difficult. We certainly had plenty of notice. The Army has had engineers on stand-by to join UNTAG since 1979. Nonetheless, the scale of the deployment, the tough conditions in which they will operate and the importance of the task all make this a challenging undertaking.

Our contingent of 303 men will be made up of two main elements. The headquarters element of about 50 men—the Headquarters Chief Engineer UNTAG—will be part of UNTAG headquarters in Windhoek, the capital of Namibia. The main body of our contingent comes from 17 Construction Squadron, based at Holsworthy in New South Wales. The squadron consists of two construction troops, a resources troop, a plant troop and a field troop. As well, the squadron will have a full workshop unit and communications and medical support. The 17 Construction Squadron and its workshop will be based at Grootfontein in northern Namibia, close to the Angolan border, but it may be called on to operate anywhere in Namibia and perhaps in neighbouring countries. The Australian contingent will be commanded by Colonel Richard Warren, a highly trained and widely experienced engineer officer who had served throughout Australia and in Papua New Guinea. In Namibia he will serve as the Chief Engineer, UNTAG, as well as Commander of the Australian contingent. The second in command of the Australian contingent is Lieutenant-Colonel Kevin Pippard who will serve as senior operations staff officer to Colonel Warren at UNTAG headquarters. The 17th Construction Squadron at Grootfontein will be commanded by a Major David Crago, whose previous postings have included service with the Commonwealth monitoring force in Zimbabwe in 1979-80.

The contingent will deploy with its own heavy equipment. The main items of equipment to be shipped include 24 Land Rovers, 19 Unimog all-terrain vehicles, 26 heavy trucks, 43 trailers, 8 bulldozers and a range of other road making plant such as graders, scrapers and rollers. The supporting workshop will require a further 40 vehicles, and over 1,800 tonnes of stores will be shipped with the contingent's equipment. The ad-

vance party of the contingent will leave Australia this week. The heavy equipment and stores will be loaded for transport by sea in about the middle of March. The main body of the contingent is scheduled to leave on 17 March. Those members will fly to Namibia by United States transport aircraft.

The Prime Minister has already indicated that our troops will find in Namibia an uncertain political and military situation, and a harsh and unforgiving terrain. In recent years, Namibia has been subject to a very complex series of interconnecting conflicts. In the first instance, the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) has been fighting the South African armed forces, both in Namibia and from bases in neighbouring Angola and Zambia. In recent years, South Africans have recruited Namibians into the South-West African Territorial (SWAT) Force to support them in fighting SWAPO.

Meanwhile, events in Namibia have been heavily influenced from across the border in Angola. The Angolan Government, supported by up to 50,000 Cuban troops, have been fighting an insurgency based in the south-east of the country by the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). UNITA has been aided by the South African Government, while SWAPO has been aided by the Angolan Government. As an additional complication, Angola has been providing refuge and support to the African National Congress in its fight against the regime in South Africa. UNTAG has a difficult and complex task in helping to untangle this complex situation. It will monitor the cessation of hostilities by all parties and the implementation of the transition to independence for Namibia. UNTAG's military component will play a vital role in this process.

Under the UN plan a cease-fire is already in place before UNTAG's arrival. During the 12 weeks following the arrival of UNTAG, all but 1,500 South African troops will be withdrawn from Namibia and the remainder will be confined to camps. At the same time SWAPO forces inside Namibia will be confined to their camps, and those in Angola and Zambia will be restricted to their bases there. Unarmed SWAPO personnel and other Namibians outside the territory will be able to return to participate in the election.

The military component of UNTAG will be required to monitor, and if necessary enforce, this complex cease-fire and disengagement. It will need to keep borders under surveillance to prevent infiltration of forces. It will be responsible for disarming and disbanding citizen forces such as SWAT Force, ensuring that all military installations along the northern border are deactivated or placed under UN supervision and providing security for vital installations in the northern border areas. As well, it will be required to assist and support the civilian component of UNTAG in managing the constitutional and electoral processes, and respond to any special requests from the UN special representative to help to maintain law and order. UNTAG's military component will consist of three infantry battalions of 850 men each, 300 military observers, 1,700 logistic troops and a headquarters staff of 100, making a total of 4,650 men. Should it become apparent that this is insufficient for the task, the force can be expanded to 7,500.

Clearly, mobility will be fundamental to the effectiveness of UNTAG. Our contingent's key task will be to maintain that mobility in what will often be very difficult circumstances. Hence, the tasks envisaged for the Australian engineers in support of this force include mine clearing, maintaining roads and tracks and building and maintaining light aircraft strips and helipads. They will also be called upon to help with water supplies, to construct rough camp accommodation and to build field defences. As the Prime Minister has said, these are clearly tasks which carry some risks. We all hope and expect that all parties to the complex conflict in south-west Africa will abide by the terms of the Namibia settlement. With such a large number of competing forces and conflicting interests, it is possible that trouble could break out and that UNTAG members could become involved. Apart from the risk of combat, Australian forces will face danger from mine clearing and disease and from the harsh and arid climate of south-west Africa.

Against these dangers need to be set the skill and professionalism of our defence forces. UNTAG members, including the Australian contingent, will be armed for self-defence. Our engineers are specialists in mine clearance. They have been carefully trained

and equipped for this work. Every care is being taken to ensure the safety, health and welfare of our soldiers. Nonetheless, the ADF and the Government accept that there may be casualties among our contingent. We recognise the dedication of our contingent members, who accept these risks as part of their duties and a concomitant of a profession of arms. The Government has decided that because the potential risks of service in Namibia may be higher than for previous peacekeeping operations, a more generous level of compensation should be paid to our soldiers serving with UNTAG. The Government has decided that because of the significant risks involved, the members of our Namibia contingent will receive appropriate recompense, including a substantial allowance, and that their full pay and allowances will be tax-free while they are in Namibia.

This is in fact the most generous package of allowances and conditions offered to Australian servicemen abroad since the Vietnam War. My colleague the Minister for Defence Science and Personnel, who has been responsible for putting this package together, will be giving fuller details later in this debate. I am confident that all honourable members will agree that these conditions are a fitting recognition of the service to be undertaken by our soldiers in Namibia.

Australian soldiers will serve in Namibia for tours of six months. The UN plans to bring Namibia to independence within one year. We are committed to maintain our UNTAG contingent for that period. At least one rotation will therefore be necessary. However, it may be that delays in the implementation of the transition plan for Namibia could occur, which might require UNTAG to stay in place longer than a year. The government would, of course, then have to review our commitment in the light of all the circumstances.

Our UNTAG contingent accounts for nearly half of our construction engineer capability and their deployment to Namibia will affect the engineering resources closer to home. Our engineers perform a lot of important work in Australia and in our region. Among the activities which had been planned for our engineers are a number of high priority defence cooperation program (DCP) projects in the south-west Pacific and Papua

New Guinea, including a new police headquarters in Vanuatu, a new wharf on Manus Island in Papua New Guinea, and studies for the establishment of a new base for the Papua New Guinea defence forces air element in Port Moresby. All of these projects will be able to go ahead unaffected by the UNTAG deployment. Another major task for our engineers is participation in Kangaroo 89. Here the departure of 17 Construction Squadron will have some impact, but the Army is planning to use reserves more fully to make up the gap. I might say that I am very pleased, as I said before, that two reservists are among our first deployment to Namibia and that others will follow. I believe this demonstrates in a concrete fashion our determination to integrate the reserves fully into the Army and treat them as the serious soldiers that they are. I conclude by joining the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Howard) in wishing the men of our first Namibia contingent well in their important work.

Mr SINCLAIR (New England—Leader of the National Party of Australia) (3.28)—I share the good wishes extended to those who are about to serve in the United Nations Transitional Assistance Group, the UNTAG Corps, by the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke), the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Howard) and the Minister for Defence (Mr Beazley). I do not think there is any more significant decision by this Parliament than the decision to send armed forces abroad. This is a significant decision and, albeit that it comes 11 years after the original decision, it is one which now has a prime bearing on those personnel about to serve in Namibia. There are three aspects of the service that I wish to address: the role of peacekeeping forces and their role in southern Africa; the effect on the Australian Defence Force (ADF); and the protection of the rights of serving personnel and their dependants.

First, with respect to peacekeeping forces, I was very critical, and remain critical, of the Government's decision to withdraw the multinational force from the Sinai. I well understand the reason for the return of the rotary wing element and comprehend the advantage to the mobility of the Australian Defence Force, in particular the Operational Deployment Force (ODF), of that helicop-

ter facility. Nonetheless, I believe there were other roles that could have been played there.

Australia has served and is serving in a number of other joint forces around the world. I think it is commendable that yet again the United Nations (UN) in this instance has been prepared to act and it is the more commendable because it seems the Soviet veto has not been applied as it has on a number of occasions. We recall that, because of the Soviet veto, it was necessary to form a multinational force and observers (MFO) rather than a UN force when the Sinai commitment was entered into. There is, without any doubt, for Australia a very real responsibility to act as a neutral country where we can to assist in trying to ensure peace between other nations. The Opposition parties see this as an entirely appropriate part of the role of the ADF. It is in that respect that we made this initial commitment and commend the Government for pursuing it.

With respect to the role in southern Africa, the situation there is difficult. Indeed, one of the elements that I noticed absent from the Prime Minister's statement—and it has not been adverted to by the Minister for Defence—is the very large number of Cuban troops that have been serving in the area. There is a requirement that, by 1 August, all 47,000 Cuban troops must be north of the fifteenth parallel. That is a large number of personnel. We need to understand that the UNTAG group is a very small element and much will depend on the goodwill of those other personnel—not just the Cuban troops but also the group that has been referred to by the Minister within the South West Africa People's Organisation. We know that SWAPO has been guilty of continued insurgency activities, in violation of the New York agreements, along the border of Angola and south-west Africa. There has been, apparently, a building up of about 4,800 SWAPO members in various camps.

It is an extraordinarily sensitive part of the responsibility of UNTAG to try to control a large number of forces whose acts in the past have not suggested that they are prepared to meet the general obligations of the peace accords, although I believe that at least to date the Cuban troops are acting in accordance with their obligations. One can only hope that within the responsibility of

the UNTAG group, which is to monitor the peace process, there will be an ability for it to act as one would wish, given its size and the inevitable limitations of any peacekeeping force. Indeed, one commends those in the United Nations who have been responsible for putting together this element.

For Australia, however, it is a risky operation. One would be foolish to think there is not an element of risk in our service in Namibia. This has been acknowledged by the Prime Minister and now by the Minister for Defence. It is in that respect that we all need to understand the nature of service in the Australian Defence Force. It is in that area that my own concern is paramount. We know from the Prime Minister's statement that about half of the engineering capacity of the Australian Defence Force will go to Namibia. We have been told by the Minister for Defence that two reservists will be in this first detachment. While we entirely endorse the integration of reservists with the Australian Defence Force, and hence their dispatch and participation, through the amendment to the call-out legislation, I believe there is a problem because of the nature of demands that could be brought to bear on the ADF and other areas.

The Prime Minister's statement refers to the defence cooperation program in the Pacific. It is not only that obligation overseas which might require a commitment from the Australian Defence Force; from media reports it seems that the Government has made an initial suggestion that up to 1,000 Australian Defence Force personnel might participate in any cooperative peace force involved in Cambodia. We also know of an approach by the Government of Papua New Guinea for Australian Defence Force personnel to be posted there. In other words, quite apart from this obligation, there are at least two possible commitments which will draw further on the ADF. When that is measured against the record rate of resignations and the Australian Labor Party's attitude towards the Defence Force, which has not shown care for and attention to the personnel of the Australian Defence Force, one can only be apprehensive about the impact this will have on the Australian Defence Force's ability not only to meet those external obligations but also to maintain the train-

ing program and the high standards expected in its preparedness and ability to service the new equipment acquired by it within Australia and within the ADF's other broader commitments.

Of course this is particularly significant as far as the Army is concerned. Over the 12 months to which the Prime Minister's statement refers, every member of the engineering corps will be serving in Namibia. As half will go in the first element and half in the second—even though there might be some drawing on reservists, and one needs to understand that inevitably there is some turnover—every member of the engineering corps will serve in Namibia. While that is excellent in experience terms, the reality is that numbers in the Australian Army are inadequate to meet the sorts of obligations that this overseas commitment places on them. There has been 11 years notice. Over that time one would have hoped that there could have been a recognition that there might well need to be, therefore, some build-up of the engineering force so that it is not stretched to the limit, as I suggest it might be. The Minister has said that there will be no effect on Kangaroo 89, nor on domestic ability. I put it to him that in the circumstances of such an extraordinarily large commitment it will be very hard for the Army to meet its domestic commitments not only in Kangaroo 89 but in the defence cooperation program and certainly, if additional commitments are required, in either Cambodia or Papua New Guinea.

Perhaps the most significant element, however, of Opposition concern is our worry about the extent to which the protection of rights of serving personnel and their dependants, if any injury should occur, is covered by the Government. I understand that the area is to be declared a war zone. I remain to be advised whether the service will be declared operational. I also heard no reference in the comments of either the Minister or the Prime Minister to the present terms of the Commonwealth Employees Compensation Act which largely, in many instances, has replaced the overall embrace of cover for veterans. One needs to understand, if there should be death—sadly, we know that there was one in the United Nations forces in Lebanon a little while ago—that those

who serve abroad in the Australian uniform on behalf of this country need to be offered a more secure and better package than that which is available to anybody who serves within Australia.

Certainly, for those who are serving in the UNTAG group, there should be a requirement on the part of this Government to provide at least as generous a package of entitlements on their return—or for their dependants, should anything tragic happen to them—that ensures that they and their dependants are protected. I trust that the Minister for Defence Science and Personnel (Mrs Kelly) will cover this aspect in her statement. We need to know whether the Government will declare the zone operational; the impact on dependants of the present package within the Commonwealth Employees Compensation Act; and whether veterans' entitlements will be available to the full degree that they were available in Vietnam.

The whole of the character of what I have seen and heard suggests—as does the reservation in the comments of the Minister for Defence—that the Government is not being as forthcoming as it should be. In the Opposition's mind that is totally unacceptable because there is, without any doubt, a necessity for those who are serving in these circumstances to be fully covered and fully protected, as should be their dependants. I say to those who are serving and who will serve that members of the National Party join other members who have spoken in wishing them well and commend them for their professionalism and the high standards which we know they will achieve, and trust that they all return to this country in a 100 per cent healthy state.

Mrs KELLY (Canberra—Minister for Defence Science and Personnel) (3.38)—I thank the House for the cooperative spirit in which this issue has been debated. As the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) and the Minister for Defence (Mr Beazley) have said, uniformed Australians have an outstanding record in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping forces. From Korea to Cyprus, to Lebanon and Iran, Australian police and military personnel have been keeping the peace. Often that peace has been uneasy and fragile, as the battles of long time enemies have flared up again along disputed borders or between

traditional rivals. Keeping the peace in troubled lands, trying to implement on the ground the complex strategies of mediators and envoys, is no sinecure: it is tough, difficult and enormously valuable work.

The peace plan for Namibia has been long in the making, as the Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence have said, and much delayed in its implementation. Now, after 10 years, it is time for the plan to be tested; it is time for the Australian Defence Force (ADF) to make its contribution; and it will. It is a contribution from all Australians and tangible evidence of our commitment to peace in the world. For the 300 men who are going to Namibia, it is a very personal commitment. I have visited the Namibian contingent twice, accompanied on my most recent visit by my colleague the Minister for Industrial Relations (Mr Peter Morris). I was most impressed with the calibre of the troops we are sending, the quality of their leadership and equipment, and their good spirits and high morale. Colonel Richard Warren and his second-in-command, Lieutenant-Colonel Kevin Pippard, were in New York attending the United Nations Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG) contingent commanders brief, but Colonel Peter Rose, the Commandant of the Land Command engineers, took me around, along with Major David Crago, who is leading the 238 men of the 17th Construction Squadron, UNTAG, to Namibia. I must say that I was particularly impressed with the leadership of the officers who will lead this contingent.

I was invited to a lunch at Holsworthy, where I had a chance to meet members of the contingent and talk with them about their concerns and feelings on the eve of their deployment. They all knew that they were going into danger. No doubt for many of them there was regret at the thought of leaving their families behind. But all were quite clear about one thing above all: that they were going to Namibia for a good reason, for a really worthwhile purpose. They take with them all our best wishes and our unanimous support. Along with our goodwill, they deserve tangible evidence that we appreciate what they are doing for us and for the cause of peace in the world.

A package of conditions has been agreed on that recognises the unique and special

character of the circumstances that these men will face in Africa. I will go into the details of the allowances in a moment, but I begin by expressing my pleasure at the efforts that will go into providing for the families of the men who are going to Namibia. Members of the contingent will be eligible for up to seven days of pre-embarkation leave to finalise their personal affairs and to make their farewells before they go. They will be able to keep in touch with their families and loved ones while they are in Namibia and Defence will meet the cost of postage to and from members of the contingent.

A support network, known as network 17, has been established to assist families. Based at No. 1 Construction Regiment at Holsworthy, the network includes a 008 information service which families can ring for advice and support. The families already have been called in. They have met with the officers and have had a full brief in regard to contact and the sort of support they will have. So the support network is already well in place.

Normal Defence Force allowances will be payable to members of the contingent. The transfer allowance of between \$335 and \$410 per member, depending on whether he lived in barracks or outside prior to departure, will be paid. Separation allowance for those who are separated from their families will be paid. Members of the contingent also will be eligible for an outlay allowance and an interest-free loan of \$1,500 to assist in meeting costs associated with establishing themselves in an overseas country.

In Namibia the contingent will be divided into two groups: the headquarters staff in barracks in the capital and those who will be out in the field, mainly along the northern border. The headquarters staff will receive a special Namibia allowance of \$22 a day. On top of this, the United Nations allowance of \$1.52 is payable. Headquarters staff will pay rations and quarters charges at the Windhoek barracks through the commanding officer, although the commanding officer will be empowered to waive these charges if he finds the conditions there to be substandard. No rations and quarters charges will be paid by members of the contingent out in the field and their special allowance for Namibia will be paid at the rate of \$35 a day as well

as the UN allowance. These rates will be reviewed, but not diminished, soon after the contingent deploys to Namibia.

Allowances payable to members of the contingent will vary from \$335 plus \$23.52 a day for single members serving at headquarters to \$410 plus \$39.96 a day for a married member posted to the forward areas. The Treasurer (Mr Keating) has agreed that all pay and allowances for members of UNTAG will be free of tax. The decision dates from 18 February and the Treasurer will be seeking an amendment to section 23A (c) of the Income Tax Assessment Act to give effect to it. I would like to thank members of the House for their support of that initiative. Particularly, I would like to pay tribute to the Treasurer for his support. The Treasurer has proved by this decision that this Government is committed to the UN peacekeeping force. This is no empty gesture; it is a real and determined decision, which I welcome most warmly.

Honourable members opposite raised the issue of repatriation benefits. These benefits will be appropriate to the task and hazards that the contingent will meet. Currently we are examining the various options. Obviously, there are two categories: operational and peacekeeping. Basically, I am looking at trying to provide the best conditions possible for these people. Some people argue that better conditions are offered under the peacekeeping category. Others argue that better conditions exist under the operational category. Much will depend on the circumstances. As a minimum, these conditions will include: normal benefits under part 4 of the Veterans' Entitlements Act; 24-hour any occurrence cover for death or invalidity benefits while outside Australia; coverage under the Commonwealth Employees Rehabilitation and Compensation Act for 28 days after return; favourable standards of proof for cases; and limited rights to sue at common law. These are just the basic conditions and, as I said, we are looking in detail at the categories that they should fall into. The best interests of the troops are being taken into consideration, bearing in mind the threat scenario that they are going to be facing. No package of conditions can fully compensate for the hazards that Australia's contingent of UNTAG will be walking into, but conditions

like the ones I have outlined are designed to take account of the difficulties that can be predicted and the separation from families and loved ones that necessarily accompany deployment such as this.

The Australian contingent to UNTAG will soon be deployed. To the 300 men directly involved, I extend my best wishes and personal thanks. They are joining a proud group of Australians, including my father, who, many years ago, was a member of the peacekeeping force in Cyprus. These men over the years have genuinely fought for peace. I wish them all the best of luck in their role of mediating in an area that has known the ravages of war for so many years. I wish them a safe return. I hope that their families feel compensated in some way by the packages we have allowed. I hope that the servicemen feel that at least this Government is looking after them and their families. They go in the hope, though not in the certain knowledge, of succeeding in their mission. The heartfelt good wishes of all peaceloving Australians and of everyone dedicated to the ideals of the UN everywhere go with the ADF contingent to be deployed to Namibia.

MR SPENDER (North Sydney) (3.48)—I shall be brief. I welcome, as other speakers have, the decision to give effect to a decision taken in principle many years ago by the Fraser Government, of which the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Howard) and the Leader of National Party of Australia (Mr Sinclair) were both members, to support, effectively through Australian troops, the peace process in Namibia. Namibia is large in size, small in population and impoverished. Like so many other African countries, it has been afflicted not simply by poverty but by man-made disasters of one kind or another. In particular, it has been bedevilled by insurgency.

I am glad that we are going to see the removal of foreign troops. I am also glad that the South African Government appears to be taking a more realistic approach to some of the foreign policy issues on its border. We on this side of the House look forward in particular to the eventual withdrawal from Africa of all Cuban troops who, as the arm of the Soviets, have been so responsible for so much of the armed devastation that has bedevilled sub-Saharan Africa.

Australia's role is an important one, as has been pointed out by all speakers. I join the Leader of the National Party in hoping that our involvement in Namibia will not overstretch our forces. I notice that in his statement to the House, in reference to the 300 men that we are sending to Namibia, the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) said:

This is a very large and important commitment for Australia, comprising almost half of the Army's construction engineering capabilities. Careful planning, including the use of Reservists, has been required to ensure that high-priority engineering tasks closer to home can still be performed.

I emphasise that in this case careful planning, including the use of reservists, was necessary for the purposes of leaving available the capability of high priority engineering tasks closer to home. It is a pity that our forces are in that state.

I acknowledge, as other members have, the difficulties that this process is going to face. The timetable looks for independence in a year's time and the establishment of democratic government. I am sorry to say that the record of democratic government in Africa has been a sad one. I hope that on this occasion a democratic government will be established and will be able to flourish.

Let me say one other thing about some of the disasters that have bedevilled Africa. When we speak about Africa—indeed, when we speak about any other part of the world—in terms of rights and abuses, we need perhaps to take a broader view and not be as selective as this Government has been in its approach to southern African affairs. We join the Government unequivocally in condemning apartheid. The reasons for that condemnation are well known and have been stated again and again by speakers from this side of the House.

We think that more attention should be paid to some of the other manmade disasters in the sub-Saharan area of southern Africa. I will give one example. In August of last year in Burundi the majority Tutsis slaughtered some 25,000 minority Hutus. In contrast to the language of denunciation on South African affairs—and I am not quarrelling about the language of denunciation when it comes to apartheid but I do quarrel about selectivity in weight, however—the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Sen-

ator Gareth Evans) answered a total of one question on this dreadful outrage. Twenty-five thousand people were slaughtered. It passed almost unnoticed by this Government. When asked a question on notice by Senator Chaney—a question put down on the *Notice Paper*—about whether Australia would look into what concerted international action might be possible over Burundi the Minister's response was nothing, zero. There was no answer after many months. One would think that if this deep concern for the people of Burundi is felt, as it should be, the Minister could bother to get around to answering a question on that subject. I ask him and other members of the Government, in the spirit of the bipartisan and sensible approach to these important foreign policy issues, to look to the other issues as well in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Prime Minister has welcomed the involvement of the work of the United Nations in this case. We certainly welcome more effective work from the United Nations. But we need to understand that effective work from the United Nations depends on constructive diplomacy from the Soviet Union, especially at the Security Council level. It is good to see that in some respects changes have been noted in the way in which the Soviet Union is approaching a number of foreign policy issues as it reassesses its own position in the world and its own internal position. But we need to remember that the United Nations is a meeting ground of nations and that its success is not dependent on some kind of mystical quality that can be attributed to the United Nations but is dependent crucially on the constructive involvement and cooperation of the major countries. It was the Soviet Union, at the Security Council level, which for decades was the major preponderant bloc to successful work in the Security Council.

What we are seeing is a first step. We hope it will be a successful step towards democratic government. We welcome again the involvement of Australian troops. We hope that if Namibia proves to be successful it may help wean the South African Government away from the policies of apartheid which are so universally condemned. It is in the interests of all South Africans that that tragedy be put to one side. But it is in our

general interests to look to African affairs as we look to the affairs of any other part of the world and to apply a measured, balanced and objective judgment on events.

Debate (on motion by Mrs Darling) adjourned.

NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION AMENDMENT BILL 1988

Bill returned from the Senate without amendment.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Leo McLeay)—I acquaint the House of the appointment of Senator McLean to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade in place of Senator Macklin who has been discharged.

ECONOMY: LIVING STANDARDS

Discussion of Matter of Public Importance

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Leo McLeay)—Madam Speaker has received a letter from the Deputy leader of the Opposition (Mr Peacock) proposing that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely:

The impact of six years of economic mismanagement under the Hawke Government on the living standards of low to middle income earners.

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

More than the number of members required by the Standing Orders having risen in their places—

Mr PEACOCK (Kooyong) (3.56)—This is an interesting matter of public importance that I bring before the House today—even if I say so myself—not only because it provides one with the opportunity to range over the consequences of the economic mismanagement of the Hawke Labor Government but also because it provides an opportunity, does it not, for the Treasurer (Mr Keating) or whoever else may respond, to pick up the much vaunted, in recent days, publicity and advertising campaign projected forward by the Government. The Government has told the Australian people that it is going to do a comparison of its seven years in govern-

ment, that is seven years of the Hawke Government—it has had only six so far and the way it calls early elections it probably will not make seven—with the record of the Fraser Government. I find that fascinating, quite apart from the reality that Australians are suffering under record high interest rates, a huge foreign debt, higher rates of inflation and hopeless positions for so many on housing.

If the Government pauses at the commencement of this comparison and says, 'Let's have a comparison', it is so retrospective and rear vision mirror driven to be going to the people and saying, 'Look at the past instead of looking to the future'. If we do a calculation there were 7½ years of the Fraser Government and six years of the Hawke Government which takes us back 13½ years. It takes us back to the commencement of the Fraser Government which was the end of the Whitlam Government. If we wanted to go back ourselves what a time we would have comparing the record of Labor under Whitlam with the record for this nation under Fraser. I will put that to one side and start to examine the record of the last six years. We have the implied contrast that it is going to make so explicit with the record of the Fraser Government.

I pause before going on to say that on this side of politics we have formulated programs, schedules and policies that not only call forth the aspirations of Australians now but are predicated on the sort of Australia we want for the future. We look towards the year 2000, which is only 10½ years off, whereas the Government comes in with some propaganda exercise going back 13½ years. Even the cognisance that the year 2000, which is a shorter comparative period of time than it wants to make, will be not only just to capture the sort of thing we are on about, for not only is 1 January 2000 the start of a new year but it is the start of a new century, and indeed the start of a new millennium. It drives home the need to have in mind the sort of Australia we want. But no, the grubby little exercises, which the Government thinks will bring it some fruition, are to go back. The issues that strike at Australians today that have been caused by this Government—I can think of a number of them—include tax, interest rates, for-

sign debt, unemployment, public housing listings and household disposable income. The question for the immediate future is: What is the Government's fiscal policy? The Treasurer will come in here and say, 'Where is your policy here and where is your policy there?'. What is the Government's fiscal policy for 1989-90? What is the Government's tax gross domestic product ratio going to be? What is the Government's target Budget surplus? What is the Government's target for the net public sector borrowing requirement? How will the Government finance the tax cuts and spending commitments or inflation? By the way, quite apart from the Treasurer revealing himself today as a textual deviate in misinterpreting my transcript, I also asked him a question about the projected rate of inflation. He got up and said: 'Oh come on, I'm not going to answer that. It's all up here; I know it all. I gave all that out a couple of weeks ago at a press conference—he has to do all these press conferences—I went along to a press conference and I gave the answer to the press. Go and look it up'. So I went along and had a look at it. He was asked:

So as of now there is no forecast for inflation?

This was the answer:

No. But you are not entitled to get off the top of my head CPI forecast.

What a terrific answer! Some answer. The harsh reality is that there is no forecast for the projected rate of inflation. The Treasurer knows that. He could not give it at the press conference and he could not give it today. We come to this comparative exercise, and I will go through a few of the examples. Those opposite are going to do the old seven-seven calculation—Fraser and Hawke. Let us have a look at tax. Starting point: this Treasurer is the highest taxing Treasurer in Australia's history. Bracket creep, tax creep, has taken a huge toll on Australian living standards. Let us have a look at them. In 1982-83, 24.7 per cent of Australians faced a marginal tax rate of 40 per cent or more. Today that figure is 51.3 per cent. Some contrast. Do not tell it to the marines if the Government thinks it is going to sell this successfully. We know interest rates are at a record high. Under the Labor Government average annual interest rates are significantly higher than under the Fraser Government. I make the comparison here: average home loan re-

payments as a share of household income have increased from 19 per cent in 1983 to almost 31 per cent. Some contrast. Because of the brevity of this debate I will not go into detail on foreign debt but, as I have consistently said, under Labor our net foreign debt has virtually quadrupled.

Let us consider public housing. We know what has happened in the private arena. For those who have been forced to look to public housing, under Labor the number of people on public housing waiting lists has increased from 110,000 to 160,000. Some contrast. The Treasurer is always talking about employment records. Let us look at unemployment. Under Labor the average monthly unemployment rate has increased from 6.1 per cent under the Fraser Government to 8.5 per cent under the Hawke Government. Under this Treasurer the number of long term unemployed has increased by nearly 20 per cent and under Labor the average youth unemployment rate has increased significantly. The House will remember that tragic report which came out the week before last from the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, the Burdekin report on youth homelessness. It had as a central element the linkage of homelessness and unemployment. Under six years of this Labor Government, as all members of this House know, Australian families on low to middle income earnings have had their living standards slashed.

While I am on the subject of comparisons, a year ago the Labor Party had great celebrations on the fifth anniversary of its election to power. It was the sixth anniversary yesterday. The Prime Minister was asked to go to the National Press Club and celebrate the occasion, mark the occasion. He refused. The Prime Minister was asked to participate in a variety of functions yesterday. He could not because he had a previous engagement. He had to go to the track. He was at the race track. At least it was a change that he was gambling with his own money—I trust—rather than the money of most Australians. Government members crept through this celebratory exercise almost as if they were going through the ventilators and under the carpet to avoid being seen yesterday.

So much for the comparisons between the Hawke Government and the Fraser Govern-

ment. What about this essential element of household disposable income? I really do think that the most damning indictment of this Government's economic management is just that—that while families on low to middle incomes have suffered drastic declines in their real incomes, those on higher incomes have emerged relatively unscathed. We have heard it in here before: a family on average weekly earnings—

Mr Downer—Not Bondie?

Mr PEACOCK—I will come to someone like that in a moment. Before we get to him because he earns a little more than a person on average weekly earnings, a family on average weekly earnings with a dependent spouse and two children would need \$58 a week to return it to the position of disposable income that it had at the time of the election of this Government. Some contrast again. When I confront the Treasurer with these figures he comes in time and again—he will probably refer to it again today—and says, 'Well, it is no good referring to these people on average weekly earnings'. He does not see them. The old black windows in the car will not allow him to look at them.

Mr Keating—There are a lot in Toorak.

Mr PEACOCK—That is not in my electorate, so go and find out the facts. The Treasurer is getting it wrong again.

Mr Howard—He needs a Gregory's to get to his electorate.

Mr Carlton—He does not know where Bankstown is.

Mr PEACOCK—As I look at the way this Liverpool preselection is being looked into, it seems to tie in fairly and squarely with the Treasurer's a few years ago. I can see that he will not be saying too much about the preselection techniques going on down there, with the old left and right.

The Treasurer comes in here and talks about the aggregate measure of per capita real household disposable income, claiming that this has increased under the Labor Government. It is true. The Treasurer has actually come in a number of times and told us something that squares with the facts—that the aggregate measure of per capita real household disposable income has increased.

But, as with so many things, it begs the question of why.

I listened to him one day and heard him say that. I went back and had a look at the figures. I thought, 'He is right in this regard today. I had better look and see why these aggregates are so'. Do honourable members know what the answer is? The increase in aggregate real per capita household disposable income is overwhelmingly due to increases in capital sourced incomes. If one looks at the contribution of wages, salaries and supplements to the growth, it is lower in the years of the Hawke Government than under the Fraser Government. Some contrast. If one looks at the contribution of pensions and the like through personal benefit payments to the growth in real per capita disposable income, it is also lower in the years of the Hawke Government than under the Fraser Government, but the contribution of capital sourced incomes to the growth in real per capita household income is significantly higher. Of course, that includes the mates, the rich mates.

I do not know why he comes in and gives us this figure. The latest Australian Bureau of Statistics income distribution data tell a similar story: those on low to middle incomes have suffered while those on high incomes have done better. We have to move away from the digits and the big picture, the big canvas, the effervescence, the bubbles bursting and the glass running over, and look at what he says when he is asked what he is doing for the average person, which comprises the majority of Australians today. Alan Ramsey on *Four Corners* asked him a very interesting question. He referred to the Treasurer's explanation for our bad balance of payments figures being that there had been a massive injection of additional national income. I think the Treasurer said the economy had been too successful. It was too hard to handle all the success. Mr Ramsey said:

Now a lot of people out there in the community don't believe that you've been too successful, that they've got a lot of additional income in their pockets. Who got all the extra money and when are ordinary people, your ordinary voters, your supporters feel they are going to get their share of that money?

The Treasurer went on again with the big picture, big canvas, the effervescence. There was no answer because it could not be answered. The harsh reality is that this Treasurer is quite unable to state a case if he wants to follow the propagandising of the Prime Minister in comparative terms between the record of the Hawke Government and the Fraser Government because the comparison is odious. If I was speaking beyond the Treasury area, if I was moving beyond the subject of the matter of public importance, it would not matter if it was on foreign affairs or, dare I mention it, immigration or, dare I mention it, living standards, the record of the Treasurer just does not compare. At root, what has transpired under this Government is that life has been for the few—and the very few. I mentioned last week that I was quite struck when a prominent official of the Labor Party in Victoria said to me, when I challenged him about the record of the Hawke Government, that it is 'a government that we will not remember with pride'—that is 'we', the Labor voters. It is not only the Labor voters who will not remember it with pride but also the members of the Australian community who have had to suffer and whose living standards have been reduced. They get nothing from this Treasurer but expectations that things will get better. The reality is that there has been a harshness and an irrelevance in the Treasurer's policies in terms of the improvements in the living standards of Australians. Whether the Government goes straight to the election on its record or whether it seeks to make the comparison between the Fraser years and the Hawke years, it will be condemned because the comparison is crippling, and crippling for the Government.

Mr KEATING (Blaxland—Treasurer) (4.10)—The Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the honourable member for Kooyong (Mr Peacock), came into the Parliament this week under pressure to perform—

Mr Peacock—What?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Mil-dren)—Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition was heard in relative silence.

Mr KEATING—At the start of today's debate in the House I raised matters which the shadow Treasurer, the Deputy Leader of

the Opposition, had said in an article headed 'Peacock: The pressure's on to perform.' Is it not interesting to note that one week into the parliamentary session, despite all this bluster and bravado about how the Government was going to be under pressure to change policy and how there was going to be a big attack, there was only one group under attack and that was the Opposition. At the beginning of the second week, here we are with an article entitled 'Peacock: The pressure's on to perform'. I suppose that he will say that that story in a newspaper is a piece of fiction.

Opposition members—Look behind you!

Mr KEATING—The Deputy Leader of the Opposition was heard in silence; honourable members opposite should show me the same courtesy.

Mr Downer—All your supporters are there.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER—Order! I do not require the assistance of the honourable member for Mayo. There is a great deal of interjection. If honourable members wish to draw themselves to the attention of the Chair they should at least sit in their own seats, otherwise I expect them to remain silent.

Mr KEATING—We heard a speech full of bluster, displaying all the political antics of somebody who does not know what policy is about or what the issues are about. Today we were seeing someone using all the thespian skills he could muster to smother the fact that he put his policy foot in it. He committed the Opposition to the same public policy on budgetary matters as the Government. What we saw today was what we have often seen from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition; that is, all tip and no iceberg. In other words, it was all bluster and blarney but there was no quality or analysis underneath it. In the course of his remarks he said that I was—to use his foolish expression—'a textual deviate'. In other words, I dared to have the temerity to actually refer to something he had said in a text. Oh, shocking! It is dreadful that the Treasurer should actually pick the Deputy Leader of the Opposition up on something! What did he say? In the principal conceptual debate last week about the current account and savings and public sector dissaving, he said we should have a

tightening of fiscal policy. Today, he was asked the following question:

With the surplus would you still aim to have a sufficient surplus to produce a net, a zero net PSBR?

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition answered:

That would be our aim . . .

He then put out a press statement and got up after Question Time to explain himself, in what was a pathetic apologia for a mistake, saying:

. . . we will be in a better position because we are addressing public expenditure.

In other words, it does not matter which way one approaches it—whether one wishes to change the outlays or the receipts—he is in there supporting the same bottom line. His aim is to have exactly the same Budget balance as that of the government; that is, a zero public sector borrowing requirement (PSBR). The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has been saying that the Opposition stands apart from the Government because the Opposition has a different policy position on the principal issue in Australian public life at the moment; that is, the current account deficit and its solutions. On the principal issue—not a peripheral issue—in Australian politics and our economic life at the moment of the current account deficit and how the policy setting should be adjusted to cope with it the shadow Treasurer says that the Opposition's fiscal policy will be the same as the Government's.

Mr Peacock—I didn't say that.

Mr KEATING—No, the honourable member did worse than that. He then said he did not say it.

Mr Peacock—You have the old selective amnesia.

Mr KEATING—We have the embarrassed silly giggle. Well, you should be embarrassed. I saw you trying to explain to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Howard) at Question Time about what you said. The Leader of the Opposition gave you no succour and comfort in reply because he knows that you do not know.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Mil-dren)—Order! I ask the Treasurer to direct his remarks through the Chair and then we might have some silence.

Mr KEATING—In a critical issue for the public sector of Australia, particularly the fiscal policy of the Commonwealth, the Opposition is saying, 'We'll have the same policy as the Government; the same policy as you'. It is then suggesting to the people that it could carry out our policy better than we have. If that is its position, that is fine; but the Deputy Leader of the Opposition put out a pathetic press statement an hour or so ago, after Question Time, and this is the sentence which he says neutralises what he said earlier; that is, that a zero net PSBR would be his aim:

I mean, just take into account the figures I've given you, puts them in a position where their aim——

God knows what that means—

that Keating constantly talks about and practice can point to will be destroyed and we will be in a better position because we are addressing public expenditure.

For a start, it is illiterate.

Mr Peacock—'Illiterate'—you?

Mr KEATING—Apart from that fact, it does not detract from the point his aim would be a zero net PSBR. In other words, he commits his Party to the same fiscal policy as that of the Government.

Mr Peacock—The least read, most illiterate Treasurer there has ever been.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER—Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will cease interjecting.

Mr KEATING—I know that the honourable member is embarrassed. Well he might be. His colleagues behind him and the Press Gallery know that in the interview today with Hadler he committed the Opposition to the Government's budgetary policy. His mate the honourable member for Wentworth (Dr Hewson) is waiting to get his job. He would have another nail in the wall, and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is in there talking about unemployment benefit and the rest. The fact is that he does not understand the policy brief. If he does not have a note under his nose he does not know. He does not do press conferences because he cannot cope with them. He does doorstops on one question and then runs away. He is not accountable. He always happens to be out of Canberra whenever there is a big news day on the economy so that he does not have to do a press conference.

Mr Peacock—I am doing press conferences all the time.

Mr KEATING—Go and do one this week; face the Canberra Press Gallery tomorrow and let them ask about fiscal policy and the Budget balance. The Government was to come back under a cloud and under attack. ‘The Opposition is going to come in with a new policy prescription and tighten up expenditure’, said the Leader of the Opposition. What do we have a week later? It is not the Government under pressure; the honourable member for Kooyong is under pressure. He is not only under pressure today but also will be under pressure tomorrow by putting his great big foot in a place where he should not. Fancy not knowing the Opposition’s basic stance on fiscal policy! Fancy, in his own mind, not knowing! In parliamentary terms the incompetence of not knowing where fiscal policy is, is unspeakable. He knew that he had a matter of public importance (MPI) on. I will bet he nearly died when he realised that he had put his foot in it and then had an MPI on.

Mr Downer—He has got a fixation with the shadow Treasurer.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER—I warn the honourable member for Mayo.

Mr KEATING—So what happens? The boys behind him have closed ranks. They will let him get away with a silly speech about the Labor Party’s record over six years instead of defending his blunder, which is to commit his Party to the Government’s policy. After six years that is where honourable members opposite stand. They talk about their record. For 30 years they let McEwenism and protectionism poison this economy. For 30 years, through public policy indolence, you let our manufacturing sector run into the ground. In 1980-81, three years before this Government came into office, the current account deficit was already at 6 per cent of gross domestic product. Those in the foreign affairs portfolio and in labour and domestic portfolios sat there doing nothing about this problem, and then this Government got the job of trying to haul Australia back into the twentieth century from the late nineteenth century to make the place look like a modern industrial state—and members of the Opposition are here saying

‘Look at the average’. The most dishonest statistic that the Opposition uses today is the average of unemployment under the former Fraser Government and under this Government: the average using the low number that the Opposition inherited from the Whitlam years was the high number that was left this Government. Fancy anyone daring to use that.

This has all been trotted out today because the honourable member had to fill in a 15-minute speech when he knew that basically he had muffed it and put his foot in it on the basic strategy point. There is the approving giggle from the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Howard), who would be ready to shaft the honourable member at a minute’s notice, particularly for this performance, and from the honourable member for Wentworth (Dr Hewson), who cannot wait to get the shadow Treasurer’s job, and from the rest of the ineffective shadow front bench, who would not know what fiscal policy, the non-farm deflator or anything else meant. Basically, they are a bunch of gargoyles sitting there listening to the debate, like watching a tennis match with the ball going backwards and forwards. That is the context in which the honourable member for Kooyong is here today, and I know it.

I do not mind and have never minded being accountable for this Government’s policies at any number of press conferences—good or bad news—but I do mind, frankly, when the Opposition will not be held accountable. When the Deputy Leader of the Opposition makes a mistake like this and unambiguously says, ‘That would be our aim’—that is, to adopt the Government’s fiscal policy, which is the primary instrument of economic policy—in these circumstances of pulling down public sector demands on Australian savings, and then uses this gobbledegook in the paragraph that I read earlier to worm his way out of what is a major, cardinal political and economic error, this is a gaffe of unbelievable proportions the like of which I have never seen.

The honourable member talks about the Labor Party’s record. The only record that the Opposition has to worry about is our electoral record. I know the Opposition was full of bravado about how it would beat us in 1984 and then did not. Then Mr Howard

said from the comfort of some New York hotel that the times would suit the Opposition for 1987, and the Opposition was creamed again. The Opposition will get creamed another time because, basically, out there in the business community, amongst the elite of this country, ordinary working people, people know that the Opposition is a joke. The people who write newspaper leaders and run the debate know that the Opposition could not cut the mustard in a fit. One week back, when the Government is supposed to be under enormous economic and political pressure, all today will prove is that the person under pressure is the Deputy Leader of the Opposition on the basis of massive and gross incompetence.

As far as the record goes and all these idiotic and insincere references to battlers, what is the view from the champagne suite on Melbourne Cup day of the battlers with the old top hat and tails on and the champagne bottle in their hand? When did the Opposition ever worry about battlers? Did the Opposition ever worry about them when it was in government, when those unemployment numbers were rolling up under the honourable members for Kooyong and Bennelong? Fancy the Deputy Leader of the Opposition having the hide, representing one of the toffee seats of Melbourne and perpetually mixing with that clique, to talk about battlers. It would make a cat laugh. Then he is supposed to come in here crying crocodile tears about unemployment and the social wage. The Opposition would rip Australia to pieces. It would have interest rates at 30 per cent. It has no wages policy. It has adopted our fiscal policy. This would leave it with one instrument left, which is monetary policy. The Opposition would tear the place to pieces like it did in the past. But it will not be given the opportunity.

All today reveals is that six years on, to yesterday, the Opposition has not moved a centimetre in terms of understanding policy or the framework. That means that the Opposition is as empty-headed and useless today as it was six years ago. That is the message for the public and the press gallery, and that is the message that will clearly seep through to the Australian electorate before polling day. That is why the Opposition will go to where it belongs, which is another

three years on the green leather opposite, asking us questions, putting out mindless press statements and generally acting the fool.

Mr BRAITHWAITE (Dawson) (4.25)—It must be a surprise to the members of the Government who have been challenged to come in here to listen to the Treasurer (Mr Keating) to realise that they are going out as ignorant as they came in. There has not been one remark in the last 15 minutes addressed to the matter of public importance. The Treasurer's speech lacked substance and had a lot of rhetoric. One always knows when a salesman is selling a bad product. He does not try to uphold the quality of his own product; he tries to challenge that of the opposition. The Treasurer in this regard is a bad salesman and even did a bad job trying to challenge the Opposition.

What we are talking about today is a very important part of the constituency who have been overlooked completely by this Labor Government—the lower and middle income earners, whose living standards are deteriorating because of the lack of real disposable income. When the services that are available to people from a disposable income are compared—housing, health, education for the family, recreation and just everyday living—the facts and figures of the last six years indicate that there is no way in the world that the lower and middle income earners are any better off in terms of their disposable incomes than they were six years ago. It does not matter what record one takes. No wonder the Treasurer devoted all that time to talking about the Opposition and the shadow Treasurer (Mr Peacock) but failed to come to grips with the argument that we have put forward.

Let us consider past records and foreign debt. Everybody will be well aware that the increase in foreign debt has been massive under this Government. For example, foreign debt has increased from \$36 billion in 1982-83 to \$121 billion last September, which is greater than a three-fold increase. The net foreign debt for 1982-83 was \$22 billion. It is now \$97 billion—nearly 4½ times as much. It is only held at that figure because of a high exchange rate, and when the exchange rate starts plummeting again that figure will rise.

Let us consider the record in relation to inflation rates. Our inflation rate, which came as a rather savage surprise to the Treasurer just recently, in comparison with the rest of the world leaves Australian citizens in a very bad situation. For instance, in 1984 the inflation rate in Australia was 3.9 per cent compared to the 5.2 per cent average of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the 6.7 per cent average in the European Economic Community (EEC). Looking at the same situation today, the inflation rate faced by our citizens is 7.7 per cent compared with the OECD rate of 4.3 per cent and the EEC rate of 3.9. That is the figure that the Treasurer challenges as being incorrect. I would suggest that there are a lot of battling families who would say that, indeed, the consumer price index (CPI) is incorrect and that, with the pressures they face in everyday life, the CPI is undoubtedly higher than that recorded figure.

It is very important to look at a comparison of interest rates. Interest rates are an important factor when one looks at the standard of living that people enjoy. Too many people in Australia today, particularly the lower and middle income brackets, have to borrow to enjoy those standards that we are talking about. In 1983 the comparative interest rate in Australia was 13.7 per cent while in the USA it was 11.4 per cent. In Australia it is now 13.05 per cent and 9.1 per cent in the USA. In Japan, one of our major competitors, it is 4.17 per cent. So on an international comparison, I ask: Who is the better off? In national comparisons, all Australians have been worse off in that period.

Last week the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Howard) asked the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) about disposable income. The Prime Minister did not cite the source of his information, but he said that this Government has increased real household disposable income by 5 per cent. He also mentioned that 1.1 million people had gained employment. In fact the booklet put out by the Australian Institute of Family Studies on the income transfer project, entitled *Families and Tax in 1989*, released just last week, indicates:

The three components of prices, taxes and wages are contained in the three words, real, disposable

and income. 'Real' means adjusted for inflation; 'disposable income' means income after taxes have been deducted and family allowances, pensions and benefits and supplements added in.

I seek leave to table a document taken from the report which shows what the facts are and what the Prime Minister did not disclose the other day.

Leave granted.

Mr BRAITHWAITE—The table indicates that from 1976-77 to 1984-85 everyone, from single income people to couples and sole parents, benefited by as little as \$26.79 a week to as much as \$38.42 a week. Between 1984-85 and 1988-89 a single person's disposable income dropped by \$30.61; that of a couple with two children dropped by \$41.71; and that of a couple with four children dropped by \$47.85. Where does the Prime Minister get his figure of a 5 per cent improvement in disposable income when these figures come from a quite neutral planning authority, the Institute of Family Studies? Its figures, which agree with ours, show quite conclusively that a family with two children has suffered a deterioration of \$58 a week. This fact was supported recently by Eric Risstrom, who said that Australian families in that category are \$56 a week worse off now than they were those many years ago.

I would now like to deal with what disposable income is supposed to buy in 1989. Last week we had a major housing summit, which was a talkfest. The quality of housing is one of the things by which we measure our standard of living. That meeting was really a diversion by the Treasurer and the Prime Minister so that we could not see the real situation in the housing industry today. A report of only this morning, following a poll by Saulwick, indicates that far from what the Treasurer and the Prime Minister are saying—that the problem is a shortage of land—only one person in 10 believes that but four out of 10 people believe the problem can be blamed fairly and squarely on interest rates.

Last Friday the Treasurer gave away land that I understand had already been under option to a Singaporean agency. Some other land is subject to flooding. So not only is he trying to push his economics uphill but also he will be pushing water uphill to prove that

there is no flooding in that area. A third problem is that some of the land is used as an airport, and that will always remain an airport. That is the Treasurer's response to the major problems of housing in Australia, particularly for those low to middle income earners.

In 1983 the average monthly repayment on a housing loan was \$350. Today it is \$778. In 1983 it was 19.2 per cent of a person's income and in September 1988 it was 30.7 per cent. There are record interest rates now applying, particularly in the home loan area. In March 1983 the interest rate on home loans was 12.5 per cent and today it is 15.5 per cent. The prime rate of interest has gone from 14 per cent to 17.5 per cent, and the small overdraft rate has gone from 14 per cent to 17.5 per cent. The small overdraft rate is very important to those people trying to get a housing loan but not being able to get a deposit together.

I heard as recently as today that the banks are asking those people to get a personal loan, in addition to their mortgage, which carries an extra rate of interest of 2 per cent. If the Treasurer or the Prime Minister wanted to get to the base of the problem, they would find that in the last six years people have had to walk out of their houses because of the increased loan repayments due to high interest rates. We cannot blame this on anything but the Treasurer's determination to make sure that interest rates remain high. He is not taking any interest in the living standards of the people we are concerned for, the low and middle income earners. We are not talking about the Treasurer's living standards, but those of people on low and middle incomes who have suffered from those interest rates, high taxation and now this latest scandal of the Treasurer not being prepared to support his own policies in this Government.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Mil-dren)—Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr RONALD EDWARDS (Stirling) (4.35)—Today's matter of public importance from the Opposition challenges the Government to talk about the living standards of ordinary people. It also mentions economic management and how that economic man-

agement affects living standards. The Opposition has argued that there has been a decline in living standards under the Labor Government. At the outset we say that that is not the case, and we can talk about statistics in a minute to show that. But what we also ought to say is that I and others on my side of the House are quite happy to oblige the Opposition with a debate about economic management. When we reflect back over the seven sorry years that preceded us, we realise that there was a record of economic mismanagement. We have only to reflect back to the time when we took office in 1983 to see that high inflation was common in Australia—for example, 11 per cent—coupled with what is really a very sorry record in unemployment, which was rising. In fact we had a condition known as stagflation. People such as the Minister at the table, the Minister for Land Transport and Shipping Support (Mr Robert Brown), are familiar with it. It takes an extraordinary economic inability to get into that combined condition of high unemployment and high inflation, but the Opposition managed to do that. It even reinforced it by ensuring that in its last year in office it put an extra quarter of a million people on the unemployment list. That was an extraordinary achievement. In the context of an expanding Budget deficit, in Keynesian terms, it ought to have been soaking up unemployment—but it was not. So we had a prospective Budget deficit of \$9.6 billion under the present Opposition—it was already running a high deficit anyway—and it was not eating into unemployment, but those high rates of unemployment were not eating into inflation either. So we had this paradoxical situation in terms of the tests of economic management: high inflation, high unemployment and a high deficit.

But the story went on. We thought that as they messed it up in terms of unemployment policy and fiscal policy, they might get it right in terms of monetary policy. But they did not. Despite their best efforts, the inflation rate and interest rates, which at one stage reached 22 per cent, ran away from them. We have to remember that these were the four major achievements that they could go out on. As the lights went out on Malcolm Fraser and John Howard, they also took out with them some extraordinary eco-

nomic statistics—high inflation, high unemployment, a very high deficit and high interest rates. We might have thought that the tale would have ended there, but it did not, because they also took out with them high tax rates. They managed at the same time to leave in place the 60 per cent marginal tax rate. So one can count their five extraordinary achievements—

Mr Robert Brown—And negative growth.

Mr RONALD EDWARDS—I was going to turn to negative economic growth. For the first time in 20 years we had negative economic growth. It was an extraordinary achievement. I find it unusual for the Opposition to come in here on an anniversary, if we can call it that, and say, 'Let us look back at what has been achieved'. We are happy to do that, but when we do, the first thing we are forced to do is reflect upon the economic mismanagement that preceded us. We are happy to oblige the Opposition on this, but it is fair to say that we should look at the tax policies and the policy options that have been explored by us and the Opposition.

I said that the 60c in the dollar rate of tax was still in place when the Opposition was in power, and we brought it down to 49c. But we also did a number of other things in terms of tax reform, most of which Opposition members did not like. They did not like them because they affected people whom they were happy to protect, particularly those engaged in tax avoidance and evasion practices. More than that, they were not happy to tackle the issue of the capital gains tax; they did not want to. They were also happy to keep the free lunches in place. I find it extraordinary that Opposition members have backed off addressing the many opportunities that we have put in front of the Australian public in the past six years. They are still the defenders of the free lunch. We have learnt in the last couple of days that they have finally managed to renege on the assets test in terms of a social welfare policy.

I wish that at some stage members of the National Party of Australia would challenge members of the Liberal Party of Australia. I know the Nationals are challenging the Liberals on the Kerin wheat marketing plan.

But the previous Government—and members of the Opposition should reflect upon this because it has had very serious long term implications—overvalued the Australian dollar over a long period and thereby gave no help to our export industries. It was the decision of this Government to float the Australian dollar that corrected those problems. It is all very well for members of the Opposition to talk about market outcomes. But they were not willing to let market outcomes prevail. They wanted to disguise those outcomes with what amounted to a managed exchange rate. People in the export market will tell members of the Opposition that that is not the way to conduct an economy that is growing and vibrant. We have had to change one of those fundamentals and allow the Australian dollar to float. The previous Government never met that challenge. The Australian public knew that it would not meet that challenge. The interesting thing is that the Australian public know that the Opposition, even though it has had six years cooling down on the opposition benches, will still not meet the challenge. Opposition members still react to the sectional interest groups, as they always have.

I have found it very interesting—as I am sure my colleague the Minister for Land Transport and Shipping Support has—to watch Opposition members over the last six years. We realise that it is a bit difficult being in opposition because a lot of the time one has to counterpunch, react to Government initiatives and try to put a reasonable positive gloss on what otherwise is a difficult job. We accept that, and the Australian public accepts that. But one would have thought that, having done that counterpunching exercise, members of the Opposition would have sat back and said, 'Let us put together a policy framework that is designed to project Australia into the future'. We thought that the Opposition, after six years, would have produced such a framework. We thought that *Future Directions* would be it; but it is not. It is a look back into the past. No one is rejecting the past; what we are asking is, 'What is the promise for tomorrow? What chances and opportunities can you put in the way of the Australian public?'. The sad thing about *Future Directions* is that it does not

do that. It is a 'look back over your shoulder' approach.

Some of us have been quiet over the past six years and have been willing to listen very carefully to try to see what policy prescriptions might be presented by the Opposition. But none have been presented. One can understand that because being in opposition is often very difficult. But the other side of that is that the Opposition has not been prepared to do the hard work of putting the policies together. Where is the wages policy? Where is the industry policy? Where is the exchange rate policy? Where is the tax policy? Where is the employment policy? They are important questions; I think they are fair questions. They certainly get asked in here and they are also asked in the community.

The Opposition would do itself and those who seek to vote for it a lot of good if it had alternative policies that were thought through in terms of projections down the track. I accept that Opposition members want to look back to the past because the past was successful. But the problem is that it has not learnt enough from the past. All the Opposition has done is focus on knee-jerk prejudices that make it feel comfortable. But that approach does not equip it for dealing with what is down the track tomorrow. It is a bit like having a football team. The other Minister at the table, the Minister for Trade Negotiations (Mr Duffy), knows that Essendon has to recruit new players if it wants to be competitive. The problem is that those opposite have not followed that line. They have not recruited new players. They have simply said, 'We have a couple of premiership trophies on the shelf from a few years back'. They may have the premiership trophies from a few years back, but the public is asking, 'What are you offering us this season? What is the new coaching strategy and who are the new players?'.

Sadly, I have to say that I never come here with any sense of excitement in that sense. I never wonder what the Opposition's policies will be because all we ever hear is the short term fix or a quick comment. Again, to be fair, that is reasonable because there are people in the press gallery who want a daily feed. But the larger Australian community wants a more substantial meal. They want to know what is the Opposition's strat-

egy. The Opposition has to address some taxing and very serious questions.

We have a joint responsibility to inspire the Australian community with a belief that this country has policies and projections for the future. It is my view that the Government has done a lot of that work. We can talk about the public sector borrowing requirement and the reduction of a deficit into a surplus. We have done all those things and met those challenges. But the challenge is not over. We have to do a lot more on restructuring. We have to do a lot more for our export industries and import competing industries. Those challenges are still before us. We on this side of the House would be crazy to say that those challenges do not exist; they do. But, in facing those challenges, one has to make sure that one has addressed the other things. We will not have the support of the Australian public if we are not doing something about job creation, taxes and attitudes towards the training and education of young people. If we fail those tests, the public will say, 'It is no good your going out into the wider world until you have met our requirements at home'. I say to those opposite that over the past six years that has been done. But there is a lot more to be done. I am confident that, with the policies we have put in place so far, we are in a position to do that. The Opposition faces the challenge of getting that hard work done. The evidence so far is that it has not done it. I am happy to reject the matter of public importance put forward by the Opposition.

TARIFF PROPOSALS

Mr DUFFY (Holt—Minister for Trade Negotiations) (4.46)—I move:

Customs Tariff Proposals Nos. 1 to 9 (1989); and

Excise Tariff Proposals No. 1 (1989)

The tariff proposals I have just tabled relate to proposed alterations to the Customs Tariff Act 1987. Customs Tariff Proposals Nos. 1-7 (1989) formally place before Parliament, as required by law, tariff alterations made by notices published in the Commonwealth of Australia *Gazette* during the recent recess. Customs Tariff Proposals Nos. 8 and 9 (1989) introduce further changes in the context of the post-1988 assistance arrangements

for the textiles, clothing and footwear (TCF) industries.

Customs Tariff Proposals No. 1 (1989), operative on and from 1 January 1988, contains an alteration to additional note 1 to chapter 72 to raise the minimum copper content specification of high alloy steel. This note was prepared some years ago and has been overtaken by changes in the steelmaking industry. The Steel Industry Authority has confirmed that changes in technology have made the restrictions imposed by this note irrelevant to current assistance requirements.

Customs Tariff Proposals No. 2 (1989), operative on and from 1 January 1989, contain the following alterations:

The removal of Forum island rates and adjustment of developing country margins of preferences to five percentage points below the general tariff rate in relation to certain tariff classifications. These rates are in accordance with the Forum island countries and revised developing country preference schemes introduced on 1 July 1986;

the acceleration of the phasing-out of customs duty rates applicable to passenger motor vehicles and components thereof of New Zealand origin in accordance with the mid-term review of the passenger motor vehicle plan; and

removal of redundant item 41D from part III of schedule 4 which was in place until 31 December to accord concessional treatment to certain parts and accessories for heavy commercial vehicles.

Customs Tariff Proposals Nos. 3, 7, 8 and 9 (1989), contain a series of alterations made in the context of the post-1988 assistance arrangements for the textiles, clothing and footwear industries.

Customs Tariff Proposals Nos. 3 and 7 (1989), operative on and from 1 March 1989 and Customs Tariff Proposals No. 9, operative on and from 1 July 1988, contain the following alterations:

Changes to reflect recent decisions made by the Government on the TCF plan, changes to the plan announced in last year's May economic statement, the outcome of a review by the TCF Develop-

ment Authority on velvet duty rates, a liberalisation of Australia-New Zealand Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement (ANZCERTA) arrangements, and new entry arrangements for handicraft textiles and clothing and handmade footwear;

alterations to the rates of duty of certain tariff classifications which prior to the TCF review fell within the ambit of the TCF policy. This action now allows the duties applicable to these tariff classifications to be phased in accordance with the rates alterations reductions;

the insertion of new item 40F in part III of schedule 4 to allow duty free entry of carpets and floor coverings of heading 5703 which are made by non-powered tufting machines held in the hand. These provisions were previously contained in item 40D which had validity until 30 June 1988. Customs Tariff Proposals No. 9 ensures that the provisions continue in the intervening period; and

an amendment to note 1 to schedule 5 to facilitate entry of industrial crafts without a certificate from the supplying country until 31 August 1989.

Customs Tariff Proposals No. 8 (1989), operative on and from 1 January 1988, contains an alteration in relation to embroidery kits. The customs duty on embroidery kits of subheading 6308.00.90 is being reduced to 15 per cent. Customs Tariff Proposals No. 4 (1989), operative on and from 4 February 1989, contains alterations to section 26 of the Customs Tariff Act 1987. These alterations complement the changes to the customs and excise tariffs which were announced in the 1988 Budget relating to the method of duty collection on beer. Customs Tariff Proposals No. 5 (1989), operative on and from 25 January 1989, contains an alteration resulting from the Government's decision on the Industries Assistance Commission's report on transport containers. The customs rate of duty has been reduced to free. Customs Tariff Proposals No. 6 (1989) and Excise Tariff Proposals No. 1 (1989), operative on and from 15 February 1989, contain alterations to the customs and excise rates of duty applying to topped crude oil. These alterations clarify Government policy that

topped crude oil for use as refinery feedstock will continue to be duty free. Topped crude oil used otherwise will be subject to duty at a rate equivalent to that applying to fuel oil. Summaries of alterations contained in these proposals have been prepared and are being circulated for the information of honourable members. I commend the proposals to the House.

Debate (on motion by Mr Moore) adjourned.

OZONE PROTECTION BILL 1988

Bill returned from the Senate with amendments.

Ordered that the amendments be taken into consideration in Committee of the Whole House forthwith.

In Committee

Consideration of Senate's amendments.

Senate's amendments—

No. 1—Page 2, paragraph 3 (a), line 8, leave out "and".

No. 2—Page 2, after paragraph 3 (b), add the following new paragraph:

"and (c) to use the best endeavours to encourage Australian industry to:

- (i) replace ozone depleting substances; and
- (ii) achieve a faster and greater reduction in the levels of production and use of ozone depleting substances than are provided for in the Convention and the Protocol,

to the extent that such replacements and achievements are reasonably possible within the limits imposed by the availability of suitable alternate substances, and appropriate technology and devices."

No. 3—Page 18, paragraph 37 (1) (d), line 9, at the end of paragraph add "other than the Northern Territory".

No. 4—Page 18, paragraph 37 (2) (c), line 13, after "territory", insert "other than the Northern Territory".

No. 5—Page 18, subclause 37 (3), line 18, leave out the subclause.

Motion (by Mr Peter Morris) proposed:

That the amendments be agreed to.

Mr PEACOCK (Kooyong) (4.54)—I am advised, in terms of the amendments that the Government is moving, that the Opposition is happy with the Government's proposals.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Resolution reported; report adopted.

OZONE PROTECTION (LICENCE FEES—IMPORTS) BILL 1988

Bill returned from the Senate with a request for an amendment.

Ordered that the requested amendment be taken into consideration in Committee of the Whole House forthwith.

In Committee

Consideration of Senate's requested amendment.

Senate's requested amendment—

Page 2, subclause 4 (3), lines 3 and 4, leave out "only in force for", insert "in force for only".

Motion (by Mr Peter Morris) proposed:

That the requested amendment be agreed to.

Mr PEACOCK (Kooyong) (4.57)—The Opposition concurs with the Government.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Resolution reported; report adopted.

OZONE PROTECTION (LICENCE FEES—MANUFACTURE) BILL 1988

Bill returned from the Senate with a request for an amendment.

Ordered that the requested amendment be taken into consideration in Committee of the Whole House forthwith.

In Committee

Consideration of Senate's requested amendment.

Senate's requested amendment—

Page 2, subclause 4 (3), lines 5 and 6, leave out "only in force for", insert "in force for only".

Motion (by Mr Peter Morris) proposed:

That the requested amendment be agreed to.

Mr PEACOCK (Kooyong) (4.58)—The Opposition concurs with the Government.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Resolution reported; report adopted.

TAXATION LAWS AMENDMENT BILL (No. 3) 1988

Bill returned from the Senate with amendments.

Ordered that the amendments be taken into consideration in Committee of the Whole House forthwith.

In Committee

Consideration of Senate's amendments.

Senate's amendments—

No. 1—Page 24, clause 37, proposed sub-subparagraph 160ZWA (13) (b) (ii) (B), line 3, leave out "and".

No. 2—Page 24, clause 37, after proposed subparagraph 160ZWA (13) (b) (ii), insert the following new subparagraph:

"(iia) if land (in this subparagraph called the 'excepted land') that formed part (whether a minor part or a significant part) of the original area is not included in the new area but land (in this subparagraph called the 'new land') that did not form part of the original area is included in the new area—the circumstances that gave rise to the exclusion of the excepted land from, and the inclusion of the new land in, the new area and, in particular, (if applicable) the circumstance that the taxpayer sought, but was unable to secure, the inclusion of the excepted land and agreed to the inclusion of the new land only as a substitute for the excepted land; and".

No. 3—Page 24, clause 37, after proposed subsection 160ZWA (14), add the following new subsections:

"(15) Where:

- (a) a Crown Lease (in this subsection called the "original lease") of land (in this subsection called the original land) has been granted to a taxpayer;
- (b) after the grant of the original lease, the original land came to be vested in or held by a government authority; and
- (c) the government authority granted to the taxpayer under a statutory law of the Commonwealth, of a State or of a Territory a lease (in this subsection called the "fresh lease") of the original land, or of that land less an excised area or together with an additional area;

then, for the purposes of this section, the fresh lease shall be taken to be a Crown Lease and to have been granted by way of renewal of the original lease.

'(16) If there was a period between the end of the term of the original lease referred to in subsection (15) and the beginning of the term of the fresh lease so referred to, that period shall not be taken to preclude the fresh lease from being regarded for the purposes of that subsection as a renewal of the original lease provided that the taxpayer concerned continued in occupation of the original land during that period under a permission, licence or authority granted by the relevant government authority pending the grant of the fresh leave.'".

No. 4—Page 34, clause 46, proposed paragraph 160ZZMA (1) (a), line 30, leave out "after 28 January 1988", insert "on or after 20 September 1985".

Mr PETER MORRIS (Shortland—Minister for Industrial Relations) (5.00)—I move:

That the amendments be agreed to.

There are three amendments: two amendments are in respect of clause 37 and the third is in respect of clause 46. I am advised that, with respect to clause 37, specific cases have arisen to which the attention of the Government has been drawn by way of amendment in the other place. The Government has no difficulty in accepting those two amendments. In respect of the amendment to clause 46, I am advised that a possible unintended consequence will arise from the carriage of this amendment. However, it is an amendment that has been imposed upon the Government in the other place, and we have no alternative but to accept it.

Mr Peacock—You are accepting all three amendments?

Mr PETER MORRIS—All three, yes.

Mr PEACOCK (Kooyong) (5.01)—As I understand it, Senator Walsh indicated that the amendment to clause 46 was not acceptable to the Government. I am pleased to hear that it is now acceptable. I say to the Minister for Industrial Relations (Mr Peter Morris) that we do not oppose the amendments that he has put to the Committee. We have pressed for the amendments in the Senate, as the Minister either mentioned or implied. The record of the Government in this arena of taxation is not good. It has continually ridden roughshod over the taxpayer in the pursuit of ever-increasing tax revenue. Added to that, the legislation has often been needlessly complex and convoluted, thus breaking one of the fundamental tenets of a good taxation system, that is, the need for simplicity.

The amendments before the Committee, as I understand them, will at least bring back a little equity to the tax system. I had intended to refer to some of the details of the matters involved; I will not do so. I trust that the Government, from the words used by the Minister, is picking up the amendment to clause 46, which will add to existing legislation affording automatic roll-over relief to asset transfers between spouses upon

the breakdown of their marriage where the transfer is effected pursuant to an order of a court under the Family Law Act. The Australian Democrats and the Opposition have been arguing strongly for this amendment. Senator Walsh, on behalf of the Government, claimed that the new amendment would have an adverse retrospective effect on some people, but he has produced nothing but esoteric examples to show this. He has not displayed a case in which some would be hurt. Indeed, the Democrats' amendment was introduced on 8 November last year. If it does have a vague retrospective impact, it is incumbent on the Government, backed by the vast resources of the bureaucracy, to reword the clause.

We are pleased to support the other amendments to clauses which have a retrospective and other effect on capital gains. It is only because of the quick action of the Opposition in most of these amendments—I give the Democrats credit for the one which I mentioned in a little more detail—that the inequities will be forestalled. I note that not everyone is so lucky. A recent Administrative Appeals Tribunal case on the original capital gains tax legislation, which is being amended by Taxation Laws Amendment Bill (No. 3), found a gross case of retrospectivity; that is, retrospectivity caused by Government press release, about which I have talked in this Parliament on many occasions.

Let me draw the Minister's attention to case No. 4825, in which the taxpayers entered into a leasing arrangement with a petrol company on 13 March 1986. At that date the capital gains tax was operative following the announcement of the Treasurer (Mr Keating) on 19 September 1985, but the actual details of the imposition of capital gains tax were unknown, and remained unknown until such time as the Bill was introduced into Parliament on 22 May. I do not want to take up the time of the Committee. Having drawn the Government's attention to this matter, I ask it to look at it. Deputy President Bannon, when delivering the reasons for his decision, stated:

The taxpayer and his wife appeared to me to be hard working Australian citizens who were in financial difficulties . . . There is no element of tax avoidance in this case, only conflict with the new law. It is with regret that I reach the conclusion . . .

I think that some injustice has been done. Later legislation has not mirrored what was contained in the press release, causing, in the words of the Deputy President, hardship. There are sure to be other examples, but I think his words speak for themselves.

I conclude by asking the Minister to convey to the Treasurer the request that he provide an undertaking that the appropriate legislation will be amended so that other taxpayers will not be similarly subject to the retrospective impact of the capital gains tax. I regard this Government as a rapacious government. It hounds people for tax at all times. But generally, I think it would wish to do so only under the law. Where there are circumstances of a conflict in the law, even this heartless Government ought to be moved to make amendments.

Mr PETER MORRIS (Shortland—Minister for Industrial Relations) (5.05)—I think it is the ultimate hypocrisy to hear the Deputy Leader of the Opposition (Mr Peacock) speak about hounding people for tax. Yes, we hound tax cheats and the tax rogues that the Opposition fostered and promoted——

Mr Beale—Hey, come on!

Mr PETER MORRIS—Go back to the record and read it, my friend. Yes, we are hounding those tax cheats, but within the limits of the law so that they pay their fair share of what they are properly required to pay just as all other honest wage and salary earners pay their share. We know that the policy of the Opposition, in government, was to foster the only growth industry it had—the growth of tax avoidance and tax evasion. I do not want to belabour the Deputy Leader of the Opposition any longer. The point made by Senator Walsh still stands. There may well be unintended consequences in respect of the amendment to clause 46—the moving of the date back from 28 January 1988, in regard to the exemption from capital gains tax for property settlements arising out of a marriage breakdown, to 20 September 1985. It seems to me the amendment is based upon the expectation that, on the one hand, there will be a surplus arising from the disposal of assets which could be the subject a property settlement. On the other hand, there could be losses involved. The property or businesses could have been acquired post 20 Sep-

tember 1985, and a capital loss, arising out of a settlement, could have been incurred.

Mr Beale—The lights are dimming on your Government, my friend.

Mr PETER MORRIS—They dimmed on the honourable member a long time ago. The effect of this amendment will be to preclude any capital loss, for the purposes of the capital gains tax, being taken into account for the benefit of one of the spouses, by backdating it to 20 September 1985. So it covers a period between September 1985 and January 1988. Be that as it may, the responsibility for that lies at the feet of the Opposition. Given that the legislation has been amended by the Senate against our will, we in this place have no alternative but to accept it. But let responsibility rest where it belongs: any consequences that flow out of this that are detrimental to the spouse concerned will be the responsibility of the Opposition.

Mr Peacock—In the meantime, fix up the inequities.

Mr PETER MORRIS—I will convey those remarks by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to the Treasurer as requested. I will ask the Treasurer to respond to him in writing.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Resolution reported; report adopted.

NAMIBIA Ministerial Statement

Debate resumed.

Mrs DARLING (Lilley) (5.09)—The Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) and his able supporting Ministers outlined earlier today the terms of Australian participation in the peacekeeping forces in Namibia. They said that the Holsworthy based 17 Construction Squadron, and the Chief Engineer, Headquarters, comprising 300 engineers and support staff, will leave for Namibia in March, with vehicles and equipment expected to leave by sea later this month.

UNTAG, the United Nations Transitional Assistance Group, will monitor the implementation of the transition to independence for Namibia. It is appropriate, given Australia's record in peacekeeping activities internationally, that our forces will be

undertaking non-combative duties. The Australians will be involved mainly in road, bridge, airfield and accommodation construction, and in the maintenance of power and water supplies for a 4,600 strong UN force. A field engineer element of the contingent will carry out minefield clearance. The troops will be in Namibia initially for 12 months, with a six-month tour of duty for contingent members.

It is appropriate to note the bipartisan support of the statement of the Prime Minister on this action and to say that Australia first offered engineers for UNTAG in 1979. The offer was confirmed by the present Government in 1983 and again in September last year. I am one of two members of this House who were privileged to participate in the Australian delegation to the United Nations in 1988. I acknowledge the cooperation and contribution of my partner, the honourable member for Moreton (Mr Donald Cameron).

I wish to comment on the background to Australia's involvement in UN peacekeeping forces and in particular the matter under discussion, Namibia, from a United Nations perspective. In doing this I would like to put on record the excellent performance of officers of the Australian permanent mission to the United Nations in New York. Australia enjoys a high reputation in the United Nations and internationally owing to the integrity and the dynamism of the contributions of Ministers for Foreign Affairs and of our diplomats at the United Nations and missions across the globe. It is important for us to remember this factor when we comment on the Prime Minister's statement today. It has been a long, drawn out process in which Namibians have striven to gain their independence with the support of the United Nations. It is important for us to recognise that this is no sudden movement; it is a very long movement. The diplomats at the permanent mission in New York have played a very strong part in our reaching this point. It is because of their contribution within the forum of the United Nations that we have reached this point. I particularly commend Mr Kevin Boreham, who is the Deputy Commissioner of our mission and who takes responsibility for our contribution to peacekeeping forces generally, and Ms Mary Wickes, who is responsible for Namibia which

is of one of the last vestiges of colonialism globally. Both of these people have been working with officers in the Department in Australia and with Ministers and have been able to put forward very strong points of view. They have fulfilled a bridging role between United Nations (UN) delegates representing the superpowers. Australia, despite its smaller population, has most certainly been up front in this operation.

Australia is a significant contributor to peacekeeping operations. Apart from the assessed contribution to UNIMOG, the United Nations Military Observer Group, UNIFIL, the UN Interim Force in Lebanon, UNDOF, the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, UNEF, the UN Emergency Force, and our voluntary annual contribution to UNICEF, the UN International Children's Emergency Fund, Australia provides 20 police to serve the UNFICYP, the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus. We have 13 observers to the United Nations truce supervisory organisation and most recently we have joined other contributors in providing 15 observers to UNIMOG. Australia has reaffirmed our commitment to providing the engineering unit to UNTAG and we fully share the concern that burdens on contributing countries should be minimised, particularly given the number of developing countries on which this burden is very heavy. Australia's view is that UN members should participate in peacekeeping forces only for a specified period of one term plus a possible second term. Australia will be guided by this principle in its participation in future peacekeeping forces, including UNTAG. UNTAG will monitor the cessation of hostilities by all parties and the implementation of the transition to independence for Namibia.

One of the major points put forward by our delegation in New York was the annual cost of current and envisaged peacekeeping operations, which is well above the annual cost of running the UN itself. The Australian delegation takes a leading role in promoting greater cost effectiveness in UN bodies, including the operation of the peacekeeping forces. We believe that peacekeeping operations should not be used to palliate regional problems or to delay their resolution. There is no substitute for the peaceful settlement of disputes. A member State should adhere

strictly to the provisions of the UN charter regarding the non-use of force. But the charter itself recognises, in providing for peacekeeping operations, that these principles will sometimes break down. We must remember that the UN peacekeeping forces are one of the success stories of the United Nations, as was recognised when that body was awarded the Nobel peace prize in 1988.

Australia has had a particular interest in the question of Namibia, which has been on the UN agenda since the very first session of the General Assembly in 1946. Australia has consistently supported the people of Namibia in their struggle for self-determination and independence, and we continue to do so. We have also persistently adhered to our belief that the implementation of proposals contained in Security Council resolution 435 of 1978 offers the best possible process and path to independence for Namibia. Today the Prime Minister has confirmed that we are ready to back our statements, made internationally and in the United Nations, with practical action. The history of Namibia's struggle for independence is long—far too long. After World War II, the UN requested that South Africa place the territory under UN trusteeship. South Africa refused and until recently the territory has been the subject of continuing dispute between South Africa and the United Nations.

The South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) has been fighting South Africa for the liberation of Namibia since 1972, from bases mainly in Angola. For over 10 years after South Africa agreed to take part in the UN package, aimed at easing Namibia's peaceful transition to independence from the South African Government, that Government refused, for a variety of stated reasons, to come to the discussion table. At this stage I am presenting a majority view to the House: an opinion that was transmitted by a large number of people sitting in the General Assembly of the UN. After the UN agreed that the different parties should discuss the problem to devise a practical means of withdrawing troops and ensuring a peaceful transition to independence in Namibia, South Africa, whilst maintaining membership of the United Nations, ceased taking its place in the Assembly. It had taken its marbles and gone home. There

was no delegate from South Africa in the United Nations whereas there were delegates from all of the other parties, involved in the plan for a peaceful transition. Although Opposition members have brought up other concerns, South Africa had to come to the discussion table if it was to demonstrate its credibility and show that it wanted to find a peaceful solution. South Africa did not come to the table. However, I welcome the fact that South Africa has now decided to cooperate with the UN in the implementation of proposals for the independence of Namibia.

The signing of the Brazzaville protocol in late 1988 by South Africa, Cuba and Angola has formalised the acceptance by South Africa of resolution UNSCR 435 1978, which outlined a blueprint for the realisation of independence for Namibia. The date set for the implementation of the resolution is 1 April 1989. Over the period of transition to independence it is intended that South African troops will withdraw from Namibia, Cuban troops will begin leaving Angola, African National Congress camps will leave Angola and SWAPO will be allowed to participate in the elections for an independent government of Namibia to be held in November 1989. The UNTAG, along with civilian representatives, will be deployed to Namibia during the transitional period to assist in the implementation of UNSCR 435.

Australia has been a committed member of the UN Council for Namibia since 1974. We have been an active participant in council and committee activities during that time and will continue to be so. Australia will also continue its voluntary contributions to the UN Fund for Namibia. The time may be approaching when it will be necessary to look more closely at the role of the Council for Namibia, particularly if the ongoing negotiations move to a successful conclusion. It may then become necessary to define in more detail the Council's role in the transitional period. The Bureau of the Council and the Office of the UN Commissioner for Namibia have already turned their attention to these matters. I grieve with other people the loss of the UN Commissioner who died in tragic circumstances in the Lockerbie disaster. The Australian delegation is looking closely at the situation in Namibia, the role of the Council and the office of the UN Commissioner and

is ready to play a constructive and active role in any discussions.

In September last year Australia had the pleasure of welcoming a mission of consultation led by Council President Ambassador Peter Zuze, the first such mission to Australia since 1984. That mission briefed the Government on the situation in Namibia, met with the parliamentary Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade and held talks with senior officials of a number of major government departments. I would like to take this opportunity to express this nation's gratitude for the demonstrated energy and sense of purpose displayed by Ambassador Zuze in leading the Council. We would certainly be looking to his continuing leadership in the future.

Australia has played a key role in this area. I wish to bring to the attention of the House the role played by the Australian delegation to the UN in the matters which we are discussing today. I am sure the appreciation and best wishes of all parliamentarians go with Colonel Warren, Lieutenant-Colonel Pippard, Major Crago and the 300 Australians whom they will lead to Namibia in the interests of a peaceful transition to independence for the war-torn people of Namibia.

Mr WHITE (McPherson) (5.24)—As has already been indicated by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Howard) and other speakers from this side of the House, the Opposition supports the deployment of the Australian contingent to Namibia. Members of the contingent go with the best wishes of this Parliament and the Australian people. While the position taken by the Opposition of agreeing with the Government, is somewhat unusual, it is pleasant and good to see. The Fraser commitment of 1978, which was formalised in 1979, has been reaffirmed by this Government. It is very much in Australia's interests that we participate in these peacekeeping operations around the world, particularly in the region in which we live.

This deployment of troops will be difficult, as other speakers have said, and there will be occasions when it will be dangerous. We are talking about an uncontrolled situation in which there may be a requirement for our soldiers to defend themselves. We are talking

about the clearance of mines in a climate of largely uncontrolled warfare that has gone on in Namibia for some years. Indeed, we are talking about a dangerous operation. But Australian engineers are well trained and their expertise in these sorts of operations—for instance, in Vietnam—has been well noted. Some of the bravest men I have ever met were Australian engineers in Vietnam. So I have no doubts about their capacity to do the job.

From what has been said today by Government spokesmen, the conditions of service under which our troops will be operating appear to be adequate. But we have to ask why it has been left to the last minute for these conditions of service to be put on record. The advance party goes next week and the troops a week or so after that. They have been carrying out training for all this time not knowing under which conditions of service they will be operating and what their benefits will be. It is not as though this commitment has been sprung on us by surprise. We have had this commitment since 1978. The Government has eventually got around to deciding on the conditions of service a week before the servicemen leave for Namibia. As I understand it, the observers that we recently sent to the Persian Gulf in another form of peacekeeping operation did not even know until after they got there exactly what their conditions of service were to be.

While the general benefits and conditions of service may be acceptable—and we will have to have a look at them in more detail—there is one matter which my colleague, the shadow Minister for veterans' affairs, the honourable member for Farrer (Mr Tim Fischer), will take up in more detail, namely, the question of repatriation benefits. I am glad to see the Minister for Veterans' Affairs (Mr Humphreys) at the table. Once again I ask the Minister: how is it that a force that has been warned about overseas service for something like 10 years will be leaving this country presumably not knowing what its repatriation benefits will be when it comes back? It is an absolute disgrace that we expect our servicemen to go overseas not knowing under what conditions they are serving. I ask the Minister to use all his efforts to get this matter resolved before

those men go. After 10 years, the Government has still not made up its mind. I really do not understand that.

The Department of Industrial Relations is interfering in regard to the general conditions that apply to this force. Apparently it is being given carte blanche to decide what conditions should apply to the Department of Defence. That in itself is something I find extraordinary. That is the reason, no doubt, for the long delays in getting this matter resolved. That is what happens when the government directs that the employment conditions of the Department of Defence and the Australian Defence Force be decided by the Department of Industrial Relations. The Government can find the effort and the energy to make conditions and benefits reasonably attractive when soldiers, sailors and airmen actually have to go and do a job, but in times of peace, when it is thought they will not be required, the Government reduces those benefits; it reduces the status of members of the Defence Force to that of second class citizens. The Government has to wake up to itself. If it wants engineers, or anybody else, to go and do a job it has to look after them in times of peace as well. If it does not, at the end of the day, as is gradually happening now, it will not have anyone to do the job that the country expects of them.

Australian troops overseas, in war and in peacekeeping operations, have a reputation second to none. I am quite sure that this contingent will maintain that record. Some weeks ago I sought permission to visit the contingent at Holsworthy before it went. I got a most extraordinary letter from the Minister saying he did not think it would be convenient. I indicated that there was going to be one hell of a row about it, and the Minister changed his mind.

The point I make is that the Government and Ministers do not own the Defence Force; the force is part and parcel of the Australian community. The Government might be in temporary control, but if the shadow Minister for defence, or anybody else, asks to go and farewell them, to wish them well and to ensure that they know they have the support of the Opposition, it is certainly not up to the Minister for Defence to deny that request. I am pleased that the Minister's deci-

sion has been changed. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition and I and the shadow Minister for defence personnel, Senator Newman, will be visiting the contingent this Sunday.

The implications of this deployment to Namibia are quite widespread. There are some beneficial implications. It shows that Australia is playing its part in seeking to maintain the peace around the world. It will be invaluable experience for our engineers. I think it is a pity, certainly initially, that only engineers are going. I would have preferred to see a more balanced force where people from other corps got experience in these sorts of operations and brought that experience back into the different corps of the Army. That is not to be. I understand the problem. The United Nations force has to be balanced and Australia agreed to provide the engineer contingent, but I am disappointed that the Government did not seek to change that commitment so that we could have provided a commitment of all arms.

The other good thing about this is that we will see, perhaps not initially but eventually, reservists used as part of this contingent. It is very important at a time when the Reserve numbers are declining—when those that come in are leaving within 12 months—that they are given the opportunity to serve, as they should be, as the reserve component of one army. The Reserve and the Australian Defence Force have a great deal to offer. Unfortunately, they are not being used properly.

There are some adverse implications. It is quite clear that the manpower policies of this Government have allowed our defence forces to run down. We have said that many times before. A defence force is not there just to sustain itself; it is there to do a job. Look at the wide eyes and the looks of surprise on the faces of Government members when they are actually asked to do a job like providing a contingent for Namibia. Some 300 engineers are going this month, another 300 or so in six months and maybe another 300 after that. It will make life difficult, because of the shortage of manpower in the Australian Army, to fulfil all the commitments which should be fulfilled by it. A policy of wastage and deliberate reductions in the manpower ceilings of units has brought this about. It is not as though

this is going to be a one-off. The fact is that we can expect more of these commitments, particularly in our own region, a region which is showing increasing signs of instability and in which we should be much more involved.

One of the other problems with this deployment is that, despite what the Government says, we all know that our commitments under the defence cooperation program will have to be reduced. That is a great pity because that defence cooperation program, far from being reduced, should be greatly expanded. It is Australia's demonstration that it is, and wants to be, involved in the region in which we live. It is time the Government came to grips with the isolationist policy it has followed, particularly in the last two years since the production of the White Paper, and threw it out of the window and said, 'Yes, we are involved. This is our region; we are going to make a major contribution to keeping the peace because that is essential to the security of this country'. One does not adopt these isolationist policies and sit back with a defence of mainland Australia concept and say, 'Come and get us if you can'. It is stupid, it is discredited, and it is time it was changed.

One of the commitments we should have undertaken last year and the year before was a reasonable commitment to the Persian Gulf. Certainly we have observers there now, but what was Australia's response when the war in the Persian Gulf was creating enormous difficulties for the Western world in particular in the supply of oil, when international sea lanes of communication were being threatened? Under this Government the response was, 'We will put some divers on stand-by in Perth'. A pathetic commitment. The Government has to realise that Australia's contribution to these peacekeeping operations has to be made if we are to have any credibility in the Western world as a reliable ally.

I have touched briefly on the role of reservists. I am very pleased to see that two have been included in the initial contingent, with a promise of more to come. Once again, the implication of this deployment of troops is the reconsideration of the role of the Reserve. In Australia we have a very small regular component but we have an enormous reservoir of reservists who have shown over

the years that they are capable, with training, of doing the job. What we have to realise is that they need to be told that this is their role and not be left withering on the shelf, with lack of equipment and lack of proper direction, looking for a job to do.

In this context I would very much question that the role of so many of the Reserve units is the guarding of static facilities should war break out. The Minister here last week—and I agree with him—came to the conclusion again that a major threat to the Australian mainland was not likely. If that is so, why are we wasting all this money on Kangaroo 89, for example, when we have this commitment, this requirement, to get more and more involved in our region? Why are we wasting \$100m on Kangaroo 89, which is basically an exercise for the defence of the Australian mainland, when the Minister is currently scouring the Defence Force for further cuts, such as another F18 squadron to go, an F111 squadron to go, further manpower cuts, further ships to be taken out of service? It is a ridiculous concept. What I am saying is that the role of the Reserve should be reconsidered so that it can play a more active part within the Defence Force.

In conclusion I just want to say this: Government speakers this afternoon have condemned the role of South Africa—and I think that role is highly suspect. But it should be remembered, and I put it on the record, that for the last 10 years or so there have been 50,000 Cuban troops serving in Angola and Namibia, and it is about time the Cubans were given the condemnation the Government so freely gives to South Africa, which, after all, is going to supply a great deal of the logistic support for this force under very difficult circumstances.

Mr TICKNER (Hughes) (5.39)—I do not propose to speak this afternoon for all my allotted time but it would be remiss of me if I were not to make some substantial comment since I am the Federal member for the seat of Hughes, from which these troops will leave. I also speak in my capacity as the convener of the Government members' defence forces action committee, so I have a very special interest in the subject matter of this debate. I do not propose to descend into petty party point scoring and to demean this occasion, as I believe the shadow Minister

for defence, the honourable member for McPherson (Mr White), has done, but rather to speak about what I believe are the high-minded principles, the idealism and commitment to a peaceful and more secure world which lie at the heart of the debate before the House this afternoon.

However, I make the comment that we on this side of the chamber, the Australian people and the defence forces and their families in this country will start to take the Opposition seriously when it debates defence policy and does two things. That will be, first, when the honourable member for McPherson is elevated to the shadow Cabinet. At the moment he really is not regarded as a prominent member of the Opposition and, for that reason, defence has been effectively downgraded in the eyes of service personnel and their families. The second thing that has to be done for the Opposition to gain any credibility at all in matters pertaining to defence is for it somehow to manage to reconcile the massive inconsistencies between the expressed fiscal policies of the Opposition and the very bland assurances that we have from the shadow Minister on defence expenditure. Having said that, I make it very clear that I believe this is a debate that ought to rally all the Parliament around the single call of support for the Australian Defence Force. To the very great credit of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Howard) and the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke), they managed to do just that.

We, in the Australian Labor Party, are extremely proud of our contribution, as a country, to the United Nations, since the formation of that very important body. People sometimes forget the role that Dr Evatt played in the conference in San Francisco in April 1945 at which he was a driving force for reform and for the strengthening of the United Nations charter. Even the *New York Times* recorded, when Dr Evatt finally left that conference, that he had arrived as virtually an unknown single, second-string delegate with the background of a professor and Labor politician but left recognised as the most brilliant and effective voice of the small powers: he was a leading statesman for the world's conscience. Dr Evatt's contribution was not just a contribution for his party

and his ideals: it was a contribution for Australia and the world.

The peacekeeping contingent that we are sending to Namibia is, as I have indicated, something from which all Australians can take great pride. In his speech to the House this afternoon, the Prime Minister talked about the concerns that had existed, about the arc of instability stretching from southern Africa through the Persian Gulf, through Afghanistan and southern Asia on to Indo-China. He said—and I commend him for his vision—that we now see if not an arc of peace at least an arc of peacemaking. We, as the Government of this country, are very proud to be associated with that initiative.

The previous speakers in this debate have talked at very great length about the very significant details of the contribution being made to the peacekeeping force. Suffice it to say that almost one-half of the Australian Army capability will be participating in that peacekeeping force. Having had the opportunity, some considerable time ago, to visit the troops that will be going to Namibia and to see the vehicles and the heavy equipment painted with the United Nations logo in white, I was extremely proud to see that Australia could participate in that way to work towards the creation of a better world. Of course, it is not the first time that we have participated in that way. We have a long history of participation going right back to 1947 and 1950. I mention our participation on the UN Committee for Indonesia, our contribution to the Balkans and our presence in the Sinai. The list goes on. I stress that the participation in those efforts has generally been with the bipartisan support of the Parliament as a whole.

As the Prime Minister indicated, the issue of Namibia has been on the international agenda for 70 years. It is a credit to the UN that, finally, a tortuous path to the resolution of that conflict and occupation in Namibia has finally been negotiated. The goal of independence and self-determination for the people of Namibia is a cause that I have long been very proud to be associated with. I must say that, when the shadow Minister for defence referred to the South African role as highly suspect, I thought he was mildly understating by a factor of about 100

the South African role of occupation over the last 70 years.

Mr Tim Fischer—And the Cuban role.

Mr TICKNER—And the Cuban role. My position is straight down the middle. My great regret is that that support for independence and self-determination is not apparently shared by that one speaker within the Opposition.

I particularly want to comment on the conditions of service of the personnel. Here again, it is a pity that the debate was lowered to a party partisan contribution. It seems to me that all the Parliament ought to be satisfied with the conditions that have been secured for service personnel. The shadow Minister took us back to 1978 and expressed concern that, through all that time, nothing had been done to resolve the precise conditions of service. I knew that we were often called on by the Opposition to answer for its version of the sins of our Government but I did not really think that we were responsible for taking the knocks for the actions of the Fraser Government back in 1978. Be that as it may, as the convener of the Government members defence forces action committee, I have been determined, along with my Labor colleagues representing defence constituencies, to ensure that the conditions of service of these troops were second to none.

I am very pleased that the Minister for Defence Science and Personnel (Mrs Kelly), who shared our concern, has been successful in arguing the case for justice and fairness for these troops and their families. I believe that the Armed Forces Federation and its Federal President, Mr Bob Copley, will be pleased with the result because they too strongly supported the conditions of service. I do not propose to talk in detail about those conditions of service because they have been referred to by a number of speakers in the course of this debate but I believe that they will meet with wide support. Those conditions are not some form of charity; they are the right for those service personnel—and the families—because their lives are on the line. Even up to 1985, some 650 personnel had lost their lives in the United Nations peacekeeping forces. Of course, that figure is higher now. When they go to Namibia, our own servicemen will, in many cases, be

working in dangerous areas. It is their right to have adequate support and their families' right to ensure that they have adequate support and remuneration commensurate with their responsibilities.

I conclude on this note: we have a great deal to be pleased about in the advance that the region and the world are making in respect of Namibia. It is indeed a significant step for the resolution of a conflict that has threatened that region and, at times, the wider planet. In South Africa there still remains a further blot on the international landscape. It is my hope that, in the years to pass, we will be able to stand as members of Parliament in this chamber and support an active United Nations role in resolving the problems of South Africa.

Mr TIM FISCHER (Farrer) (5.49)—It is time to inject some reality into this debate. By virtue of the statement of the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke), the Government has committed some 300 Australian soldiers to a distant part of the African continent. In fact, the commitment is to the west coast of the African continent, to that war-torn country of Namibia which adjoins Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana and, of course, South Africa. Let there be no doubt about the deadly seriousness of the situation faced by these Australian diggers heading off to that distant land in 1989. In one sense, it is history repeating itself. Whilst the guerilla warfare has waxed and waned over recent years with the presence of large numbers of Cuban guerillas and troops from various other countries, including South Africa, the reality is that there are still lingering remnants of that guerilla war.

Equally, there are minefields which will have to be addressed by the Australian contingent. I have to tell the House that it is chilling terror to have to work in any way, shape or form in an operational sense with minefields—entering minefields and clearing areas which were mined during the course of that terrorist war. It can be the most peaceful, tranquil scene, but that can be transformed in a matter of just one second to instant death or massive injury, and horrific situations can arise very quickly when mines are detonated in the process of clearing minefields and passing through areas near to where the mines have been sown. It certainly

requires absolute professionalism, and I have no doubt that members of the Australian Army will be providing that absolute professionalism with our commitment in the course of the next month or so when they go to Namibia. I just feel that the House, sitting here in this remote location of Canberra in this wonderful new Parliament House, ought to be aware, in terms of this debate, that we are committing Australian soldiers to quite a dangerous situation. The real element of danger will not emerge perhaps until after the first tour of duty over the first six months has been completed. Therefore, it is something that the House should not do lightly.

In terms of the historical context of a debate of a similar nature, I went back through *Hansard* to find the debates relating to the original commitment of an Australian force to Vietnam. I remind the House that Sir Robert Menzies, as Prime Minister, made a similar type of ministerial statement on 29 April 1965. Having made that statement, having revealed the invitation and having announced the decision of the Australian Government to send a force to Vietnam, that was followed on 4 May by a reply by the then Leader of the Opposition, the honourable member for Melbourne, Mr Arthur Calwell. He said:

Therefore, on behalf of all my colleagues of Her Majesty's Opposition, I say that we oppose the Government's decision to send 800 men to fight in Vietnam. We oppose it firmly and completely.

It is a matter of record in this debate this day with the sending of this contingent to Namibia that the Federal Government on the one hand, and the Federal Opposition on the other hand, are extending bipartisan support to the contingent. That is in very sharp contrast to the way in which 800 Australians were sent to Vietnam under that original ministerial statement in 1965. Of course, a very divisive period ensued. At no stage did those of us sent to Vietnam enjoy the unanimous support which, happily, these troops going to Namibia will enjoy consequent upon this bipartisan support indicated in the course of this debate.

We should perhaps just look for a moment at the country of Namibia. It is on the south-west coast of Africa and has an area of some 824,269 square kilometres. It lies, as I have said, in south-west Africa with South Africa

to the south and south-east, Botswana to the east and Angola to the north. The territory has a long coastline on the Atlantic Ocean. Significantly, there are a number of key ethnic groups of quite large size, including the Ovambo of 587,000 and the Kavango of 110,000, with a total population of 1,184,000. Namibia has at various stages in recent years had over 100,000 troops of one kind or another, including a Cuban contingent of guerrillas, forces from South Africa and the local army raised by the then South Africa Administration under a national service scheme which was introduced a few short years ago. It is a war ravaged land and a land where mines have been sown. It does require a great deal of help as it moves along the path to independence and, hopefully, to workable democracy. Australia clearly has a vital role to play. I would join with the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke), the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Howard) and the other speakers in wishing our contingent well.

However, it is absolutely essential that those who are going know exactly on what grounds and conditions they will be going to Namibia, how they will be protected, and what arrangements will be made for their next of kin in the event of injury or death. As we have now learnt during the course of this debate, that has not been spelt out in detail at this stage by the Government. What has been said is that a number of the conditions providing for a tax free situation for the contingent have been approved, which I welcome and support, along with certain day allowances and so forth for these troops who will be divided into two basic groups, a headquarters group back in the Namibian capital and another one towards the northern border. That is acceptable, but the Government has stopped short of resolving the situation with regard to repatriation cover or peace-keeping force cover under part IV of the Veterans' Entitlements Act or whether there will be a declaration of operational service or not. That has not yet been resolved, notwithstanding the fact that the Government knew for some time that this debate was coming up, that it knew for an even longer period that the commitment was coming up and that there had been lengthy discussions about it.

I say to the Minister at the table, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs (Mr Humphreys), that he has an absolute obligation, in the interests of fair play and in the interests of this Parliament and this Government before the contingent leaves Australian soil to go to Africa, to resolve this in clear cut terms and do the right thing by those being sent overseas. It is a very serious decision and one which obviously has not been taken lightly. Equally, the arrangements for their repatriation and their care in the event of injury and/or death have to be spelt out. I hope that the Minister, in conjunction with the Minister for Defence Science and Personnel (Mrs Kelly), will finalise these arrangements before the Ides of March so that the troops will know in clear-cut terms where they stand. Certainly my colleagues, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Howard); the shadow Minister for defence, the honourable member for McPherson (Mr White); and the shadow Minister for defence support, Senator Newman, who are all visiting the unit next Sunday, share those concerns, and I assure the Minister that we will be pressing the Government for a clear-cut statement before our soldiers go to conditions in Africa which are going to be very uncertain. These matters need to be resolved.

There are two other brief areas I would mention. Presumably, the forces will be eligible for the new Australian Service Medal. It is a great pity that I have to tell the House that 25 years after that speech by Robert Gordon Menzies committing troops to Vietnam there is still a major dispute in relation to the granting of the Vietnam Service Medal to those who served on HMAS *Sydney* and other logistical support ships. It has still not been resolved after 2½ decades. I do hope that this contingent will qualify for the Australian Service Medal and that that will be clear-cut and will be covered in the summation. Finally, let me say that the defence service home loan eligibility, which is normally granted to those who go forward in the service of their country with the Australian Army, Royal Australian Navy and Royal Australian Air Force, has been withdrawn for enlistees who have enlisted since May 1985. To be fair, they would not be truly eligible until they had completed six years of service. We now have a situation

where this quite large contingent of 300 troops is going forward, and again there is a doubt as to whether they will be eligible for the defence service home loans scheme, which might otherwise be termed the defence service caravan loans scheme, as its value has been static for nine years at a mere \$25,000. Notwithstanding the fact that its value has been eroded, surely those going to Africa in this contingent should have an eligibility for the defence service home loans scheme, and I hope the Government will clarify this.

Mr Humphreys—What are you going to put it up to?

Mr TIM FISCHER—The Minister has the responsibility, under the terms of his oath of office as Minister for Veterans' Affairs, with regard to this contingent going from Australia to Africa. He must answer to the people and to that contingent and their families with regard to their repatriation arrangements. Hopefully, there will be no injuries; hopefully there will be no deaths. But we have heard the Minister say that there has to be an expectation of some casualties. So it is a deadly serious business that this House is about this afternoon here in Canberra, removed from the realities of the African situation or the tensions of a unit preparing for embarkation from Holsworthy, Sydney, to Africa.

I remind the House that we have very serious obligations that we owe those who are going to serve our country yet again. Surely it is the obligation of each and every member, and above all the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, to see that those obligations are fully honoured. I wish our contingent well in terms of its work and service on behalf of Australia.

Mr MacKELLAR (Warringah) (6.02)—If we look back 10 years almost to the day, we find in the *Australian Financial Review* of 22 February 1979 the following report of a speech by the then Prime Minister, Mr Fraser:

We will offer an engineer contingent of 250 officers and men together with a national headquarters and support element of 50 to Namibia or to the UN force to go and supervise—

hopefully, at that stage—

the transition of Namibia to an independent state.

Unfortunately, that did not happen at that stage and now, 10 years down the line, we hear the present Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) reiterating those comments almost in identical terms. Naturally enough, we on this side of the House support the Prime Minister and the Government in the decision that the Government has taken in committing Australian troops to the role that they will have in the United Nations (UN) force in Namibia.

The role of Australian forces in peacetime but in difficult circumstances is one which they have filled with great distinction in the past. I notice that the Prime Minister said the exercise is likely to last about a year. In the light of previous experience, I hope he is right. But I doubt whether he will be correct in the belief that it will be for only a year. As I have said, the Opposition supports the decision, but it does show up in rather marked contrast the very poor decision of the Government in a previous year in removing the Australian contingent to the multi-national force in the Sinai. I think there is a great deal to be gained for serving men in the Australian armed forces to have some overseas experience. Whilst there is very real danger involved, particularly in regard to the current decision, I think it does provide opportunities for Australian defence personnel to experience conditions outside Australia and to put their training to a very real test. As I have said, I do not think for a moment that the Australian troops involved will not discharge their duties in the highest traditions of the Australian Services and forces over the years.

There are some things that worry me about the decision. I remember when 10 years ago the Government of the day was discussing a matter before it came to a decision. A report in the *Canberra Times* of 16 January 1979, when the decision was being canvassed, said:

The Government at this stage has been warned that the Army is too thinly spread to carry out the duties with which it is charged with as well as mount major overseas commitments even of a passive kind.

If that was the case in 1979, how much more so is it the case today? We all know of the parlous situation in relation to the retention of trained Service personnel within the armed forces in Australia. I note the number of people who are going to be involved in this

exercise in Namibia. According to the Prime Minister's speech:

This is a very large and important commitment for Australia, comprising almost half—

almost half—

of the Army's construction engineering capability. Careful planning, including the use of Reservists, has been required to ensure that high-priority engineering tasks closer to home can still be performed.

I hope he is correct. I very much doubt it. I do not think we can truthfully say that although we will allocate almost half of the Australian Army's construction and engineering capability to an overseas commitment, particularly one in Namibia, which is quite a long way away, we can at the same time say that we are in a position to carry out, and we will carry out, those tasks which confront us both in Australia and in our more immediate environs. I think that is a very pious hope, and I would like to see it more carefully analysed. I think it points out once again the condition with which the Australian defence forces find themselves confronted under the continuing policies of this Government. The Prime Minister said he was pleased:

... that it has been possible to minimise the impact of the deployment on support to the operational deployment force, exercise Kangaroo 89, and the defence cooperation program in the South Pacific ...

This was reiterated by the Minister for Defence (Mr Beazley) in his contribution to this debate. Again I say that on the sheer facts of the situation it really does leave us very thin on the ground, particularly in this most important area of the engineering and construction capability of the Services. I make that comment again mindful of the fact that the region in which we live is not as stable as was the case in the past, and certainly is not as stable as we would like to see it. There have been situations in recent years, which we can all bring to mind instantly, which have confronted Australia with some questions which so far, thank goodness, have not required us to mobilise the defence forces in any significant way. But given the situation in the South Pacific and in areas to our north, it is not impossible to envisage a situation which would require the Australian defence forces to be utilised in a greater

capacity than has been the case in recent years.

I have already mentioned the fact that almost half of our engineering capacity and capability is going to be involved in this exercise in Namibia, and that makes me really concerned about the continuing policy which this Government is going to direct towards the Australian defence forces. I support the commitment of these troops. I think the fact that we have made this commitment really should concentrate the minds of the members of the Government in relation to its defence policies generally, so that we can look to have a Defence Force capability which is properly aligned with the potential responsibilities which it may be required to fulfil in our own area.

There are some other aspects of the decision which have been touched on by my colleagues. I particularly mention the following words of the Prime Minister:

The Government has also ensured that members of the Australian contingent be adequately compensated for the hardships and dangers they will face through a comprehensive and generous set of conditions of service, including the payment of special allowances.

Naturally enough, I support that. He continued:

In addition, the Treasurer (Mr Keating) will be seeking an amendment to the Income Tax Assessment Act to exempt the pay and allowances earned by Defence Force personnel while they are on tour with UNTAG. Repatriation benefits appropriate to the tasks and hazards encountered will also be provided.

In providing those benefits—which I support—I hope that other service personnel who have served in previous commitments will not be overlooked. It would be most unfair if Defence Force personnel who have served Australia with distinction in previous times were disadvantaged in relation to the special benefits which appear to be going to be made for these service personnel going to Namibia.

Overall, as we have heard, the forces involved will be facing a most serious task. It will not be a holiday experience for them. They will be going to play a most significant role in, amongst other things, mine clearing. Anybody who has the slightest comprehension of the difficulties and dangers involved

in that sort of exercise will understand that the troops will face very real dangers. The situation in the area to which they are being sent is an unstable one. These servicemen will face real dangers. They will play a most significant role in the overall combination which is being put together by the United Nations. Their tasks will be highly significant. I, along with all member of the Opposition, wish them well in the confident belief that they will maintain the very highest traditions of Australian Defence Force personnel serving overseas.

Mr STEELE HALL (Boothby) (6.12)—I support the proposition to commit Australian troops to Namibia for peacekeeping purposes with mixed feelings. It is not a problem area of Australia's making. It involves the settlement of wars caused through other people's interests. Certainly I support the remarks that have been made here today in drawing to the attention of the Minister for Defence (Mr Beazley) and the Government the fact that the lives and the welfare of Australia's contingent should be protected wherever possible. The cause is worthwhile because world politics have altered so much. We have now seen the retreat of those elements which have been supported by Russian interests around the world—a retreat from interfering by force and by the supply of arms from outside countries. I have no doubt that it is the current agreements which have obviously been made—quietly at times and sometimes publicly—which have led to this opportunity in Namibia.

So Australia can join in this initiative knowing that it is not simply a one-off situation in the sense of this country in isolation being involved in preparations for democratic government arising out of a great deal of internal turmoil and warfare but, rather, that it is part of a move around the world to establish order in place of the anarchy and armed conflict that has been occurring. Australians can feel pleased indeed that this is taking place in their own hemisphere, the Southern Hemisphere, in a continent that may be far removed from us but which is important to us.

In the early part of last year, I made a very short visit to Namibia, involving one day and one night at Windhoek. Whilst it was short, it enabled me to form a few

conclusions, some of which I believe may have been right. But the major conclusion which I formed was very wrong. Windhoek, the capital of Namibia, is a modern city with modern amenities, which is able to support its society and which has a very good standard of living for those who enjoy a good income and a good lifestyle in Namibia. I remember going to the museum of natural history and being amazed at the extent to which it showed the history of the peoples and the geographic development of that country.

The contrasts were extreme. Their Parliament House is a modern building—much smaller than this but of no less quality. It was quite amazing to view the galleries and the lobbies of that Parliament House, constructed with so many adornments of local art, with magnificent murals of the animals that migrate across the plains of Namibia. That contrasted so much to the armed forces which are so evident in the streets of Windhoek. They were there in force, moving about in their sixes and dozens, obviously on the way to the war somewhere in the north of that country or in Angola. South African troops were very evident indeed. When we went into, say, a paper shop—there are very modern shops in that city—we were frisked at the door for arms. Yet what a normal scene it was in the local pet shop, where Australian cockatiels were for sale at 26 rand a pair. It is a city of contrasts which no doubt would have extended further if one had time to look at life in Namibia.

The conclusion I made, after looking at the facilities there and the obviously very high quality infrastructure that South Africa has built there—in the form of public buildings, transportation and the development of agriculture, dry though the country may be by current standards—was that South Africa would not get out; that it would not allow Namibia its freedom. I made that conclusion last June and within a few months I was proven very wrong indeed. South Africa has now agreed to negotiations to establish parliamentary democracy in that country.

I guess that what has caught so many of us by surprise—perhaps even South Africa itself—has been the obviously open or tacit agreements reached between the two major power groups in the world. The different

attitude of the communist world, as it is being squeezed economically to a position of some reality in regard to its intrusion into other parts of the world, into outside spheres of influence, has led to this sort of agreement. It is very pleasing indeed that it has occurred. If one looks at the opposing forces, one sees an agreement which has been hammered out of a warfare conducted by the left of the left in the sense of the Cuban troops to the north and Angola and, in some ways, the very fascist organisation of the South African Government. There could hardly be two greater extremes in the world today. Therefore, one would have thought that their conflict would have been more deeply carried on into the future. But the greater powers that be have been able to establish this agreement by negotiation. This perhaps heralds much greater optimism for the world than has been warranted until now.

I am very pleased to support this move involving Australian troops. I simply end by reaffirming that support by saying that I am sure they will be sensibly led. As has been stated here today, I hope they are led with a view to preserving their welfare. I would not want to see Australian troops injured or killed while involved in someone else's war, a war that has not been constructed by or contributed to by Australia. If that management of our troops involved is maintained, I hope that the great prestige which they enjoy in the world and their capacity as Australian service people to perform will be matched by a sensible oversight of their activities to the degree that their welfare is safeguarded so that they can return home to Australian soil.

Mr HALVERSON (Casey) (6.19)—Before beginning my speech, I warmly endorse the comments of my colleagues the honourable member for Warringah (Mr MacKellar) and the honourable member for Boothby (Mr Steele Hall) on this important topic. Today, many of those speaking have looked at the contribution of Australian servicemen in this rather desolate part of the world. What we have not really seen thus far is a clear indication of the background to our very real commitment to Namibia. I thought it would be worth while in this closing part of the debate examining the reasons that

Australians are about to serve in this very challenging part of southern Africa.

Namibia, as many honourable members who have contributed to this debate have already said, formerly known as South West Africa, is a vast, 824,000 square kilometres, arid, mineral-rich African territory, bordered to the north by Angola and to the south and south-east by South Africa. There is a spartan population of about 1.5 million souls. It was first colonised by the Germans in 1884. In 1920 South Africa assumed control under a League of Nations mandate. In the years that followed South Africa established a thorough administrative, political and economic dominance in the territory. When the much-despised apartheid system was introduced into South Africa after World War II it was also applied to Namibia.

When the UN succeeded the League of Nations in 1945 South Africa refused to enter into a new trusteeship arrangement with it and since 1946 the UN and South Africa have been in conflict over the political status of the territory. As a result of South Africa's refusal to submit reports on its administration of Namibia, the 1966 session of the UN General Assembly resolved that South Africa should be stripped of its mandate in the territory and that responsibility should be vested in the UN appointed Council for Namibia. A long process of UN sponsored debate on Namibia has continued to this day.

In the 1960s South Africa moved to consolidate its control in the territory and the provisions of apartheid, notably in the area of severely limiting indigenous people's rights in landholding, were intensified. In October 1966 the predominant nationalist movement, the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), launched a guerilla war against the South African military presence. Extensive armed conflict has continued ever since. The UN has made intensive efforts to attempt to achieve the peaceful solution of the Namibian issue leading to independence for the territory. South Africa participated in a series of talks with the UN, while simultaneously attempting to maximise its control in the territory and moving to develop an elected political structure within Namibia.

The attainment of black majority rule in Angola and Mozambique in 1975 and in

Zimbabwe in 1980 placed further pressure on the South Africans. In 1978 efforts by the Western members of the Security Council to reconcile the protagonists in the dispute over Namibia led to the adoption of Security Council Resolution 435. It provided for a cessation of hostilities, withdrawal of South African troops and free elections supervised by the military and civilian United Nations Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG), the aim of which was independence for Namibia. Australia has offered to contribute troops and UNTAG peacekeeping forces for more than 10 years. In December 1986 Australia announced that from 1986-87 \$1m per annum would be spent on scholarships for African refugees from South Africa and Namibia. In May 1987 sanctions applied to South Africa were extended to Namibia. In August 1985 the Australian Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) asserted that the need for Namibian settlement remains as strong as ever; only the urgency has increased. Indeed, by August 1986 some 12,000 Namibians had been killed in the 20 years war of independence.

In mid-June 1985 South African attempts to achieve an internal solution were greatly advanced by the establishment of an interim government, the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGNU) in Namibia based on the multi-party conference (MPC), a group of internal parties which does not include SWAPO. This move met with widespread international condemnation. The UN Security Council passed Resolution 566, totally rejecting this internal solution, and the Secretary-General issued a statement condemning the move as a further obstacle in the path of a negotiated settlement in Namibia. The 1987 report, however, indicated that the MPC TGNU was not as pliant as South Africa would like it to be and that it was declining to set up the ethnically based system of electorates which would ensure a weak and divided successor state, easily manipulated by South Africa. The TGNU was aiming for a nationwide vote for an assembly which would run the country and draft a constitution.

In April 1988 South Africa's President decided to reassert South Africa's authority in Namibia. President Botha gave Louis Pienaar, the South African appointed administrator,

the right to overrule the Cabinet, call racially based elections for each of the region's 11 ethnic groups, and impose sweeping press censorship laws. The most important aspect of this development was that the administrator had the power to veto any move to repeal Proclamation AG8, a key piece of apartheid legislation that entrenches white social and economic privilege. By being unable to remove apartheid, the TGNU has lost virtually all hope of ever gaining any popular support.

Meanwhile, diplomacy continued. In July 1986 a special UN conference on Namibia was held in Vienna, attended by representatives of 128 governments. Their decisions, including a demand for comprehensive sanctions against South Africa to force it to grant independence, were endorsed by UN special session later in the year. In April 1987 the UN Security Council discussed Namibia for four days. Until August 1988 10 years of extensive negotiations had failed to resolve the dispute, which had been complicated by South African insistence on linking the withdrawal of its forces from Namibia with a withdrawal of the Cuban presence in Angola. However, on 8 August 1988 Cuba, Angola and South Africa, with American mediation, agreed to a 14-point accord.

The main features of the agreement are an immediate ceasefire between on the one hand the armed forces of Cuba and Angola and on the other the South African Army; South African troop withdrawal from Angola by August 1988—and this deadline was met; the establishment of a joint military committee composed of military officers from Angola, Cuba, South Africa and Namibia to monitor the withdrawal of South African troops from Angola; to recommend to the Secretary-General of the UN the date 1 November 1988 for the beginning of implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 435; the estimated 50,000 Cuban troops based in Angola will withdraw from the territory; the 7,500-man UN force to be sent to Namibia by 1 April 1989—some months before the elections are due to be held; a policy of non-intervention in neighbouring territories; South Africa stops assisting the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA); and Angola stops providing assistance to SWAPO and the African Na-

tional Congress (ANC)—and presumably this also means that an independent Namibia would not permit ANC guerillas to operate out of its territories.

The House can see that the extensive efforts of many people have contributed over many years to what now looks like being a solution to a problem that has plagued the world for many years. We now see Australian troops—in fact, about half of the engineering component of our Army—being deployed to this very challenging and hostile environment. These troops will be involved in the building of roads and airfields, repairing bridges, constructing buildings and fortifications, removing minefields and setting up watch towers, water and sewerage systems. They will be led by Colonel Richard Warren and represent the cream of Australian defence manpower. It behoves us all on both sides of this Parliament to support this operation with great will. It is a dangerous and, as I say, hostile environment. Australian soldiers will almost certainly be killed there. It is appropriate on this night for Australians throughout this country to recognise the challenges that are in store for our troops. I only hope that the Government in its wisdom, deciding to deploy these troops there, recognises the enormous challenges that it has set up and I trust that the logistic support that is so necessary to provide such an operational component so far away with its muscle receives all the support that this nation can offer.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Sitting suspended from 6.30 to 8 p.m.

AGED OR DISABLED PERSONS HOMES AMENDMENT BILL 1988

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 2 March, on motion by Mr Staples:

That the Bill be now read a second time.

upon which Mr Braithwaite had moved by way of 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:

- (1) notes the concerns of service-providers in adhering to the changed arrangements, at the lack of funding, and at the lack of flexibility in the arrangements which are diminishing the quality of care to our aged; and

- (2) expresses its concern at the diminishing role of the providers of services to the aged because of various Government initiatives, particularly the commissioning of the report *'I'm Still an Individual'*.

Mr PRATT (Adelaide) (8.00)—I resume my remarks by giving a brief recapitulation of the points I made in the chamber last week in reference to the Aged or Disabled Persons Homes Amendment Bill 1988. The Bill seeks to introduce a number of changes covering a broad spectrum and concerns the industry which provides essential care and support for the aged and disabled in society. To use the words of the director of one such institution in my electorate, the Hawke Government is being politically dishonest in saying that by 1990 no-one will be required, by law, to pay more than 87.5 per cent of the pension and supplementary assistance for accommodation in nursing homes. The effect of this 87.5 per cent ceiling will undoubtedly be to heap massive pressure on the industry as it attempts to continue to provide an acceptable level of service to the patients in its care, as prices rise and a lid is put on its charges. I point out that not all people are financially disabled and, for years, the wealthy have, to some degree, subsidised the less well off.

The consequences of instituting a ceiling on the charges of nursing homes will be, of necessity, that homes concentrate on caring for patients in categories 1, 2 and 3, which attract the highest level of subsidy, to the detriment of those in categories 4 and 5. Dementia patients are deemed to be in categories 4 and 5—those needing the least amount of care—but dementia patients can often keep staff fully occupied with the tasks of feeding, toileting and dealing with incontinence.

If a nursing home's budget is restricted by the type of patients it has and the amount it can charge, the only way to overcome the shortfall is to decrease the level of service. That is precisely the situation that leads to the neglect of an individual's dignity, such as in the case of communal clothing. Dementia or not, people should not need to suffer neglect. Another aspect of the same point is: What about the staff? By pressuring the institution the staff have that pressure passed directly on to them. They have to work in

an environment where they never have time to do the job well, and are never able to have the satisfaction of making a patient comfortable and happy because they are too busy jumping from crisis to crisis and servicing only the most fundamental needs. I can see two crises looming: firstly, a situation in which patients in categories 4 and 5 will only be accepted in voluntary institutions, which will then become overloaded and under-financed; and, secondly, a staff shortage throughout the industry.

There is a tremendous amount of debate about the Government's declared decision to cut total nursing home beds to a level of 40 per hundred of the population aged over 70. In 1987 there were an estimated 167,000 people aged 65-plus in South Australia, making up 12 per cent of the State's total population. By the year 2021 it is predicted that that group will represent 17.3 per cent of the population. Further, by that time there will be an estimated 22,800 people in South Australia aged 85-plus, compared with 13,222 in 1987, an increase of 72 per cent in that short timespan. That dramatic change must indicate something to everyone who is concerned with planning aged services and residential care.

At the moment in South Australia there are 7,700 aged persons in 160 nursing homes and about 5,740 aged persons in 125 hostels. Half the nursing home residents are aged 85 years and over. If bed occupancy in nursing homes in the year 2001 corresponds with the present aged percentage, that same percentage of people aged 85 and over will be looking for 6,622 beds. The present overall number of nursing home beds is 7,700. If no more beds are available in South Australia by the year 2001—and the Government is indicating in this legislation that it intends to decrease them—that will leave only 78 beds available to people under the age of 85. What does the Government want people to do—take it in turns to sleep?

This is only one example of the inadequacy of the Government's thinking on the subject of planning for the future with regard to adequately providing a broad range of options in the interests of the aged in our community. There is no doubt that the private sector will feel the pinch severely. It will be the voluntary sector which will be

left to pick up and care for categories 4 and 5 patients that the private sector may feel it has to pass over in order to better survive by filling its beds with the categories 1, 2 and 3 patients that attract a higher subsidy. Where is the Government's logic in trying to cut costs by limiting resources, then turning around and boasting that by 1990 no person in a nursing home, regardless of the personal resources at his disposal, will have to pay more than 87.5 per cent of the pension for accommodation in a nursing home? On the other side of the problem there are the hostels. I received a letter from the Administrator of the Churches of Christ Retirement Services Inc. in my electorate. He said:

The haste with which the Hostel Recurrent Funding agreement has been brought forward is typical of other changes we have had to cope with in the aged care industry.

I am not sure if the problem lies with the Minister or the Public Service. However, we have been told in no uncertain terms that failure to sign or changing the Agreement will put our subsidies at risk.

Of particular concern in this climate is that the Minister can change the conditions, and the thought of the consultation process only reminds that it has been a sham in the past . . .

You will notice my criticism that the Disabled Code is now to apply fully. This condition was changed without consultation.

The upshot is that nearly every hostel for the aged in Australia no longer complies with the requirements. This must be the height of stupidity since we have previously built for the aged and had no troubles.

It now seems that the Government is saying that since some aged people are disabled, all should be treated as disabled.

Perhaps they should have said that, for example, 5% of the units should be for the disabled . . . but they didn't.

He has been told that such a requirement would have been received far more favourably, especially as a prospective condition for new buildings. The Administrator says he feels that the trouble lies in the central office in Canberra, where unrealistic goals and deadlines are being set and pursued to the embarrassment of local staff. The Administrator has made it clear to the department concerned that he signed the agreement under extreme protest. Australians must be concerned about being heaved, bullied or blackmailed. He makes the point that by far the majority of the hostels for the aged in

Australia have been designed for the aged, not the disabled. A requirement to provide for the disabled aged by expecting a proportion of rooms in a complex to be so designed seems more reasonable than presuming all aged people are disabled. Short of bulldozing the Churches of Christ Retirement Services' 145 hostels and rebuilding—and at what cost—the organisation cannot comply with the requirement. The Administrator makes it quite clear that he feels the Government is over-regulating the industry. That is the issue.

I have said that there are many good aspects of the legislation before us. The majority of the nursing home and hostel industry is keen to see old people retain their individuality and dignity. However, that which is not specified in the legislation and is being left to either regulation or interpretation by the Minister or the Public Service is already causing deep concern within the industry as several significant problems loom large on the horizon. This legislation, in the form presented to the House, is not the panacea it pretends to be.

I conclude with this warning: those approaching consumer status should be deeply concerned about the future of this industry; otherwise they may find that what they need may not be there when they need it.

Ms CRAWFORD (Forde) (8.09)—Many speakers have addressed the Aged or Disabled Persons Homes Amendment Bill, which seeks to amend the 1954 Act. The Bill attempts to pursue a policy which gives this Government a total aged care policy and will provide for an extended range of care options to meet individual needs. Surely, no-one in our community would suggest that, as we as a community become more aged, people should not be treated as individuals. This is precisely what the Bill seeks to do. It seeks to do it in a number of ways, but particularly through the funding program. What we see in this funding program is an arrangement whereby people are looked at in categories and whereby their needs are met. It attempts not simply to categorise people into one set of nursing home people, one set of hostel people, or one set of people in individual programs, but rather it looks at the whole basis of the kind of services which are provided. It attempts to address the inconsistencies which are currently in the pro-

posals for the funding of nursing homes and hostels. It attempts to seek that out. It also attempts to provide quality care for all aged citizens within our community, irrespective of their financial situation and, hopefully, irrespective of where they live and who the care providers are.

All of us can cite many examples of a wide range of care that is available to the aged people in our community. It is imperative that, if we are to address the care of the aged within our community in a total way, we acknowledge, firstly, that they are individuals and, secondly, that people have needs and that these needs must be addressed in a legislative way. Many of the care providers feel threatened because they are not willing to be flexible enough to offer changes. However, there are many good care providers within our community who see and welcome this Bill as an attempt to address the situation realistically.

I am interested to hear the honourable member for Adelaide (Mr Pratt) suggest that putting on a ceiling of 87½ per cent of the pensions of those people in aged care will place great pressure on the industry. One is forced to ask: What does he view as a realistic figure for people to pay for their care and needs? After all, this is subsidised by government and is subsidised by taxpayers, and all of us must share the common responsibility of the care for the aged. A figure of 87½ per cent of pensions equalises the burden and sets a realistic figure and goal so that people will not be ripped off. Let us face it; some of the findings in our earlier nursing home review found that many people were being charged for services they were not receiving and that they were being overcharged for services which were very often of a very poor quality.

When I talk of quality I am always forced to look at a nursing home within my own electorate which is known as Canossa, which provides a very wide range of services. It exemplifies the kind of service and the quality of service which this Bill hopes to emulate for all Australians. The Canossa Hospital, which is run by the Canossan Sisters of Charity, provides hostel accommodation, nursing accommodation, and specific accommodation for Italian speaking people in our community who in their later years find that

they like to have things familiar, and linguistically familiar, around them. It also provides respite care within its walls and, of course, it has a very active residents association. People are treated as individuals and the care providers in this home have no difficulty with the funding arrangements, with the quality care that is expected, and with the 87½ per cent which they currently charge, which is welcomed because they understand fairness, justice and equity for all aged people in our community.

The residents reflect that individuality. Those who are mobile are often seen down the street. Those who are not are provided with buses or taxis and with means of going places. At a number of functions which I have had in my electorate the residents from this particular hostel and nursing home stand out because they are individuals, because they are prepared to stand up and be counted, and because they have not lost any of those great attributes that we admire in people irrespective of age. Surely if we are to offer people dignity in their later years we cannot, and we must not, forget that they are individuals. I find it extraordinary that people would suggest that the Chris Ronalds report *I'm Still an Individual*, which this legislation takes into consideration, is in any way a reflection on the care that is provided in some homes. If people find it a reflection on them, all I can say is that they are obviously breaching individual binds. I can cite a number of examples, which I will not do here, but I think we are all aware of certain homes where any sense of dignity, any sense of individuality, is taken away and where people are ruled by fear—fear that if they do not conform they will be thrown out on the street, fear that if they do not do as they are told they will be thrown out on the street. We are talking about adult people who have given very much of their lives to this country and here they are in their later years, when they should be surrounded by comforts, when there should be a degree of respect, in places where some care providers insist that they conform to what they consider to be the necessary mores. I am very pleased that Chris Ronalds and her review team, as part of this Bill and as part of our total aged care package, are embarking upon an education and information program throughout our com-

munity, and are offering to nursing home residents, to hostel residents and to others the acknowledgment that they have rights, that they have dignity, and with that, of course, responsibility to themselves.

Of course, it is not only they who have responsibility; the care providers also have responsibility. This Bill, by seeking to look at the way in which care providers spend their money, attempts to make people responsible. I am sure that nobody in this House would suggest that we as the Government can continue to give money to people and not find them accountable. It is surely a matter of concern to us that if we give money to hostels and to nursing homes they must give the kind of services for which the money is given.

Earlier I heard the honourable member for Adelaide talk about dementia patients. The honourable member for Adelaide perhaps is unaware of a very large program that is already operating under the nursing home and aged care program which specifically targets dementia patients. In my own electorate at Neilson Home, Matron Buxton runs an excellent program for dementia patients. Those people are treated as individuals and the quality of their life has been expanded. It has enabled people to develop and to live a more worthwhile existence within that nursing home. It is indicative of the kind of range of services one can offer if one is more flexible about funding—which is exactly what this Bill is about. It is not about care providers saying that there is one way of doing things. There is never one way of doing things for individuals. There is a whole range of ways, all of which are equally valid, in the same way that the categories set out that there is a range of needs and a range of services which have to be provided within that community.

I have cited one hostel and nursing home which offers a wide range of services within the electorate. There are also other nursing homes which offer different kinds of services and which, because of the nature of their clients and the nature of their residents, tend to be much less able to expand into the community but are able to bring the community into them. Many school children are involved in nursing homes. I am thinking in particular of Sinnamon Retirement Village,

where the local school children have an 'adopt a granny' program. They go into the nursing home and are very much part of that community.

This is all able to be funded. It is part of a total aged care package. It is all part of a quality of life. It is all part of a quality program. This is not to say that this is the only way this should occur, but under this Bill such programs can and will be expanded. Individuals who wish to participate in such programs will be able to do so. It is imperative that many residents in nursing homes have the opportunity to continue to feel part of a world that is considerably wider than the acre or so upon which their nursing home or hostel is built. It is this very issue that is at the heart of the changes to the aged and disabled peoples homes rearrangements. It is the fact that we have acknowledged that aged people in our community have demands and needs and are individuals. Through this Bill we will continue to meet those demands, to meet those needs, and at a price which we can be sure people are accountable for and at a price which pensioners can afford. The whole issue of equity is at the heart of this Bill. I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr HICKS (Riverina-Darling) (8.20)—In speaking to the Aged or Disabled Persons Homes Amendment Bill 1988 I must once again express my strongest concern at the apparent stringent conditions being placed by this Federal Government on those people wishing to provide care for the elderly. To be fair may I first of all thank the Minister for Housing and Aged Care (Mr Staples) for his courtesy in speaking with the delegation from the Cobar Shire Council. Over a very long period the people of Cobar have been pointing out to the appropriate authorities the problems that the Lilliane Brady Village was facing in operating a small nursing home in an isolated area and trying to survive under the Federal Government's new nursing home funding policies. New initiatives have recently been taken by the Government in relation to these smaller nursing homes so I congratulate the Minister on a start in the right direction.

However, the new proposals do not overcome all of the problems facing small isolated nursing homes such as the Lilliane

Brady Village. In the first place, the new funding formula under the nursing and personal care component does not adequately cover the salaries of the staff. In the case of the Lilliane Brady Village, a director of nursing and a deputy director of nursing must be provided. Because of the isolation of the nursing home and the relatively small population of Cobar, attracting staff of exactly the required level of experience is difficult. For example, a second year trained sister may be able to do the work required but the only sister available may be a seven-year trained sister who should be, and therefore has to be, paid the award wage that his or her experience attracts. Because the rates set by the Government are averaged right across Australia the figure arrived at is well below that which in practice does apply to isolated nursing homes. Of course, this applies not only to nursing home wages but to most wage cost structures in isolated areas.

The Government would have us believe that the flexibility of the care aggregate module, or CAM, arrangements enables service providers to overcome a variety of problems. It fails, however, to address the matters of staff availability in many areas, particularly in isolated locations. It also fails to address the matter of nursing homes having to meet the requirements of the outcome standards, the national complaints unit, the State health departments and the myriad of other performer indicators by which service providers are constantly monitored by government. As the quality of care deteriorates—which inevitably must occur as a result of government funding cuts and the inability of nursing homes to charge patients more than 87.5 per cent of their pension—extra stress will be placed on nursing home staff. The stress on nurses is going to accelerate, particularly on the director of nursing. As nurses find the professional care required to be greater than the number of hours allocated by the Government they will turn to other forms of nursing outside nursing homes.

Let us now look at another situation which has developed in relation to the care for the aged, this time in the city of Broken Hill. Honourable members may recall me previously bringing to their attention the pending closure of Kalinda Court and Allura Lodge, which are two wards of the Broken Hill Base

Hospital that care for elderly long stay patients. The New South Wales State Minister for Health, Mr Collins, recently made a statement confirming the closures and repeated what we all know to be true—that is, that the finance for the care of those people is the responsibility of the Federal Government. He also reiterated that the hospital wards in question were beyond the stage of rehabilitation and should be demolished. Where does this leave Broken Hill's elderly citizens who need care? In the first place, there is already a very long waiting list for both hostel and nursing home accommodation. There are only two nursing homes presently operating in Broken Hill—the Centenary Nursing Home and St Anne's Nursing Home. Both are in a parlous situation because of costs that are unique to Broken Hill and, as with the situation applying in Cobar, they will not be able to survive on a Government cost rate that is based on an averaging across Australia.

It is not my intention to argue the merits or otherwise of the industrial system that has developed in Broken Hill over the years. But this system has certainly placed tremendous pressure on the whole of the aged care system in that city. The New South Wales Nursing Association is seeking to have some of these conditions apply to nurses employed at the two Broken Hill nursing homes. They are seeking the payment of the Broken Hill allowance of \$12.40 a week and the provision of an additional one week of annual leave. Both of these are standard provisions of the Broken Hill award. This would cause an estimated increase in the running cost of both nursing homes as at 1 July 1988 of approximately \$60,130, or 4.21 per cent of the budget for 1988-89. If all conditions that applied to the Broken Hill Base Hospital staff were insisted on—and thankfully they are not—the position would be even worse. In fact when the administrators made representations for economic relief from the Department of Community Services and Health because of these additional costs, the reply from the departmental representative stated in part:

I am somewhat surprised by your request, and to meet your request for special treatment for the homes of Broken Hill would at the very least, require an amendment to the National Health Act.

So we now face the situation that not only are the present nursing homes facing great difficulty and the possibility that they may not be able to continue for much longer under the cost structure presently applying in Broken Hill, but these costs, unless totally funded by the Federal Government or eased by local industrial agreements, will ensure that no entrepreneur or church group will apply to have further nursing home beds allocated for Broken Hill.

The Federal Government has expressed a desire to have more hostel type accommodation provided in lieu of nursing home beds. Presently Aruma Lodge provides a high standard of hostel accommodation in Broken Hill but many more beds are required. Because of this, over the past four years Southern Cross Homes, the present administrators of the two nursing homes in Broken Hill, have applied for funding for hostel accommodation. Unfortunately, despite the long waiting lists for this accommodation, they have been unsuccessful. I doubt if they will apply again because, as the Voluntary Care Association has recently pointed out, anyone who builds this accommodation under the new guidelines for funding announced by the Federal Government over a period of time would not be economically viable whether they were built in Broken Hill or anywhere else. Therefore, the cost structures applying in Broken Hill would rule that accommodation out completely unless Broken Hill were treated as a special case by the Federal Government or special industrial conditions were negotiated.

I was interested to read in the *Barrier Daily Truth*, Broken Hill's daily newspaper, that the Barrier Industrial Council in Broken Hill has arranged a deputation to see the Minister for Housing and Aged Care on the matter of nursing homes and hostel accommodation in Broken Hill. I am accustomed to the Barrier Industrial Council, for reasons best known to its members, ignoring me as the Federal Member in its applications to various Ministers on a range of issues. On this occasion I am disappointed because care for Broken Hill senior citizens is of universal concern and certainly should be approached on bipartisan lines. Perhaps I may be misinterpreting the situation. The invitation has not arrived yet, but I am looking forward to

it in the mail. Broken Hill is going to need a united front if it is to provide adequate services for its elderly citizens with the local and Federal conditions presently applying, and if we adopt a disunited front we will do so to the detriment of those elderly citizens.

In 1986 the Government endorsed the findings of the Nursing Homes and Hostels Review which recognised that there was a need to develop a total aged care policy with an expanded range of care options to meet individual needs. The Government undertook to introduce a series of measures directed at the expansion and better resourcing of the sector. In other words, the Government was going to make additional resources available that would enable more elderly and invalid people to remain in their homes. As I have recently relayed to the House, I have not as yet seen any evidence of this financial support in my electorate, and this applies particularly to Broken Hill.

The concern over the matter of care for the elderly and infirm citizens of Broken Hill has become an issue of serious concern to its citizens and because of this great concern a petition has been circulated in the community which I am sure will be signed by most of the people of Broken Hill. This petition will in due course be presented to the Parliament.

Throughout Australia there are still great problems existing in the provision of nursing home and hostel accommodation. Both Cobar and Broken Hill are unique cases that require particular attention and I call on the Minister and the Government to take urgent action that will help to overcome the very real problems existing in those areas.

Mr JENKINS (Scullin) (8.29)—The measures contained in the Aged or Disabled Persons Homes Amendment Bill 1988 are quite technical in nature but they are part of a continuing program by this Government to improve aged care and care for disabled people. As has been outlined by previous speakers, this is but the fifth stage in an eight-stage program to improve institutional care for older people. That plan was announced in 1986 and arose out of the Government's response to a number of reviews that over the years have been well discussed in the community and open to great debate.

There was first the Auditor-General's report back in 1981, which was followed by an Expenditure Committee report, the McLeay report, followed by a Senate committee report known as the Giles report. Finally there was the Department of Community Services report of the nursing homes and hostels review. Much that is contained in this report formed the basis for the present Government's strategy in the area of nursing homes and hostels. The particular piece of legislation before us tonight goes a long way towards putting in place the legislative arrangements for the provision of hostel services. Importantly, it will ensure that those hostel services are better targeted.

One criticism that has often been made of the way Australia has developed its nursing home and hostel services is that they have been planned on an ad hoc basis and that people and governments respond only to submissions that are placed before them. This Government has seen the error of this form of action and it has decided that, as in other areas, we should be doing what we can on a needs basis. I think even honourable members opposite have acknowledged the success with which this has been carried out.

Another important aspect of the legislation is that people will be assisted in having hostel places in the form of respite care made available to them. I think that respite care, in providing services for the aged and disabled, is an area of great importance that has started to be opened up. It is of importance to the older person or the person with the disability and it is important to the quality of life of a carer at home. Often because of the permanent nature of the funding arrangements for both nursing home and hostel places, families have been prevented from having some relief, some respite, from their onerous duties. Now, as we see in this legislation and in previous legislation for nursing home arrangements, the way has been opened for those carers to provide for their families by allowing those they are caring for to go into hostels on a respite basis. I think that is important. It ties in with the overall strategy of the Government in the provision of institutional care for older people and the other programs that give a range of options to older people.

Often we hear that there has not been provided the amount of consultation that perhaps there should have been. I think we have to reject that, given the number of reports that were provided to the Government before the policy was set in place in 1986 and given the gradual way in which the Government's policy has been put into place. It is unfair in the extreme to suggest that the voices of not only the people in nursing homes or hostels but also the care providers have not been heard when they have proper comments and criticisms to make.

If we also look at the appropriateness of the program, much has been made about the Government's objective of 100 residential places per 1,000 people aged 70 and over. In particular, the criticism from those opposite rarely relates to the mix of those places, a mix which will see 60 hostel places to 40 nursing home places. It is suggested that suddenly the rug will be pulled from under a number of nursing homes in the provision of places. That is not the case. This will be a gradual process and does not necessarily mean, as I believe some of those sitting opposite have suggested, that there will be wholesale closures.

It is unfortunate that, in the area of aged care, when presented with a scenario like this the Opposition often chooses to tug on the fear of change itself that is ever present in the elderly population. I believe that that is not the way to go. This is an area of policy where we should all be working together, and that is why the Government has acknowledged the need to put into place gradual changes. Those opposite perhaps forget when they raise these points that a lot of what we are talking about tonight is the appropriateness of the level of care. When we suggest that in some cases nursing home treatment is not appropriate, that is not a criticism of individual nursing homes or of the nursing home industry in total. It is a simple statement of fact that often the people who reside in nursing homes do not require the level of care that is provided by nursing homes. Therefore we put into place a proper procedure, as in this Bill, for improvements to hostel care, which is an option that gives another level of care to the elderly.

Nursing homes and hostels should be seen in their relationship to such programs as the

home and community care program where for aged and disabled people the Government attempts, with the cooperation of State, local government and other community agencies, to put in place a wide and varied range of programs that will assist those people for as long as possible to remain in their own homes and to keep their independence and an ability to remain within the community that is able to support them. In the past, these options were not available and, unfortunately, people were often inappropriately placed in nursing homes. At least there is now a realisation that we have to look more carefully at the appropriateness of the treatment that is given to people who find themselves in this situation.

The shadow Minister for community services and aged care, the honourable member for Dawson (Mr Braithwaite), in his opening speech earlier in this debate also referred, as he did in his second reading amendment, to the report *I'm Still an Individual*. Unfortunately, he took a very dismissive attitude to the report and, I felt, unfairly belittled what it had to say. He quite extraordinarily plucked from what is a lengthy document—some 170 pages or so—one anecdotal story about a patient and about that person's pet and the effect it had on the person's placement in a nursing home. To do that is to dismiss the value of such a document. The value of this document is not just to patients, to people who reside in nursing home accommodation, but to all those who are involved in the provision of these services.

I cannot understand why the Opposition would be expressing, as it does in its amendment, concern at the diminishing morale of the providers of services to the aged because of various Government initiatives, particularly the commissioning of the report *I'm Still an Individual*. That seems to suggest that in commissioning reports about user rights we are placing the Government in some sort of direct adversarial role with service providers. That is a nonsense. Service providers, along with residents, were involved in the formulation of the report and they are able to be involved in the continuing community consultations surrounding this report. That is important. It is yet further evidence of this Government's ability to continue to provide opportunities for consulta-

tion. When we have the upshot of this, when we see that care providers can work in consultation with those who represent residents and with the residents themselves, we will have a better situation.

I want to raise briefly some of the matters that have been raised in the report. One of them was the lack of information that residents of nursing homes suggested they had about their options. It was said that they had not been informed about the range of options available to them and that, whether it was because a relative wanted to get rid of them by putting them in institutional care or they were acting in ignorance, in some cases there have been inappropriate placements. That is a sad feature. It is all right for me, as part of the Government, to stand here and say that that is a sad situation, but I know that the Government is addressing the importance of providing the appropriate information to those individuals that find themselves in a situation of looking for appropriate care.

Remarks are made about the life in these homes, but importantly the report indicates that of the residents contacted many had positive things to say about nursing homes. That needs to be stressed. The negative aspects of nursing homes are portrayed, but there are positive aspects and they need to be stressed. I have no doubt that the majority of people that work in the nursing homes area—even if it is referred to as an industry—have respect for their clients and have their best interests at heart. But sometimes the sort of atmosphere that those people are in—the shadow Minister mentioned this—leads to stress. They know that they cannot give additional time to residents. They are appreciative of the fact that perhaps they should do a little bit better, but there is a need to do that not only in the context of the way the provider feels but also in the context of the way the resident feels. The nursing home situation is in some ways a form of communal living and there is a need to be constantly aware of the rights of privacy of residents who have gone from a situation of living at home by themselves or from a situation in which the trigger point of the need to go into institutional care is the loss of a spouse. There is a need to treat those residents with dignity and respect.

All in all, as has been acknowledged in this debate by many speakers on both sides of the House, in the majority of cases it is seen that what is being attempted in the area of aged care in total and, in particular, in the nursing homes and hostels area is an attempt to set in place appropriate care and a range of options of care that will enable those who are either part of our older population or who are suffering forms of disabilities that require them to go into residential type care to be catered for, that the changes are being thought out in a strategic way, that the changes should be as gradual as possible and that all those involved should be kept properly informed and be able to make comment and be involved in the strategic way in which these policies are being put in place.

Dr WOODS (Lowe) (8.43)—I must say I am absolutely amazed. I presume that the honourable member for Scullin (Mr Jenkins) does not have any nursing homes in his electorate. He is so far out of touch with what is happening that that can surely be the only possible explanation for such nonsense. He says that hostel care is another level of support. I point out that it has been there for some considerable time. It is not another level of support. In fact, it is an inappropriate level of support for many of the patients who need closer and more careful attention and who are now, because of this Government's actions, being pushed into hostel care. For him to say that the home and community care program will take care of some of the problems at the same time as the Government is destroying the guts of that program means that he is completely out of touch with what is actually happening in the real world.

His comments on the *I'm Still an Individual* report bear no resemblance to what many workers in the area feel about that report. I will address that in some detail later. He stated that the rug will not be pulled from under these people. All he was saying was that the rug will be pulled; it will just be pulled a little more slowly than some of them think. He is quite right when he says that we are talking about the appropriateness of the level of care. That is the key concern that we, in the Opposition, and many members of the nursing home and caring industry—if one wants to use that word—

have; that the level of care in many of these residences is entirely inappropriate to their needs. That way the Government can cut costs and save more money at the expense of this very vulnerable group in our society.

The resident classification instrument (RCI), for example, may in general terms be an admirable concept. It is basically aimed at getting a balance between the various levels of care and what is offered in the nursing homes and an appropriate remuneration for those levels. Although the concept is very good, ideology takes over. We have the socialist intrusion of stamping everybody with a number; they are all on some point scoring system. Certainly there is no flexibility and there is no concern about the individuality of the people concerned. The RCI structure forces patients, in many cases, inappropriately into hostels. I think it is very clear from the representations that I am sure the Government has received also that there are now a number of people who are too frail to be in hostels and who are now, because of the inflexibility of the RCI, pushed into the hostel accommodation. It is an instrument of government control.

Although we over here certainly support the concept that as many genuinely suitable people as possible should be looked after in hostels rather than in nursing homes, we have a major concern that a number of the people now in hostels and going into hostels in the near future as a result of this and associated legislation, are too frail to be in hostels. They will stay in hostels which, although the staff do a superb job, are in fact now underfunded. They need more staff and the funds for those staff are clearly not forthcoming from this Government. As I say, it is cost cutting exercise at the expense of the patients.

I am amazed at what a wonderful job most hostels do under the pressures they have at present. We often hear of hostels where there is only a single qualified nurse on at a given time to look after the needs of a number of patients. The staffing levels there may be okay if the patients are fit and pretty well able to look after themselves, as was the concept for hostels, but the number of frail patients in those hostels has been increased so markedly that the support services, the nursing services and the medical

services are rapidly becoming inadequate. It is fair to say that a number of these institutions are both overstressed and understaffed for the types of patients they are now expected to care for. One point I endorse and welcome is the proposed admission of carers into hostels with the patients themselves. This is a thoroughly laudable concept and one which, once the system has been worked out appropriately, I am sure will work to the benefit of both patients and their families.

The honourable member for Scullin talked about the aim of 60 places per thousand frail patients over the age of 70 years. Only 40 of the relevant numbers per thousand would be in a nursing home. He failed to mention that this means there would be a reduction on current figures from 72,000 to 47,000 nursing homes places—a reduction of 25,000 places. He also conveniently forgot to mention that those 25,000 places would be lost pretty well entirely from the private sector. As is often the case, the Government—the left wing of the Government at least—is targeting the private sector of the nursing home industry, which has been the backbone of the industry for many years. It is also very clear that if in fact any new nursing homes were permitted to set up in operation, they would not be receiving any recurrent funding. Of course, they very rarely get capital funding in any case. It is quite clear that this is an attempt to remove the private element of the nursing home industry.

At the same time, hostel places will go up from 43,000 to 70,500. There is only one interpretation to make from these figures; that is, quite clearly there will be a large number of very frail patients who would otherwise have been in nursing homes but who will now be in hostels. Some of those, hopefully a large number, will be appropriately in hostels. Equally it is very clear that a large number of those nursing home patients should be in nursing homes and should stay there rather than being shoved down the line to the cheaper—this is the key to it—hostel accommodation. As I say, those 25,000 nursing home beds will come pretty well entirely from the private industry. There will be no funding for new nursing homes.

But more than that there is an attack on another element in the private nursing home sphere in particular, and that is those nursing

homes with less than 20 beds. On the one hand, the Government is saying that small is beautiful, that is, that we should get patients out into the community to live in community nursing homes, community homes of four, five or six people. On the other hand, there is this pressure on nursing homes to either close down or amalgamate if they happen to be small, which in this regard means less than 20 beds. So we lose that family atmosphere, intimacy, closeness or the concept that big is beautiful. Big is clearly not beautiful, but from a government's bureaucratic point of view it is easier to handle one big organisation rather than several small ones—the bigger the better. This is part of the brave new world bureaucracy—more and more Canberra control in many areas—that the Minister for Housing and Aged Care (Mr Staples) has looming over us.

The Government also has an amazing cheek to release propaganda in the form of a leaflet entitled *I'm Still an Individual*, edited by Chris Ronalds. The implication in this document is that the rights of residents have been usurped. It is a fair interpretation of not only the documents itself but the press conferences that have accompanied it that the residents themselves may be misused, in poor conditions and have not only a host of other complaints but are the norm rather than the exception. I agree that there may be some bad apples in the nursing home sphere. We are all aware that some nursing homes are not as good as others. But this a gross misrepresentation of the situation. A number of the witnesses who were interviewed by the team producing this document have spoken to me about being misquoted and selected quoting of their comments. They believe that the interpretation which has been put on their own comments is entirely inappropriate to what they were trying to say to the team writing this particular document. I should point out that residents in nearly every nursing home in the Nursing Home Association already have their own charter of rights and responsibilities and freedom. It is that way round. It is not only a question of their rights but also their responsibilities, and that is entirely appropriate. The vast majority of nursing homes provide not only freedom to them as individuals but good caring, good basic amenities and good food. On the whole,

the nursing homes are run by caring, compassionate people. This document was described very neatly by one of my constituents whose parents are in the Jesmond Nursing Home in my constituency as 'a trendy piece of paper that will get a lot of publicity but do nothing for the old people'.

It is quite two-faced for the Government to support this recommendation that aged members of the community should have more say in where they go and what their rights are when it is the Government's own cost cutting policies which restrict entry to nursing homes to the very frail who are often unable to communicate their wishes anyway. It is pure hypocrisy. Freedom of the individual is paramount and does generally occur. This Government should support that and this document does not help that concept.

Another matter related to this particular problem is the question of resident funded hostels. In New South Wales alone there are some 600 resident funded hostel beds, mainly run by the Uniting Church and, to a lesser extent, the Seventh Day Adventist Church. Basically, the concept here is that residents, on their retirement, make an interest free loan to the board running the hostel to pay for their accommodation in their retirement. This is a refundable loan. This is true self-help. The only funding that these hostels get from the government is a subsidy for additional nursing. Apart from this, they are entirely self-supporting. In many cases, these are people who have often scrimped and saved for their own retirement. They have looked after themselves. It actually cuts Government costs. The 600-odd beds in New South Wales, forgetting about the inflation rate under this Government, is over \$10.8m at 1980 prices. What has happened now, of course, is that there is a requirement that one in five patients in these resident funded hostels be financially disadvantaged. It is a laudable aim—and I am happy to say that we should provide places for financially disabled people—but, unfortunately, this discriminates against people who have scrimped and saved for their retirement. For example, Woodfield, one of the nursing homes in the inner west of Sydney, instead of paying \$55,000 as an interest free loan, has increased that to cover the cost of the extra financially disabled people to \$68,750. In

effect, this is an extra capital tax upon a group of aged people. It is yet another penalty on those who have actually tried to save and provide for their own retirement. It is a penalty on thrift.

I believe very strongly that we should encourage self-help and not penalise it. It seems that this problem has arisen because Peter Staples, the Minister, was not even aware that resident funded hostels existed. This is the same Peter Staples who this evening informed the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia that he would not turn up for its meeting because it was going to criticise him and he duly did not turn up to the meeting. This is the Peter Staples, the Minister, who is supposed to be aware of the situation in his Government.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ronald Edwards)—Order! I suggest to the honourable member that he should refer to the Minister by his appropriate title.

Dr WOODS—It changes so often. Is it Aged Care?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER—Nevertheless, it is beholden upon the honourable member to be certain of the Minister's title if he wishes to refer to him.

Dr WOODS—Resident funded hostels should be clearly excluded from this bureaucratic outrage. The charities involved, mainly the Uniting and Seventh Day Adventist churches, have been pushed into signing so-called 10F agreements for their continued funding. They have signed these under protest. Amongst the other problems they have are the extra bureaucratic requirements in addition to the financially disabled people's regulations. For example, the Government requires information of a legal nature of residents' rights. It requires extra details, although it does not actually say which records it requires, of residents' private arrangements with the nursing homes. All this has to be in a form to be determined by the Department. As the charities say, which form? It is clearly a Commonwealth form. It is more intrusion and ministerial control, which may be appealing to the relevant Minister, but is not appropriate to the good care of these residents.

There have been submissions from the Challenge Foundation about the concept

which is embodied in this legislation of moving people, particularly the intellectually disabled, out from this sort of hostel accommodation into community homes of four or five people. We all think that it is admirable in principle, but there are a number of problems in doing this. Some of these intellectually disabled people in particular will never cope in houses of four or five people. To cope adequately, most will need increased care and increased financial support to provide that care. As far as we can see, the Government is not planning to provide the necessary financial infrastructure to allow the appropriate care for these people to survive in the community home concept. The intellectually disabled are, indeed, a very special case. If appropriate care is not available in community based accommodation, then they may well find that this approach is not only of no benefit but actually detrimental to their ongoing self-esteem and self-management. The Richmond scheme highlighted some of the problems involved in this area. Unfortunately, the Government has not learnt from those particular problems. Hostel style accommodation can be every bit as good as cottage style accommodation, so long as it is run by the appropriate organisations with caring, involvement, experience and the necessary financial infrastructure. I appeal to the Government not to throw out the baby with the bathwater in regard to this particular aspect of the intellectually disabled.

Another question related to this whole legislation, clearly not spelt out completely to everybody's satisfaction, is the question of moving people away from sheltered workshops and reducing or abolishing the funding, depending on which Government representative of the week one listens to. Although the Opposition supports the concept that the intellectually disabled should be moved out if possible into general industry, into the community, we and a large number of the parents of these people are very concerned that a large number of people who are not suitable to be moved out into the community will be moved out inappropriately. Many will, therefore, fail in the move to the outside community. Instead of going to a sheltered workshop or the equivalent, they will be forced to stay at home. There is a need for a number of procedures. There is a need

to educate the community. The community into which these people are moving needs to be—

Mr Blunt—Not to mention the trade unions.

Dr WOODS—Especially the trade unions. The community needs to be trained in the problems which these people actually face, otherwise we will find that they are doing menial tasks, they will be the butts of abuse and humour, and they will be exploited. Many of these people have been through that before they went to the sheltered workshops and have come through that problem only to be faced now, because of this Government's action, with the possibility of being put back there. For that small number of people in the sheltered workshops, we entirely support the concept of moving them into industry and exposing them to the outside world. The Government needs to make sure that the funding to support this is entirely available. For those for whom it is not possible, and never will be possible, either sheltered workshops or similar organisations would be entirely appropriate and need to be supported. I mention in passing that the job support scheme has done a superb job in this regard, but it does need more financing and expanding to have a larger impact upon what is in fact a very significant number of intellectually disabled people.

In summary, I would like to say, therefore, that the changes which the Government has in mind may be very admirable in principle but they need to be implemented very carefully, with adequate funding and with training and education for the outside community. We need to retain the good points of the current systems. We do not need change for change's sake. We need to minimise the bureaucracy and the red tape involved not only for the patients but also for the nursing homes and other organisations which are involved in caring for what is a very vital and important part of our community.

Dr HARRY EDWARDS (Berowra) (9.01)—I do not propose to detain the House for long, but I wish to make just a few supplementary remarks to the very comprehensive survey of the subject by my col-

league the honourable member for Lowe (Dr Woods), who has just resumed his seat.

Mr Smith—A good speech.

Dr HARRY EDWARDS—An excellent speech. The Aged or Disabled Persons Homes Amendment Bill is within the context of the Government's changed approach to the provision of accommodation for the aged and disabled following the 1986 nursing homes and hostels review. This approach has now been in place for the last 18 months. In concept it is a 'needs based' approach, in contrast to what was referred to as the 'submission model' of previous years. Faced with the inevitable expansion of aged persons accommodation with the ageing of Australia's population—this is so well documented I will not give any figures—this Bill seeks to ensure a 'better targeting', or rather a more specific targeting, of government subsidised services to persons in need and to areas in need—as there are areas apparently disadvantaged in the aged care accommodation stakes. These are circumstances in which it is imperative to contain government expenditure—it is good to see that the Minister for Housing and Aged Care (Mr Staples) and his Department recognise that, because this cannot be said of the Treasurer, the honourable member for Blaxland (Mr Keating), who has very complacently said that the process of expenditure reduction has gone about as far as it can. It certainly has not, as the Government will very soon come to recognise. There are plenty of studies around by reasonable, practical men that could give the Government a lead in this, and which are not the 'mindless shrieks of ideologues', as the Treasurer accused last Budget time.

So in circumstances where it is imperative to contain government spending, the emphasis on a needs based approach is entirely appropriate, and I accept that. It is a pity that the Government does not more widely embrace the principle—and I have particularly in mind the health care system. But while the principle of a needs based approach is a good one, I get worried when such a policy is to be administered by socialists.

Mr Cowan—You must have flexibility.

Dr HARRY EDWARDS—That is what it will not have if it is administered by social-

ists, and I will come back to that in a moment. When we study the detail and the real thrust of this legislation, we see there is serious cause for concern, as Opposition speakers who have preceded me have pointed out. First, there is nothing in this legislation or funding approach designed effectively to utilise and encourage the private sector. As my colleague the honourable member for Macquarie (Mr Webster) put it the other night, that is counterproductive to, and indeed a betrayal of, the interests of the aged persons the legislation is intended to help. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that there is on the Government's side an underlying antagonism towards the involvement of the private sector in providing these services—not just discouragement of new private enterprise hostels and nursing services, but arrangements that will have the effect of phasing out, driving out, existing private enterprise establishments.

Mr Braithwaite—Quite deliberately.

Dr HARRY EDWARDS—Quite deliberately, as the shadow Minister says. The private sector is being squeezed at both ends, particularly nursing homes. They will be prevented by this legislation from taking more than 87.5 per cent of pension from patients, irrespective of whether the patients can afford to pay more. That provision is presented as a great plus: The Hawke Government avers that by 1990—shades of the reference to children in poverty—no-one will be required to pay more than 87.5 per cent of pension for accommodation in a nursing home. Again it is like no-one having to pay more than the schedule fee for medical services—if people can get them. But in typical socialist fashion, that commitment begins to foul up the overall aged accommodation and care situation. It pretty effectively does away with the private enterprise provision for the top end of the market and, in that way, adds to the overall imbalance, indeed shortage, of accommodation.

We have only to consider the parallel situation of school funding to recognise the wrong-headedness of eliminating capital funding to private sector service providers. In not doing so it is like cutting off one's nose to spite one's face, as my colleague put it the other night. Thus capital funding support for private schools allows the school

itself and the provision of schooling at a lesser cost to the taxpayer than if fully provided by the public sector. That same consideration surely applies to hostels.

Added to this, there is the squeeze from the official funding components, the so-called standard aggregate module (SAM) and the care aggregate module (CAM) components. The latter, CAM, has been suggested by some to mean 'caring attitude missing' from this Government! But there is a squeeze resulting from these being set at levels which are notably less than the actual cost figures supplied by the private nursing home associations, and all this puts the private hostels and homes under great pressure. There is out there—this does not seem to be recognised by the Government—a great deal of pressure, apprehension and even despair at this time. One cannot counter that just by pointing to some private operators, under whom admittedly there has been insufficient care and dedication, and some patient neglect, and so on.

I repeat: a reasonable and responsible approach to policy in this area would recognise the potential for the private sector playing a significant role in meeting future accommodation and care needs, which are going to be very large indeed. But this Government, in contrast with that, has seen fit to inhibit and discourage such a private sector role, to the longer term detriment of the aged citizens of this nation.

I spoke at the beginning of two Opposition concerns at the Government's approach. Its failure to encourage a larger participation of the private sector is one. The second is the bureaucratic rigidity and inflexibility that my colleague referred to a moment ago, inevitably associated with such a centralised public sector biased community service planning operation—this bureaucratic outrage, as my colleague the honourable member for Lowe called it a moment ago. In this respect I wish only to refer to an initiative by certain public spirited citizens who belong to a local community organisation from the township, suburb, of Berowra in my electorate. I mention particularly Messrs Bill and Ernie Foster. I say 'township' deliberately, because the community of Berowra in my electorate is somewhat isolated and is situated between Hornsby-Asquith-Mount Colah, which is the

northern limit of metropolitan Sydney, and the Hawkesbury River, which forms the northern border of my electorate. This is by no means a high income area when compared with some other parts of this electoral division.

The proposal to which I refer is the establishment of a low cost residential accommodation and care complex for the frail and aged in the Berowra township. The community organisation that I referred to is in a position to make a significant capital contribution to the project but, of course, the sum available is by no means adequate to fund the construction costs in their entirety. The essence of the case put for this proposal is that the Berowra township is, as I have said, a somewhat isolated community with a population now of the order of 16,000 people. There is no aged accommodation whatsoever anywhere near it. The fact is that in the whole Hornsby-Berowra area, which stretches from the northern outskirts of Hornsby right up to and including Wisemans Ferry—an area of the order of 10 times the size of the balance of the regional planning area—there is no aged accommodation at all. Yet, the application for assistance for this proposal meets with a stereotyped bureaucratic response. A recent response from the relevant Commonwealth department reads as follows:

As you may be aware, the Government has adopted the recommendations made in the Nursing Home and Hostel Review. That is, the growth of residential care services should be planned on the basis of ratio of 100 residential care places per 1,000 people aged 70 and over in all areas of Australia. The objective is to achieve 60 hostel places and 40 nursing home places per 1,000 aged people. Funding rounds are now concentrating on those areas that have a hostel ratio of 30 or less places per 1,000 aged people.

I also wish to advise that a planning area takes in account the ratio of residential care services provided in the entire Local Government Area, not areas within the LGA.

The planning area for Hornsby-Ku-Ring-Gai has a combined hostel and nursing home ratio of 172 places per 1,000 aged people.

It goes on to express regret that the proposal could not be funded. What appears in no way to be taken into account is that the relevant local government area includes a number of very large retirement complexes, such as the Mowll Village and related villages complex at Castle Hill.

Mr Cowan—It has a wonderful reputation.

Dr HARRY EDWARDS—Yes, it has. I was going to say that it is among the largest and the very best in all Australia. This complex draws its clients from all over Sydney, New South Wales and, for that matter, Australia. I repeat that no allowance is made for that fact. The guideline figures quoted in the response that I read out and confirmed in this legislation are inflexibly applied as a bureaucratic imperative and completely neglect the reality of this local situation. So, this very worthy local initiative has been stifled. Some way of affording it any assistance at all has, apparently, not even been explored. I take this opportunity to appeal to the Minister and the Department to sit down and have another look at this worthy proposal from this organisation in Berowra.

The Opposition is not opposing this Bill, nor the needs principle on which it is based. But we express serious concerns about the Government's approach, such as those to which I have referred. I support the amendment that was moved by the honourable member for Dawson (Mr Braithwaite).

Mr COWAN (Lyne) (9.16)—Australia can rightfully claim to be fairly well down the track so far as the care of our aged people is concerned. I think the Aged or Disabled Persons Homes Amendment Bill 1988, which we are discussing this evening, is just another step in what the Government sees as being needed to keep up with the advancement of aged care. As the honourable member for Berowra (Dr Harry Edwards) pointed out, we agree with the Bill in relation to which the honourable member for Dawson (Mr Braithwaite) has moved a second reading amendment. But I wish to point out certain factors relating to it that are of some concern to the Opposition. From listening to this debate, I believe that certain Government members also see problems in respect of the Bill.

We have to realise that taxpayers' money is being used for the care of certain people within our society. Today over five million Australians are drawing a pension of some kind—principally the age pension. Commonwealth and State governments have a commitment to contribute towards certain care. I do not think there is any great objection to this in principle, but there are certain things that we have to be careful about in

this respect. Both governments and oppositions must realise that when taxpayers' money is being made available for the care of certain groups within the community, governments must keep some control. The legislation before the House is a typical example of a government on the one hand trying to keep control of taxpayers' money and on the other hand protecting certain people, such as the underprivileged, low income earners and other people in the community who need help. None of us object to this because we have hearts that are that way inclined. I am sure that the privileged in our community want to help those who are less fortunate. But we have to appreciate that the standards of care must be kept up, particularly so far as health is concerned. We have to make sure that what we are doing, with good intentions—and the legislation before us is an example of this—does not ultimately mean that somebody or some group within the community will be disadvantaged. I particularly refer to financially, physically or mentally disadvantaged people who want to be and should be in a nursing home or institution. These people should not be further disadvantaged.

People are living longer today. If there is one thing that aged people do not want, it is stress. They need health care. I am concerned that aged people from the metropolitan areas have turned up in my electorate office and have told me that they have worked for a lifetime just to put a bit of money aside so as they can care for themselves. But because of asset testing and the high costs of living today they are unable to live the lifestyle that they would like to in retirement or meet their demands for housing and health care. This is a tremendous stress upon many Australians.

One thing that members of this House, whether in government or in opposition, should seek to avoid is placing continual stress on aged people within the community. Each one of us will eventually reach the stage where this problem arises. Australia has the problem of inflation. It is not the only country in the world with that problem. In addition we have so many regulations that today one almost needs to be a bush lawyer to cope with the demands of the social security system, with its regulations and re-

quirements dealing with aged care. One needs to have a legal mind or the assistance of somebody such as a member of Federal Parliament whom one can consult and ask, 'What does all this mean?'. Even honourable members need expert assistance in understanding the requirements of the social security system. We are fortunate that officers of the Department are available to assist us to advise constituents about these matters.

Many aged persons are coming to my electorate to live, having retired from the metropolitan areas. They are attracted to the electorate because homes are cheaper, the geography of the area is good, the atmosphere is marvellous to live in. It is because of my experience with these people that I sound the warning to the Government that it is dealing with taxpayers' money. That is an important thing that should not be forgotten. In any legislation that comes before the Parliament there must be flexibility. We must consider the foundation of legislation that comes before us to see what its effect is going to be on the ordinary people of Australia. We must ensure that the legislation is flexible so that aged people can be cared for properly.

Let honourable members never forget that private enterprise has contributed immensely to aged care in Australia. The greatest contributions have been made by community groups and churches, organisations that over the years have displayed greater foresight than any government ever has. These organisations have raised the money for aged care establishments. I can point to people who contributed, beyond their means, sums of \$2,000 and \$3,000 and even up to \$100,000 to support the establishment of a nursing home in their own community. I can cite the example at the moment in the Great Lakes Shire of people at Bulahdelah who have responded in relation to the 40 nursing home beds that were advertised as available within the shire. Within one week the people of that small township with a population of just over a thousand raised more than \$300,000, with the support and backup of the surrounding rural community. These people, who have good hearts, said that they wanted a nursing home to accommodate aged people within their community—men and women who are not being cared for. They have said

to the Government, 'We will comply with your policy and we will put up the money'. They will put up double the fee, if need be, to provide their share of the cost of a 40-bed nursing home. They will equip the home and run it.

I remind the House that farming community groups grow the vegetables and fruit that are needed in the nursing homes. They come in with their baskets full and the ladies of the group cook cakes for the aged people. They are an example of the wonderful co-operation that this nation needs. I mention this matter because it is so important and the Government should never overlook it. These local citizens cook the cakes and grow the vegetables and fruit; they also provide butter and milk and other things to assist the local community nursing home or hostel and units. The important fact is that the people of the local community are part of the provision of aged care accommodation.

Never let us reach the stage in this country where we, as members of Parliament, do anything to take away any of that pride from these local people or discount in any way the generosity that they display in contributing to the atmosphere and environment of every individual within the aged care establishment. I am not dealing with the technicalities of the legislation, I am dealing with the principle of what people want. The average Australian citizen wants to care for his mother and father, his uncle or cousin, or the poor old person who lives next door or down the road. Those are the people we have to think about and that is why I speak again about flexibility. Like the honourable member for Page (Mr Ian Robinson), I visit the nursing homes in my electorate as often as I can. I do not know of one person in a nursing home in my electorate who should not be there. I do not know of one person who could genuinely be taken out of a nursing home in my electorate and put into a hostel. I do not think any of these people could care for themselves. They need a maximum of care. They need care 24 hours a day because they are ill and aged. They cannot get out of their beds for most of the time.

I cannot see the position that Government members talk about when they say that there are aged patients in nursing homes who could

be in a hostel. Where does one draw the line within a hostel? At what stage does one bring in nursing? These are all matters that are categorised in the Bill that will have to be worked out as time goes on. At the moment two or three nursing homes are being constructed in my electorate. Already there are a dozen or more nursing homes and hostels within my electorate. As I said, from a geographical point of view the area is an ideal place to go to live. I have been involved with these establishments not for one year but for 35 or 40 years. I helped to start one in the days when people said, 'There will be nobody to occupy the beds. Who are we going to get to occupy them?'. We started with 18 beds and such was the demand that three months after they were opened there were 70 people waiting for beds.

When it comes to categorising these people, I would not like to be a member of the assessment team. It will have great difficulty fitting in with the requirements of categorisation that the Government is placing within the legislation. I have not attended the seminars to hear these things spoken about. It may be that the method of categorisation has already been worked out very thoroughly, but the existing nursing homes and hostels want to know a lot more about categorisation and particularly about the reimbursements they are going to receive. It is important for the administrators of a nursing home or hostel to know these things.

Today there are many different designs of hostels and nursing homes. I give full credit to the Department of Housing and Aged Care for adopting and approving new types of designs. I mention the example of Harbourside Haven at Nelson Bay within my electorate, which accommodates almost 300 people in the units, the hostel and the nursing home. It is a marvellous place. The Department has recently approved another 40-bed hostels. The administrators would like to build another two- or three-storey building. What is the matter with that, so long as a lift is installed in the building? This is the sort of change that is coming into these establishments today. Clusters are also becoming a feature of nursing homes and hostels, which I think is a good idea. There are excellent designs. I pay tribute to the churches, the community groups and the

lodges that over the years have gained tremendous experience in the design of these institutions for the convenience of the guests in them and the nurses and administrative staff who have to cope with the demands of the running of the establishment. It is important that we look at these designs to know in what direction we are going. The honourable member for Lowe (Dr Woods) made an important point when he spoke earlier about categorisation. We do not want the stage to be reached where an aged person, who has over a lifetime contributed to the well-being of the nation, will be categorised as one, two, three, four or five, and known as such. We do not want this. I hope it never happens to me.

Mr Braithwaite—It happens.

Mr COWAN—As the honourable member for Dawson said, it happens and he pointed this out when he led for the National Party in the debate. We do not want this to happen to any Australian, whether he or she be Aboriginal, poor person or the wealthiest person in Australia. I do not care who the person is; he or she should not be categorised. I ask the Government and the Minister for Housing and Aged Care (Mr Staples) in particular to be careful to see that this does not happen, for the sake of the people of Australia. We do not want to see such a situation arise.

What is wrong with a pensioner paying more than 87½ per cent of his pension towards his nursing home accommodation? If the pensioner has some money set aside and wants to help with the running of the home, or assist in getting more nursing home or hostel beds, what is wrong with his being able to contribute more? The Government says that by 1990 nobody will pay more than 87.5 per cent of his pension towards the cost of accommodation in a nursing home. I know what it is directing its attention to; we all know about that. But what is wrong with a person who wants to contribute more, to assist the home or hostel, doing so if he wishes?

We all know—both the Opposition and the Government—that in aged care in Australia we have a tiger by the tail. We have a great responsibility in this area. We hope that the Government will be able to meet

this responsibility. We hope, in the process, that future governments will give encouragement to community groups, churches, lodges and other private enterprise groups, to cater for this need. The provision of beds is important. We do not want to socialise this country and present the Government with a fast track method completely to take over and control these community groups.

The States will say that they have nursing home patients in hospital beds around the States. They are scattered here and there. We know that that is so. They have some responsibility to look after them, too. But the fact is that the planning that we do in the short and long term I am sure will be very good. We do not know whether there may be a hidden agenda. The honourable member for Dawson referred to this point. He knows what I mean. What is the hidden agenda? We hope that there is not one. We know that we are only at a certain stage with regard to aged care in Australia—and rightfully so, because we must be flexible. We have to adjust the situation as time goes by. We have to meet the extra demands that we will have.

I do not want to be parochial and I have not been since I was first elected to this place. As a Federal member of parliament I can say that the only money that we get directly for our electorates is for aged people accommodation and private schools—unless a community employment program grant is available around the corner.

Mr Ian Robinson—Or a road or two.

Mr COWAN—That is right; perhaps a road or two.

Mr Porter—We used to get that money.

Mr COWAN—We used to get it. I will look after my electorate in terms of aged care. I will fight any legislation that is considered by this House that I do not believe is in the interests of the 20 to 25 per cent of my total constituency who have retired in my electorate, in one of the best parts of Australia. Those people have had enough worry in regard to the assets test and many other matters. We do not want to see aged care become a problem.

I appeal to the Government to think of the matters that we have spoken about in

this debate . I spoke earlier about the Nelson Bay Harbourside Haven. Legacy provided funding for three beds there. Those beds have been in place for a year or so, yet they are still empty as they have not been approved. I hope that the Minister will soon approve those three beds and make them available to people who need them. I spoke of Bulahdelah. I can talk about Taree, Tun-curry-Forster, Port Macquarie—

Mr Tim Fischer—Port Macquarie—Riverwood Village.

Mr COWAN—That is right; very good. Bushland Place now for Taree; Dungog, Stroud and Gloucester. All of those communities have gone out of their way to raise money. They have initiated it. Nobody has said to them, 'You people should have this'. The communities have said this. They have sought the respect, support and cooperation of the churches, the masonic lodge or some other body. They are on the way to providing this accommodation. The ladies are cooking cakes and the farmers are growing fruit and vegetables, and providing milk. They are all involved in the fund raising.

Mr Ian Robinson—Milk and honey.

Mr COWAN—As the honourable member for Page said, they are providing the milk and honey. Is that not the atmosphere that we have to retain in Australia? This is the bread and butter stuff that the people of this country want. I am sure the honourable member for Parramatta (Mr John Brown) would agree with me on this point: the people want meat, too. They like fillet steak. I know my good friend will help the aged; I have no doubt about that. Those are just some of the comments I wish to make in relation to the legislation. I think they are very basic. If ever we get away from the basics of aged care, goodness help Australia.

Mr PORTER (Barker) (9.35)—The problem I want to raise tonight in discussing this legislation is the fact that the milk and honey that the honourable member for Lyne (Mr Cowan) talked about will not overcome the problems that some nursing homes in my electorate have as a result of this and related legislation. I particularly want to raise some of the concerns that country people have with the Government's aged care policy.

Fundamental to this legislation is the Government's move to categorisation of patients for the purpose of funding nursing home residents. The impact of that program will be devastating for a number of country nursing homes unless the program is changed or amended. In effect, the Government is saying, 'We will assist in funding according to the extent of care required'. No one would argue with that. I well remember the debate last year when the categorisation was being introduced. We on this side of the Parliament raised a number of concerns about its implementation but agreed with the thrust of the proposal. The problems that we forecast have now arisen. One of the problems is that the level of funding for each category of patient has been set so that the larger nursing home, with a patient profile which has a spread across the range of classifications, will be viable, whereas the smaller homes without that advantage—without the spread of patients from each classification—will suffer a significant reduction in subsidy.

I will give a couple of examples from my electorate. In the town of Berri, which has a population of 7,000 people, is St Catherine's Home for the Aged. There is a nursing home with 18 beds and a hostel with 16 beds, catering for the needs of that moderate sized town of 7,000 people. Under the legislation proposed by this Government it will suffer a funding cut of up to \$86,000. I say to the honourable member for Lyne that the cooking of all the cakes in the world will not raise the sort of money that will be cut from its funding. A town just down the road, Barmera, has a population of 4,300. It has a nursing home with 20 beds, adjacent to and run by the hospital in Barmera. Up to \$91,000 will be cut from its budget.

Up the road, the other way, up river towards Canberra, is Renmark, with a population of 7,700. Its nursing home has 20 beds and its hostel has 12 beds. It is another small nursing home, catering for the needs of that community. Those nursing homes are going to suffer under the proposed funding arrangements put forward by this Government because they do not have access to a large population and they cannot choose the patients that come along, to ensure they get a few category 1 patients, a few category 2 patients, a few from category 3, and so on.

They cannot get that spread and so they cannot get the sort of subsidy that the Government believes is the norm. It is not the norm in the country. To some extent the Government appears not to have acknowledged that because it has put out a paper called *Small Nursing Homes*. The response in that paper is directed quite clearly to those smaller nursing homes, especially small country nursing homes. The response from this Government is, 'Get big or get out'. I will quote from the section entitled 'Overview of the Proposal'. Paragraph 6 (a) reads:

State Offices are to hold discussions with the proprietors of all small homes to facilitate the amalgamation or expansion of these homes.

That is it. The State office of the Federal department will talk to these homes and say, 'You've got two options: you get big or you get out'. Let us look at the options. One is for such homes to get big. If one is running a nursing home in the Riverland, one cannot get big because the Government says, 'We will not approve any more beds. There are enough beds in the area now'. In fact, there probably will be a few more—up to 10 more beds by 1996. So what option is one left with? The option is to get out. Is that this Government's policy? What the Government is saying is, 'You needn't really get out, but you'll have to amalgamate'. That means close one of them and amalgamate with a town up the river, or down the river in the case of the Riverland.

Mr Duncan—Or across the river.

Mr PORTER—The Minister for Employment and Education Services is quite right. For example, one could go across the river in Berri to Loxton. There is a bit of a problem because the South Australian Government has promised to put a bridge across the river, but it has failed to come up with the funds. It keeps diverting the funds to yet another broken promise, to other roadways. They are probably in the Minister's bloomin' electorate.

Dr Harry Edwards—It is a well represented electorate.

Mr PORTER—I wonder about that. I think the margin has been dropping every election and I suggest that with the candidate we have got this time around it may well drop to a negative. The Government

has identified some of these smaller homes as falling into a special category, so the first thing I did in relation to a number of these small nursing homes in country areas in my electorate was to see whether they fall into this special category.

There are two types of special homes: the first are remote homes, and the others are what are called other special homes. Remote homes are ones that are a long way from anywhere. They have to range from 100 to 250 kilometres from another home, presumably. That just does not apply in my area. It probably applies to Oodnadatta and maybe Alice Springs, but it does not apply to most country areas in South Australia. The Government goes on to say that the definition of 'remote' is now being reconsidered with figures as low as 75 kilometres not being entirely excluded. Even so, that will not apply to all the towns I have mentioned here tonight. So they do not fall into the category as currently defined as 'remote'. Are they special homes? Special homes are general purpose homes that cater for people who have cultural and language differences or dietary requirements. Aboriginal and most ethnic homes would meet this criterion. The Berri home has two Aboriginals in it—one in the nursing home and one in the hostel home—but I doubt whether that will fall into the category of a special home. The Government has provided some exemptions, but they are so limited as to not meet the need, certainly in country areas in South Australia.

The Government, it seems to me, will have to review the application of these rules and see whether it cannot either amend the exemption categories to broaden them or amend the classification system. Unless the Government is willing to take a more reasonable, realistic and responsible look at the particular problems of some of these country nursing homes providing care to their communities, the only option, it appears, is to adopt its line of 'Get big or get out'. Is this a viable alternative? I have said already that it is not possible under the Government's rules to get big—for example, in the Riverland—because it will not allow the beds. It is a catch 22 situation. Let me read to the House from a letter that I have received from the Barmera Nursing Home which looks

at the proposal being put to them by the Government—the 'get big or get out' proposal. The letter I have from the director of that nursing home says:

The proposal suggests several areas at which small nursing homes should look, these areas being amalgamation with another home to increase bed numbers, expansion by getting approval to increase bed numbers, purchase of a home that is closing down—

there could be a few of those around with this Government in charge—

or closing down our nursing home and selling the beds.

We have given these options very careful consideration and find that none of these options are suitable. Firstly, to amalgamate with another home means that we have to relocate one or the other nursing home to one site at significant capital cost. This would result in one of our communities in the Riverland being without a nursing home and therefore the elderly residents could no longer continue to live in the towns in which they have grown up.

Mr Braithwaite—Is the Government going to contribute to the capital cost?

Mr PORTER—Let me come to the capital cost. The letter goes on:

To amalgamate and leave the nursing home situated in the present location does not achieve any significant savings. Also, the grant for which private enterprise home would be eligible for to assist in amalgamation or expansion of \$4,000 per bed is grossly inadequate and does not go anywhere near meeting capital costs involved.

I ask the Minister: what is the cost of establishing these new beds? If homes want to amalgamate, they will have to shut one down and build the beds adjacent to one of the existing homes. I bet the Government cannot build a bed for \$4,000, yet that is the assistance it will give homes. The letter further states:

In relation to expansion of nursing home beds, this option would not be supported by your Department as it is currently considered that the Riverland area in which Barmera is located already has too many nursing home beds.

That is the point I was making earlier. The letter continues:

To purchase a home that is closing down would be a very expensive exercise as I believe nursing home beds are valued at between \$20,000 and \$35,000 per bed and we would still require Commonwealth approval to have these beds relocated if this was a viable option.

That is another route that is closed off by the Government. The letter goes on:

In relation to closing the nursing home and selling our beds, this would result in having to relocate 20 nursing home residents to other nursing homes. This would mean residents being accommodated outside of their home towns and would have a significant impact on their families and the quality of life that the resident would be able to lead due to reduced contact with his immediate family. It also leaves us with the situation of having a new building approximately four years old going to waste.

The other problem is that if these nursing homes were to close down, there could be significant impact on the acute beds at local hospitals and this is something that should not be forgotten as the cost of accommodating long term patients in an acute hospital situation is far greater than accommodating them in a nursing home.

In that situation the Barmera Nursing Home has looked at the Government's paper and considered what options are open to it. The Government could cut funding by up to \$91,000. What will it do? Will it get big or get out? It says, 'We have looked at the get big option and we are not allowed to take that. If we get out, what will we do with our 20 patients? We have a responsibility to them. We don't want to shove them off to another town up or down the river. Even if the residents and the community agreed with that, how on earth do we fund the shift?'

As you can imagine, Mr Deputy Speaker, the Riverland area is up in arms over the Government's proposal. The threat to the homes in that area has been taken very seriously by the community. There was a meeting last week which some 250 people attended. I have received a letter which has also been sent to the Minister for Housing and Aged Care (Mr Staples). It sets out the community's concern. Do you know, Mr Deputy Speaker, that in a couple of days that community got 457 signatures on the letter that was sent to the Minister. That is an indication of the concern about the impact of these changes that the Government is making.

The resolution of the problem seems to me to be in the Government's hands. It seems that it must take account of the problems of servicing country towns. The Government can do that only if it acknowledges that the city model does not fit in the country. The Government has to allow the country nursing homes to continue to operate on a viable basis.

These country nursing homes that I, the honourable member for Lyne and others on this side of the chamber have referred to tonight operate with enormous community support. They provide much needed care to our elderly and infirm in country and city areas alike. Country people surely have as much right to access to a nursing home within their community as do city people. It is this fundamental right which the Government is calling into question with its forced amalgamation proposal involving the loss to some communities for their nursing homes. Country people have done a lot for this nation. Right now it is the rural exporters who are bringing home the bacon, as the Treasurer says. The only thanks they get from this Government is another kick in the teeth.

Our road funding has been cut; country hospital funds have been cut, especially in South Australia where recently we saw the State Government cut funding for the Blyth and Tailem Bend hospitals dramatically; and our rail services have been cut. Now the Hawke Labor Government is proposing significant cuts to nursing home funding to the extent that some will be forced to close down under this amalgamation proposal. Enough is enough. I urge the Minister to review the criteria applying to this area of funding. I do not question the goals of this program, as I said at the beginning of my contribution. Generally we agree with the overall approach that has been adopted, but the criteria of funding must take into account the differences in population size in various areas, service delivery and access. They must take into account the differences between city and country to ensure equality of treatment.

Mr McGAURAN (Gippsland) (9.52)—On 26 February this year, a short while ago, I had the honour and privilege of officially opening the refurbished west wing of the Toora nursing home in South Gippsland. This was once a bush nursing hospital that was forced to close in 1984 with the introduction of the insidious Medicare system. But let me not dwell on past events; suffice it to say the local community and committee of management had the foresight, wisdom and wit to go about providing a much needed facility for their community. There were already some 14 nursing home beds attached to the

Toora bush nursing hospital. On its closure it was sought to add another 16 beds so as to make up that minimum number of 30 nursing home beds necessary to make a nursing home viable.

To cut a long story short, because there are a number of aspects of concern to the Toora nursing home that I wish to touch on, I should only say that it took several years of resolute determinedness on the part of Chris Flynn, the secretary-manager, and Mr Ian Park, the president of the committee, as well as all of those on the committee and those in the wider community, to bring about a reclassification of those empty bush nursing home beds into nursing home beds. There was some capital outlay in converting the west wing of the old bush nursing hospital into the nursing home. As you, Mr Deputy Speaker, representing the electorate of Lyne, mentioned in an earlier speech, these nursing homes can only exist in rural communities with dedication and support of the communities they seek to serve. The example of the Toora nursing home bears out your own words. It was not just the work of the committee and the secretary-manager that brought about this wonderful achievement; it was also the ladies auxiliary, led by the president, Mrs Dene Wogan Browne, as well as a contribution made from a coordinating committee of the adjoining Albertan shire, headed by Mrs Val Niggl. I understand also that the Toora Lions Club played a part in fitting out the nursing home extensions.

Toora's opening took place amongst a great deal of debate about the future accommodation for the elderly in our society. It seems to me that what is at issue is how to best direct government resources to the care of the aged so that individuals are best served according to their respective needs. In addition, it is also important to lay the foundation of a lasting system of care which will be sufficiently flexible and sensitive to meet the changing and growing needs of a population which is rapidly ageing. It is vital to build a system of care for the aged which will be able to cope with change.

Like most mature Western societies Australia is undergoing a transformation in its age structure. As a population we are getting older. There are many reasons why this is happening. For the most part the cause of

this marked trend in ageing is that the decline in birth rate over past decades is taking place against the background of normally high periods of fertility at the mid-century, particularly in the post-war years which have become known as the baby boom period. Moreover, the benefits of modern medicine and technology with our increased quality of life has seen an increase in life expectancy. The statistical implications of these trends are dramatic. The number of people aged 60 years and over is expected to rise from two million in 1981 to three million by the year 2001 and to five million by the year 2021, meaning that 22 per cent of our population will be aged over 60 by the year 2021.

These statistics are very real for governments as they consider how best to plan for the care of the elderly into the next century. Between 1981 and 2001 the increase in the aged population will mean that governments will have to increase their outlays on the elderly by 131 per cent. This will mean a 50 per cent rise in government outlays in real terms between 2000 and 2021. Already one-third of the health and welfare budget is spent on the elderly, which works out to be some \$3,781 for each individual. I might add that on the current numbers 14 per cent of our population falls within the category of elderly. The demand on government expenditure will be increased by still another factor. The current decline in the birth rate will mean a reduction in the tax base in future. The lowering of expenditure on the young, owing to their decrease in numbers, will not be anywhere near enough to cover the increase in outlays for the increasing number of elderly.

The task for governments is very real. Not only do we have to ensure that the economy grows in order to provide for the funds necessary to maintain a viable system for the elderly but we need also to look closely at how we can make the system of care more effective by better directing resources whilst at the same time ensuring every aged person receives a level of support appropriate to their medical, social and emotional needs. To achieve this end I think it is necessary to have regard to a number of basic principles. In the first instance the elderly should, when appropriate, be supported in their own homes and in their own communities. Institutional-

ised care, whether it be in hostels or homes such as the Toora nursing home, should only be relied upon when no other style of accommodation suits the needs of the individual. Nursing home care, as you would know better than anyone, Mr Deputy Speaker, is the highest and most important level of care available but is also the most expensive.

On 1987 figures—the most recent available—there were 68,642 beds in nursing homes nationally. The recurrent expenditure for the same year for nursing homes was \$1.1 billion. Assuming each bed available represents an individual, this makes for a Commonwealth outlay of \$16,439.50 per resident. By way of contrast, hostel care for the same year represents an outlay of \$1,727.26 per person, making 38,800 resident places against recurrent outlays of \$67,028,000. While I am in sympathy with the general trend towards a diversification of the levels of care available to the elderly, it must be said that diversification has its pitfalls. Change can be seized upon too impetuously and imbalances can quickly occur in the provision of vital services.

The present Government believes that it is necessary to reduce the past emphasis on funding for nursing homes and, instead, build up the resources of the hostel and community based support systems. Increased funding for hostels will mean that between 1989 and 1991 some 12,300 new hostel places will be established nationally against only 1,400 nursing home beds for the same period. To emphasise this trend in other terms, the Government aims to provide 100 residential places per 1,000 members of the population aged over 70 years. To achieve the goal of diversification, the Government is seeking to achieve a mix of 40 nursing home places for each 60 hostel places by early next century. This will mean that only 10 per cent of new places allocated in the future will be for nursing homes; the remainder will be for hostels.

For us in Victoria this means that between now and 1992 only 544 new nursing home places will be established, whilst 4,814 hostel places will be created. The implications of this policy are only too obvious. Indicative of the same reallocation of resources, the home and community care scheme, better known as HACC, received in excess of an

additional \$100m between 1985 and 1988, being roughly a 50 per cent increase in funding within a three-year period. Managing change on this scale and ensuring the maintenance of standards of care gives rise to problems of enormous complexity and present governments with significant challenges. Yet these are challenges that the Government must take up.

If it were not of such practical significance I would have been embarrassed to talk of care for the elderly in the terms that I have, of dull statistics and so forth. As a rule, the elderly ought to be spoken of in terms of compassion and respect, and that ought to be enough to drive the system on. Moreover, I am uneasy at having referred to the aged in such general terms. After all, the care services I have outlined are designed to recognise the very diversity of the elderly. Ageing does not necessarily mean entry into a period of disadvantage and dependency. That is a myth. The facts of old age are that it is a fulfilling stage of life, a period in which individuals and couples might find new ways to continue to make contributions to the family and to the community in however modest a way. The ability to contribute and to feel that life is still valuable depends on the opportunities we provide, the doors we leave open which will enable the elderly to exploit further their skills, talents and interests which have developed over a lifetime.

The principles I have outlined are at risk in many nursing homes in Victoria. Let me take as an example of the callousness of some aspects of the Government's new system the Toora nursing home. Under the new system, new residents will be classified according to the severity of their disability, categories 1, 2 and 3 being the most in need of direct and constant care, categories 4 and 5 requiring less care. Under the care aggregate module (CAM), subsidies are paid to nursing homes in relation to the cost per staff hour of providing nursing home care. On this basis a category 1 patient receives 27 nursing care hours per week, category 2 receives 23½ hours, category 3 receives 20 hours, category 4 receives 13 hours and category 5 receives 10 hours. One can see the decreasing scale of nursing care provided according to the category. The actual subsidy that a nursing home receives varies, however,

according to the relative costs of nursing and so forth in each State. In Victoria a category 1 patient attracts a subsidy of \$67.60 while a category 5 resident attracts a subsidy of only \$25.57. In contrast, the standard aggregate module (SAM) provides for a fixed and uniform subsidy according to a government-determined standard required to meet infrastructure costs.

There are many problems with this approach to financing the residential dimension of the aged care policy of the Government. Firstly, the Government's policies represent a barely disguised attack on the private nursing home sector of the aged care system. The Minister for Housing and Aged Care (Mr Staples) has no sympathy, no understanding, no tolerance and certainly no proper attitude toward private sector nursing homes. The policy of this Government will simply require private nursing homes to reduce their commitments to providing care to a broad band of patients in need of close care and supervision. Moreover, the Government system suffers from rigidity in its application and is based on a dangerous assumption about the uniformity of the residential care system.

In my own electorate, Gippsland, one community has struggled to raise the funds to reconstruct a one-time bush nursing hospital and refashion it into a high standard private nursing home. I refer to the refurbished Toora nursing home. Sadly, despite the happiness of the official opening on 26 February, the Toora nursing home faces a bleak future owing to the Government's insensitive and dogmatic approach to nursing home funding. Like many private nursing homes, the Toora nursing home has found that the funding mechanism, CAM, simply cannot ensure that it can provide the quality of care needed by its residents. In practice, it knows that the health of a particular patient fluctuates on an almost day to day basis. It knows that the level of care—this is crucial—and therefore the level of staffing is never stable and that in matters like this it is vital to have staff on hand.

The Minister for Housing and Aged Care, who is at the table to take charge of this legislation, must answer this fundamental misconception on the part of the Government. Nursing care for the aged is not static or rigid. In addition, the Secretary-Manager,

Mr Chris Flynn, the Director of Nursing, Elaine Scott, and the Deputy Director of Nursing, Sissel Leorke, have found that CAM does not accommodate the particular needs of a rural community. Unlike nursing homes in urban areas, which have access to considerable capital and a fixed and concentrated supply of residents, the Toora nursing home has had to make do with considerably more humble resources.

As I said earlier, the Toora nursing home is really grafted on to a bush nursing hospital. It was a community effort based upon funds largely raised locally and it was designed to meet a pressing community need. But the physical constraints of the refurbished nursing home are poorly understood by the system the Government wishes to impose upon the community. The Toora nursing home requires three night staff to meet its needs. Instead of being built in a figure eight shape or in the shape of a square, both of which designs permit a high degree of supervision by way of a central nursing centre, the former bush hospital is limited by its history, in order to maximise the safety and well-being of its residents, to a minimum of three night staff on duty. If two are required to lift a patient at one end of the home which regrettably is built in a straight line, another must be in attendance at the other end of the hospital. But the resident classification index does not permit staffing at this level. It does not permit the particular needs of the physical history of the nursing home to determine its staffing needs. And, by so doing, the rigidity of the funding mechanism I have outlined places the residents in jeopardy. This is even more apparent when I bring to the House's attention that there are four or five patients suffering from dementia in the home. Constant supervision is therefore a priority in an environment of this sort.

The particular characteristics of the local community also mitigate against the imposition of uniform funding arrangements sought by the Government. Unlike the homes in the urban centres, the Toora Nursing home does not have a steady waiting list of residents who will assume the status of category 1 or 2 patients. The home will not therefore have a steady provision of subsidy at the highest level. This causes difficulties in that there are

patients, such as the dementia patients, who require a great deal of supervision, but who cannot be adequately taken care of in hostel type accommodation. The finances of the home are therefore placed in extreme difficulty as the bulk of their residents have been classified as category 4 or 5 and therefore attract the lowest level of funding—a disincentive designed to weed out patients of this kind and force them into hostel accommodation which does not suit their needs.

This has given rise to another problem. Though residents might not in some cases be strictly suited to a nursing home environment, where can they go to when they live in rural or isolated areas? They do not have at their disposal the virtually unlimited resources of the cities. Is it intended that they uproot themselves from the communities in which they have grown up, in which they have raised families and grown old? Is this the intention of the legislation? The problem is so critical for the Toora Nursing Home as it struggles to meet the needs of its community that it has already transferred over \$30,000 from its capital budget to its operating budget in order to keep the home solvent. And the problem is getting worse. It has a waiting list of predominantly category 4 and 5 patients who require more care than a hostel can provide them but who cannot live in the community any longer by themselves. The Government needs to address the needs of the Toora Nursing Home.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Cowan)—Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

MR IAN ROBINSON (Page) (10.12)—The Government has moved in haste to implement measures to require the care of the aged to be administered on a needs basis. Those words would seem to express a fairly straightforward and, no doubt, to those who have no real knowledge of care of the aged in nursing homes and hostels, a reasonable proposition. We have a circumstance in which the Government has moved not just in haste but really in stealth. It has changed drastically the guidelines with little opportunity for the community to become aware of its intentions, to understand the import and to be able to comprehend what is really occurring. There is always a need to change a system that has been in operation for a long

time—to update, to meet the trends of the time and so on. But what we have in this legislation and the measures previously introduced by way of regulation and by way of decision of the Government is nothing more or less than an iron-clad directive to all those who have been participants, who have worked for years, in many instances, to create a system providing care for the aged, on a basis of a direct relationship between units for aged persons, hostels and a nursing home.

On the north coast of New South Wales, there is a very substantial demand for care because of the proportion of aged in the community. I have had close and long experience with the work that has been undertaken there by recognised institutions, public committees and bodies that have been responsible for the creation of a chain of nursing home and hostel facilities, which are of the highest possible standard. That has been done with the tremendous support of the community and with fund raising referred to by my colleagues who have spoken including the honourable member for Lyne (Mr Cowan) and the honourable member for Cowper (Mr Nehl). Of course, also from this side of the House, the honourable member for Dawson (Mr Braithwaite) very clearly stated some of the important considerations of this legislation.

The Government is overlooking the fact that it is all very well to create a blue-print and to try meticulously to spell this matter out on a theoretical basis. It is another matter for it to be put effectively into practice. We see an untidy mix between the important element of capital funding and the subsequent requirement for maintenance funding. Hence the determinations that they should get big and then get out, as referred to by my colleague from South Australia the honourable member for Barker (Mr Porter), the impact of that on existing homes and institutions and the danger it poses for the future in the requirements to provide adequately across the community in terms of aged care facilities, straight accommodation hostels and nursing homes.

It is all very well to say that there is a great need to move from the submission model that was so clearly understood by the community for so long. This concept was introduced in the Menzies Government by

the late Sir Earle Page as Minister for Health who provided enormous leadership in this field a very long time ago. In my area today, there are still one or two homes that were built as a direct result of his energetic approach at that time to make it possible for capital funding to be provided and to set the starting point for the establishment of effective care of the aged. This, to a large extent, is to be jettisoned under this new direction proposition. They are indeed new directions. The administration of homes for the aged in both nursing homes and hostels is becoming a nightmare because the maintenance funding is now being provided on a basis referred to clearly in this debate by some of my colleagues—this is without question—that is hampering the day to day operation of the system. There is no clear and definitive answer in overcoming the problems that have arisen.

The Minister for Housing and Aged Care (Mr Staples) has not been very closely involved in this debate. I hope that tomorrow he answers many of the questions that have been raised—and answers them in a clear and understandable fashion. One of the first matters that I hope he clears up is the question of pushing out the private nursing homes. Obviously, it is a determination by the Government that they should be squeezed out. If that is to be the agenda, I want to know how the projected future creation of facilities will cater for all of the needs that are so obvious, if one makes an assessment of the communities and the proportion of aged persons, and the percentages so dramatically outlined by the honourable member for Gippsland (Mr McGauran). It is a challenge that must be met in this day and age. We do not want it to be met by gross waste and, by failure to have effective administration, effective Government oversight and all the rest. But we do not want it to be so administered that we get down to the incredible process that there is a Star Chamber process to determine who will get the benefits and how they will get those benefits. The contents of this legislation does just that.

It is a very great worry to the medical profession in many parts of Australia, certainly in my own electorate, and it is a very great worry to the administrators of existing health services to find that the restrictions

that are envisaged will in fact create very great difficulties in giving advice to families when a family member becomes aged and is no longer in a state of health that can be regarded as safe for home care. We will not have the facilities. We may well find that an impossible situation will be created where families cannot find an answer to that problem. They can go back to their local medico who can say that a particular person should be in a nursing home, but the committee that will determine whether that is so may well say that there is no case. So what happens? You get great trauma and the situation in which home care, even the visitations, which is a service that is provided in most communities these days to assist, by all sorts of trained people, will not adequately cover the need.

This occurs for a very obvious reason. Unless we have the impetus, which was always part and parcel of the system, where funds are raised by communities able to do this—and when that was done the Government was prepared to come forth with its share of the capital requirement to establish facilities—we are going to have a circumstance in which the community will not be supporting, as it has in the past, the capital provision. Maybe that is a saving for the Government in the long term, because there is less of a financial requirement in terms of maintenance, but what does that do for the needy? What does that do for the communities that expect to have adequate provision? The answer from the Government is, 'Oh, here are the statistics. We are going to provide X number of beds for X number of aged people in every community'. Where does that fall to the ground? It falls to the ground because the geographical locations set out for the various regions are not practical. They are not practical because they just take into account local government areas and regions without regard to the nature of those communities in terms of the people who live there. They disregard distance and community of interest, and they do not recognise the obvious overlapping there is when a region has to look at the delineation of its local government boundaries.

I want to explain why this is sheer nonsense. Unless you have a relationship between the provision of nursing homes and

hostels and the availability of medical services, ambulance services and many other things that aged people need, they are left really in isolation. It does not work. If we go back just a short time span, there was the advent of the concept that a nursing home and a hostel should be of a particular size and that it was an advantage if it had some relationship to an existing institution, probably a hospital that had a modern kitchen and modern laundry, and it could share those facilities. I can quote examples at Macksville in the electorate of Cowper—my colleague the honourable member for Cowper knows this location very well—and at Grafton in my own electorate and so the list would go on if one were to name all the locations. The relationship between a public hospital in terms of its kitchens, laundries and so on and a nursing home or hostel has been a pretty good proposition. But now that is not really regarded any longer as significant. The idea now is that one just looks at the statistics. The people in the local government areas do not even try to work out how that fits into the overall community pattern and say, 'This is how we are going to do it'. I believe that is simply a blueprint for disaster in the long term.

There is a need for a different kind of provision in a variety of locations. We have heard from South Australia and Victoria about the problem of bush hospitals and small institutions. In parts of New South Wales there is a similar circumstance. The honourable member for Riverina-Darling (Mr Hicks) referred to that circumstance. In the more heavily populated areas of the coast the circumstances are totally different. The creation of the larger related community style facilities for the aged there is much more appropriate—units, hostels and a nearby nursing home—so that there can be a blend of the facilities and the services and a means of administration that is practical. The encouragement of local support to enable that to work and be ongoing has not been recognised under this legislation in a practical way. The community is really in the dark as to what the ultimate procedure for encouragement and support will be. All the local communities know is the kind of answer that one of my colleagues earlier this evening read in response to a letter written by a local

committee seeking advice as to the steps that should be taken in order to have facilities created in that particular locality. I have received similar letters. The detail contained in the letters might be very clear to those who sent out the correspondence for the Minister and might be very clear to the Department, but it does not tell the local people a darn thing. As far as the local member is concerned, he is usually the last to know these days what is going on. I want to say to the Minister that that is a sorry state of affairs. It does not matter which side of the House one is on. Over the years this has always been a bipartisan process. Homes for the aged have not been a matter of playing politics. If it is to trend that way, it is a pretty sorry state of affairs. I believe that members of this House have not been adequately informed by the Minister. There has been no general advice and no letter that says, 'This is the new system, this is how it is going to operate'. We all have to go cap in hand to someone and start asking a lot of questions to find out what is happening in our electorates. I believe that applies to members on both sides of the House. So I say to the Minister that when he responds to the debate later he should particularly take on board the significance of that.

In the moment or two that is left to me, I want to say that the Minister might also give some update on the press statement, which he issued in response to the report on the operation of nursing homes, it has caused a great deal of concern to excellent nursing homes throughout Australia which, it is suggested, are under scrutiny in that they have not been doing their job. I believe that is a very unsatisfactory situation. There have been 44 proposals mooted apparently in terms of how institutions should in future be run. Forty-four major reforms have been recommended. How can one have those reforms and at the same time have the financial provisions so restricted under the legislation before the House that administrators are at their wits' end to keep their particular institution functioning?

Debate interrupted.

ADJOURNMENT

Bhutan and Bangladesh—Honourable Member for Port Adelaide—Mr Konrad Kalejs—League of Rights—Women Who Want to be Women—Honourable Member for Adelaide—Radiography

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Cowan)—
Order! It being 10.30 p.m., I propose the question:

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr TIM FISCHER (Farrer) (10.30)—
Tonight I want to salute two countries of quite different extremes, namely Bhutan and Bangladesh. I do so quite deliberately as part of a pro-Asian strategy to build up our political, cultural and economic links with Asia, as the Federal member for Farrer and shadow Minister for veterans' affairs and on behalf of the coalition for its own part as it recognises where our future lies.

I had the privilege of being perhaps the first member of the Australian Parliament to visit Bhutan, located as it is between India and Tibet, during the recent summer recess. It is one kingdom that values its rich and colourful heritage and it has taken positive steps to retain that heritage, despite some limited modernisation and some modest increase in tourism. It has a very popular King, who is a determined young man who lives quite modestly and who has recently, through Bhutan's judicial system, been quite relaxed about seeing one or two Ministers go to gaol who were involved with corruption, so determined is he to see that his kingdom is not corrupt and does not go down the path of other kingdoms which have suffered from a great deal of corruption, especially flowing from foreign aid. Indeed, Bhutan hesitates to take on foreign aid. It is very conscious that it can absorb only a degree of foreign aid and it quite often rejects suggestions from countries wanting to give it foreign aid, to make sure that it does retain its balance and culture in a sensible way.

Australia enjoys very good relations with Bhutan and has a modest foreign aid program, including merino sheep breeding at 10,000 feet-plus on the slopes of the Himalayas. It was certainly a very rare privilege to have visited Bhutan and to see the state of relations between it and Australia and to see Australian aid workers in many and var-

ied situations of some considerable hardship, carrying out their duties. To all of that I would simply add one tip to those who might be seeking to go to Bhutan: beware of arrows overhead, because archery is still very popular; it abounds. When I walked out of a particular ruined dzong, or castle, I heard a swish in the air and looked up and realised that I had walked straight into the middle of a target range for the local archery practice.

On the ides of March next week—on 15 March—Bhutan will in one sense move closer to Australia when direct flights start from Bangkok to Paro, just near the capital Thimphu by Druk Air, flying a BAe146, linking up with Thai Airways International and/or Qantas. I think a greater interest in Bhutan will be taken by people in Australia. Bhutan is an independent member of the South East Asian community group of nations and a free voting member of the United Nations and one which Australia should continue to build up its relations with, notwithstanding the fact that it is a small country with only just over one million people. But I say again it is a colourful country with a rich heritage and one that it was a privilege to visit.

I turn to the second country, Bangladesh. I am delighted to say that there are two areas of great tranquillity in Bangladesh, and I refer to the war cemeteries at Comilla and Chittagong, out on the eastern side of the Bangladesh, which I visited in my capacity as shadow Minister for veterans' affairs. Notwithstanding all the turmoil of Bangladesh, the cyclones, the floods of last year, the derailments and the horrific tragedies, because its population is some 110 million and the moment anything goes wrong, it always seems to go very badly wrong, those two war cemeteries, containing the graves of over 1,400 allied Service personnel, including many Royal Air Force and Royal Australian Air Force personnel, are in excellent order. I am delighted to report that much to the House.

In passing I mention my concern at the prospect that the Office of Australian War Graves may be under some review. I would be totally opposed to any abolition of the Office of Australian War Graves. I think it would cut across the intent of this Parliament to see that proper maintenance is carried out on all war graves, especially Australian war graves in Australia or Asia.

Certainly there are problems in Bangladesh and there are problems with the aid programs and the direction and focus of those aid programs. Clearly that needs to be more clearly monitored.

Finally, I salute those Australians who serve this country, be they with the aid programs or with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, in such countries as Bhutan and Bangladesh. They are not easy postings. They serve their country well and they deserve credit for their work.

Mr PRATT (Adelaide) (10.35)—As the Federal member for Adelaide people often ask me if I enjoy my job. My reply to them is that I love it. I think I understand what politics and Parliament are about and the learning process which this adjournment debate affords me. Last Thursday, as I concluded my speech on the Aged or Disabled Persons Homes Amendment Bill—a very sensitive and important issue—I stayed in the House to listen to the adjournment debate. Imagine my surprise when the honourable member for Port Adelaide (Mr Sawford) hauled himself to his feet, not to speak on the fall of living standards and high interest rates which are crippling his constituents in Westlakes, or perhaps to deliver his view on pornographic videos or the value of the submarine corporation, but to chop me up for daring to do something about the plight of our elderly. He referred to me attending a senior citizens rally in Adelaide last week, trying to portray that marvellous group of concerned taxpayers who have been neglected and rejected and now feel dejected by this out of touch government. The honourable member for Port Adelaide was very qualified to speak about this rally in light of the fact that he did not even bother to attend it! Along with the honourable member for Hawker (Mrs Harvey), I joined the 5,000 who marched from Victoria Square to Elder Park in that century-plus heat, and it is a wonder more did not keel over. The honourable member for Port Adelaide proceeds to lambaste the Liberals, Greypower, one of my staff, and whoever else gets in the way of his vitriolic tongue. But his source of information came from that great periodical, the *Herald*, the Australian Labor Party's toe rag produced in Adelaide. On a front page was a big spread by the honourable member

for Hawker, and on the back page an article by a David Harvey on retirement incomes entitled 'Watch This Greypower Group'.

The honourable member for Port Adelaide quoted directly from this piece of gutter press, where it is fair game to attack not only a member of my staff but also Mrs Jessie Taylor, President of the 5,000 strong Senior Citizens of Australia. She is not a member of the Liberal Party, as quoted by the honourable member. He is also having a go at Adelaide's Lord Mayor, Steve Condous, who is the group's patron. If we turn the page of this magazine we find four Labor candidates who are currently staffers for State and Federal politicians—a typical arrogant attitude, whereby concerned people in the community are seeking to assist our seniors groups, but if someone is a Labor staffer, well that is different in their socialist eyes.

But then the picture gets a bit clearer. Labor's secretariat has put its campaign strategy into gear and called up its Adelaide heavyweight, the man elected to fill Mick Young's shoes. Remember Mick Young? He did a runner from Parliament when he lost the axe and the cheque in the woodchip affair, so the head kicker from Port Adelaide is called in to do a number on me, the member for Adelaide, to try to discredit me so that Labor can get a bit of a run for Bib Catley, its Moscow and Warsaw trained academic, the scuba diving, luxury yacht owner who hopes to represent the working class. As George Apap—a great Labor Party luminary—said, Labor has lost touch with its supporters and keeps fielding these out-of-touch academics. He even accused the honourable member for Port Adelaide of handing out how to vote cards for the Liberals. How ironic. Well, I have got some news for the head kicker, and that is that he has lost the plot on my exposure of the Australian Democrats and their attempts to misrepresent their contribution to the Senate. But then the honourable member for Port Adelaide went on to extol the virtues of what he and his Government were doing for the pensioners and the superannuants. If we talk to the Government, it says those tens of thousands of elderly Australians have got nothing to complain about. But talk to the 38 pensioners who turned up at the Prospect Returned Services League meeting

for the Bannon, Crattey Duigan, Harvey talkfest. Ask them about raising the tax threshold or income splitting.

The honourable member for Port Adelaide condemned me for being involved in Liberal pamphlets at the pensioners rally. What does he say to the Prospect mailing list cunningly described as an address book—'Please sign if you would like to be on the Premier's task force inquiry'? It is obvious that the on ground intelligence must have escaped the eyes of one Michael Wright, because 180 petitions distributed at the rally have come flooding into my electorate office. They include names from Albert Park, Semaphore and Birkenhead, good suburbs that the honourable member would know about.

I do not mind a healthy debate, but if someone is going to chop me up to help his bloke in Adelaide, then his people are going to have to be a bit smarter. The honourable member concluded with the fact that he has been in this Parliament for 11 months and not seen from our side 'a policy on helping pensioners in need'. The honourable member has in fact been here for 12 months and in that time has made one 90-second speech—some 300 words at less than 30 a month. On 1 December he made 90 seconds worth. For my part, I have made 26 speeches to the House, including nine concerning specific pensioner problems. I have with me in black and white the coalition's retirement incomes policy, which the honourable member for Port Adelaide has never seen. That is one policy which the Government does not have.

Mr LEE (Dobell) (10.40)—The honourable member for Adelaide (Mr Pratt), who has just finished speaking, said—

Mr Sawford—He walks out again.

Mr LEE—I hope he remains in the chamber for my comments. He said he participates as often as possible in the adjournment debates because he is on a steep learning curve. He is trying to learn about parliament. I wish him well in seeking to learn as much as he can about the chamber. I hope that the next lesson he learns is that when one is going to drop a bucket on someone a gentleman at least tells the person who is the target for his attack that he is going to make a speech about something to do with him. I understand that when the honourable

member for Port Adelaide (Mr Sawford) said something critical about the honourable member for Adelaide he made sure that the honourable member for Adelaide was in the chamber at the time the comments were made. This is not the first time that the honourable member for Adelaide has acted in this way. At least this time he is not picking on a female member of Parliament, as he has done in the past.

Mr McGauran—Madam Speaker, I take a point of order. I would seek a withdrawal of that comment. It connotes bullying and is an attack on a member.

Madam SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member will resume his seat. There is no point of order.

Mr LEE—I make it clear, Madam Speaker, that I was referring to the honourable member for Hawker (Mrs Harvey), whom the honourable member for Adelaide previously attacked without any warning. I would simply say to him that if he wishes in future during the adjournment debate to attack members on this side of the House or perhaps members of the National Party of Australia or anyone else—

Mr Smith—Never from Tasmania.

Mr LEE—Especially if they are from Tasmania; the gentlemanly and parliamentary thing to do is at least to tell the person concerned that he is going to give a speech which might be of interest. This is, of course, part of his learning curve and I hope that in future debates in this House he takes that on board.

The reason I rose tonight was to make some comments about a question which I placed on notice concerning a Mr Konrad Kalejs, a gentleman who could be deported from the United States of America. I received the following information from the Minister for the Arts and Territories (Mr Holding) on behalf of the Minister for Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs (Senator Robert Ray):

- (1) On 1 November 1988 a US immigration judge, as a result of civil proceedings in the United States, ordered that Mr Kalejs be deported from the United States . . .

This was done because he had provided false information when applying for a visa to visit

the United States. The second reason was as follows:

(b) by his wartime activities he had 'assisted' in the persecution of individuals based on race, religion, national origin or political opinion' and was deportable under Section 241 (a) (19) of the US Immigration and Nationality Act 1952 as amended.

I point out that Mr Kalejs has appealed against the deportation order and it could be a long time before the appeal process is finalised. I am concerned that in answer to my question on notice the Minister has made it very clear that if a US citizen had been in Australia under similar circumstances, Australia could not have asked that person to leave our country. We do not have the same protection which the US legislation provides. We all know that Australian taxpayers are about to spend a great deal of money in seeking to ensure that people who it is alleged have committed war crimes in Europe during the Second World War and who have a case to answer will be forced to appear in an Australian court of law and have that case heard in a fair trial. I am concerned that Mr Kalejs will be deported to Australia if his appeal is unsuccessful and Australian taxpayers will possibly then have to pay for a trial against that gentleman.

The Minister has confirmed that it is possible that Mr Kalejs gave false information when he applied to visit Australia way back on 27 October 1950 and he possibly also gave false information when he obtained Australian citizenship in 1957. I believe that that should be sufficient grounds for deporting Mr Kalejs to his country of birth.

Mr McGAURAN (Gippsland) (10.45)—That insidious organisation, the League of Rights, has attracted a great deal of comment both in and outside the Parliament in recent months. Much of this comment was commenced by the very courageous National Party of Australia senator for Queensland, Senator Ron Boswell, who sought to expose its operations and influences for what they really are—a grave threat to many of our institutions. A number of Australian Labor Party members hoped to jump on the band-wagon. Let me deal with two of those Labor members who, in the process, damaged wrongly and utterly unfairly the reputation of an individual and worthy organisation.

The honourable member for Robertson (Mr Cohen), in an article he wrote in the *Bulletin* on 29 November last year, headed 'League of Wrongs', described the organisation Women Who Want to be Women as a 'front organisation' of the League of Rights. This is utterly false. WWWW, which is now incorporated into the organisation Endeavour Forum, has never had any contact with the League of Rights. Indeed, as I shall now demonstrate, it has been at the forefront of fighting the League of Rights. The founding member and currently the national and overseas coordinator of WWWW, now Endeavour Forum, is a person for whom I have a great deal of respect. Mrs Babette Francis is Indian by birth and, if anybody in our community knows about supposed multiculturalism or taunts of racism, I would suggest that she does. I understand that Mrs Francis once accepted an invitation to speak at the annual conference of the League of Rights because it is the policy of the Endeavour Forum to accept all speaking engagements regardless of the views of the host organisation. When she spoke to the League she took the opportunity to condemn strongly its anti-Zionist philosophy, and she especially condemned their questioning of the numbers of Jewish victims of the Holocaust—so much so that Dr Bill Rubinstein, of the editorial board of *Australia/Israel Publications*, wrote:

Thanks for your remarks in our favour at the League of Rights do. This turned up in their magazine attached . . . Many thanks again for doing this—it showed great courage, I'm sure as all your activities do . . .

Moreover, Women Who Want to be Women was the only Australian women's group in the non-government organisations forums at both the United Nations Mid-decade for Women Conference in Copenhagen in 1980 and the final Decade for Women Conference in Nairobi in 1985 which openly expressed support for the Israeli delegation and the right of Israel to exist as an independent nation with defensible frontiers. If the honourable member for Robertson needs any proof of that, I refer him to a report of those conferences in *Quadrant* of December 1980 and December 1985. Interestingly, Mrs Babette Francis herself made the point that no other kind of support was offered by the feminist groups funded by the Australian Government to attend those conferences.

Earlier this year Endeavour Forum published *Gizela*, the story of a Jewish Holocaust victim written by her mother. So it is absolutely wrong for the honourable member for Robertson to make that attack on Endeavour Forum and specifically Mrs Babette Francis. Despite having been requested to do so, the honourable member has never apologised to either Mrs Francis or Endeavour Forum for his utterly inaccurate and offensive remarks.

Similarly, the honourable member for Capricornia (Mr Wright), in a speech of some notoriety in this place late last year, also attacked the four Ws, or Endeavour Forum, as being an apologist group for the League of Rights. Mrs Babette Francis also wrote to the honourable member for Capricornia seeking an apology. Instead, I understand that the honourable member for Capricornia wrote back to her, not offering any sort of apology but listing a whole set of questions relating to financial status and membership and organisational aspects of Endeavour Forum for answering. Endeavour Forum is a group of sincere individuals who are pro-life, pro-family and anti-radical feminist organisations. It is made up of people of intelligence, integrity and utter fairness. To my knowledge, and certainly to the knowledge of the office-holders of that organisation, none of these people would have any contact with the League of Rights. I call on the honourable member for Robertson and the honourable member for Capricornia now to apologise to Mrs Francis and to the Endeavour Forum.

Mr SAWFORD (Port Adelaide) (10.50)—The honourable member for Adelaide (Mr Pratt) is not here to hear me respond to his comments. Last Thursday night in the adjournment debate I praised him for his essential idea of caring for the elderly citizens of Australia, and I am sure that view is shared by every honourable member on the Government side. However, he failed to accept my suggestion that he should get to the stomach, the means, the substance of what he is trying to do for pensioners. In his speech last Thursday he slammed the Australian Democrats for handing out pamphlets and ignoring the wishes of the senior citizens of Adelaide, but he failed to address the issue that the Liberal Party in South Australia

handed out pamphlets. It is interesting that on that day the Labor Party complied with the wishes of the senior citizens and did not hand out pamphlets.

The trouble with the ideas of the honourable member for Adelaide is that they lack substance. For example, last Thursday night the honourable member for Adelaide made some claims about the Bannon Labor Government in South Australia. He referred to increased violence against the elderly. The honourable member is simply not telling the truth. I shall mention some of the achievements of the Bannon Labor Government in South Australia. They include the enactment of the Summary Offences Act with increased penalties for over 50 offences. The maximum penalty for rape is life imprisonment. The maximum penalty for indecent assault is eight years. The maximum penalty for robbery with violence is life imprisonment. The honourable member did not mention the amendment to section 302 of the Criminal Law Consolidation Act which resulted in a substantial increase in the level of sentences for armed robbery and other crimes. He failed to mention the Crimes (Confiscation of Profits) Act, introduced in 1986, allowing the courts to order the forfeiture of assets obtained as a result of criminal activity. He failed to mention the penalties for drug traffickers in South Australia—a fine up to \$250,000 and 25 years in gaol. He failed to mention that the Attorney-General in South Australia has authorised over 100 appeals.

The honourable member for Adelaide failed to acknowledge that in South Australia over 100 Neighbourhood Watch areas have been established. He failed to acknowledge that funding for the Police Department in South Australia has increased by \$83m in the past six years. By the way, South Australia has the highest ratio of police per capita of any State. An examination of the evidence and a reading of the facts show that there has not been a downturn in the value of penalties for offences and that there is no evidence to support the claim of the honourable member for Adelaide that there has been a dramatic upswing in crime aimed at the elderly of South Australia.

The real point in my criticism of the honourable member for Adelaide is that, although it is acknowledged that he has the

idea right, it is no use in this House having a good idea and not having the wherewithal to put forward a policy and be able to state what the specifics of that policy are. That is really what I said. What is the outcome of the honourable member's making that statement? Is he feeling good? The outcome is nil, nothing, zero, nix, zilch, nought. It is a completely blank nadir. It is an inverted zenith. As I said to the honourable member of Adelaide on Thursday night, he came into bat for the elderly—that is a great thing which members of the Government side respect—but he made a duck. He did not make any runs. Tonight he again stated some very valid and good ideas, but he had no wherewithal, no substance, no process, no facility to implement the ideas. Again he made no runs.

Mr Price—He nicked his own wicket.

Mr SAWFORD—He nicked his own wicket, as the honourable member for Chifley said. I think he did more than that. I think he was bowled middle stump. I think the honourable member for Adelaide has a genuine concern for people in his electorate, but I would like to see him come up in this House with a little more than a piece of paper which he says is his Party's policy for the elderly in South Australia.

Mr SMITH (Bass) (10.55)—Today marked the opening of the Australian Institute of Radiography's fortieth annual conference. I was present at that conference, and radiography has some problems which I should like to bring to the attention of the House. Some researchers indicate that radiography as a profession is under some strain in this country. It is a service that most of us experience when we go to have X-rays taken.

Back in October 1986 the Institute in New South Wales called for a limited operator training program to allow medical staff in outback and remote New South Wales hospitals to attain basic knowledge of X-ray equipment. Why was this so? It was revealed that patients in remote New South Wales hospitals were being exposed to radiation doses up to 1,000 times higher than necessary because staff were operating the X-ray equipment in an untrained way. One example quoted to me involved a nurse who had

made 34 attempts at X-raying a patient in a small country town before the patient was sent to Dubbo Hospital. Another example involved a 16-year-old girl who had two punctured lungs which were missed by investigating doctors after a young nurse was asked to operate the X-ray equipment. In my view, the national conference has the ideal opportunity to raise these issues to national prominence at its conference in Launceston this week.

For most Australians the profession is the front line in preventive medical procedure for breast cancer. More than 5,000 cases of breast cancer are diagnosed each year in Australia and one in 15 develops the disease during her lifetime. For this reason alone the profession of radiography must make its voice heard so that every Australian, whether a city or country dweller, is able to obtain those expert services.

Interestingly, back in 1986 the New South Wales Government's response to the proposal for this urgent training program, was that it was far too expensive. However, one may legitimately ask the question, 'Can preventive or early warning and correct diagnostic procedures ever be too expensive?'. All honourable members in this chamber know that the cost of health services is excessive and preventive medicine is by far and away the best and cheapest medicine to the overall community.

Earlier this month the United States National Cancer Institute's most recent figures for 1985, released this month, show that the incidence of new breast cancer cases diagnosed per year is the highest in history in the United States. The death rate from breast cancer has increased and this increase may be attributed to diagnosing more cases with new technology or it may be a real increase in the spread of cancer. However, the specialists admit they do not know. Only 10 to 20 per cent of United States women have regular screenings. In Australia the figure is estimated at below 5 per cent. Britain also has concerns about radiography and the extent of breast cancer and detection. The recommendations of the United Kingdom working group on breast cancer screening in 1987 interestingly made the following observation:

There is a need for a massive program to train radiographers to carry out procedures correctly.

Indeed, the same issue applies in Australia, but more so. It is estimated that in Britain the cost of a national screening program every two years of women over 50, those most susceptible to breast cancer, would save the life of one woman in 100 who otherwise would have died from breast cancer. In my view, Australia must reassess its attitude to screening for breast cancer. I do not have all the facts, but I worry whether government, at both State and Federal level, appreciates the extent of the disease. I welcome the announcement of the Minister for Community Services and Health (Dr Blewett) of the Australian Radiation Laboratory survey to establish the range of radiation doses currently being used in the latest technology. However, is it enough just to make a recommendation, as Dr Blewett did in a press release, that women over 40 should have an initial mammograph, then regularly after that as advised by a doctor?

My concern is that when one examines the recent United States figures, as well as the concern expressed in the United Kingdom and at the conference in Launceston today, one sees that Australia needs to discuss these issues in far more depth than is the case at present. The participants in the Launceston conference will have the opportunity during the national conference to raise to national prominence these issues, which for too long have been ignored. The health of Australian women is being ignored. It is time that we all took a far closer look at this issue and supported the radiography profession.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

House adjourned at 11 p.m.

PAPERS

The following papers were deemed to have been presented on 6 March 1989:

Acts Interpretation Act—Statement relating to the extension of specified period for presentation of periodic report—

ACT Forestry Trust—Report for 1987-88.

ACT Housing Trust—Report for 1987-88.

ACT Transport Trust—Report for 1987-88.

City of Canberra (Municipal) Accounts 1987-88.

Aged or Disabled Persons Homes Act—Certificate pursuant to paragraph 9 (1) (b), dated 12 January 1989.

Census and Statistics Act—Australian Bureau of Statistics—Statement of disclosure of information—1989—No. 1—List of names and ad-

dresses of agricultural establishments for Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation.
Civil Aviation Act—Civil Aviation Regulations—Amendments to Civil Aviation Orders—Parts—
105—dated 23 December 1988, 16 and 25 January and 27 and 28 February 1989.
106—dated 16 January 1989.
107—dated 16 January 1989.