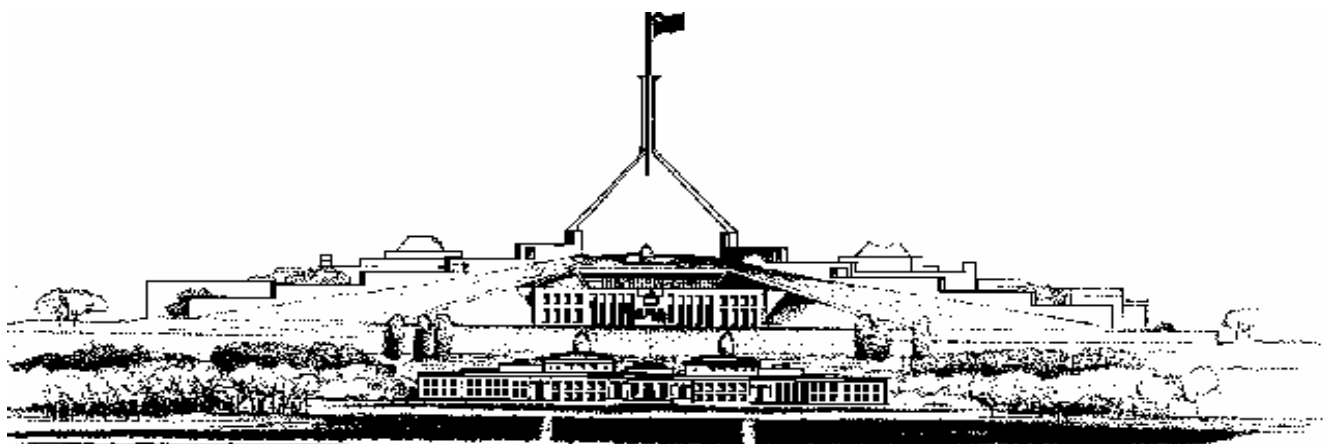




COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



House of Representatives

Official Hansard

No. 17, 2009

Monday, 16 November 2009

FORTY-SECOND PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—SIXTH PERIOD

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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SITTING DAYS—2009

Month	Date
February	3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 23, 24, 25, 26
March	10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 19
May	12, 13, 14, 25, 26, 27, 28
June	1, 2, 3, 4, 15, 16, 17, 18, 22, 23, 24, 25
August	11, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19, 20
September	7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17
October	19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29
November	16, 17, 18, 19, 23, 24, 25, 26

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**FORTY-SECOND PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—SIXTH PERIOD**

Governor-General

Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce, Companion of the Order of Australia

House of Representatives Officeholders

Speaker—Mr Harry Alfred Jenkins MP

Deputy Speaker—Ms Anna Elizabeth Burke MP

Second Deputy Speaker—Hon. Bruce Craig Scott MP

Members of the Speaker's Panel—Hon. Dick Godfrey Harry Adams MP, Hon. Kevin James Andrews MP, Hon. Archibald Ronald Bevis MP, Ms Sharon Leah Bird MP, Mr Steven Georganas MP, Hon. Judith Eleanor Moylan MP, Ms Janelle Anne Saffin MP, Mr Albert John Schultz MP, Mr Patrick Damien Secker MP, Mr Peter Sid Sidebottom MP, Hon. Peter Neil Slipper MP, Mr Kelvin John Thomson MP, Hon. Danna Sue Vale MP and Dr Malcolm James Washer MP

Leader of the House—Hon. Anthony Norman Albanese MP

Deputy Leader of the House—Hon. Stephen Francis Smith MP

Manager of Opposition Business—Hon. Christopher Maurice Pyne MP

Deputy Manager of Opposition Business—Mr Luke Hartsuyker MP

Party Leaders and Whips

Australian Labor Party

Leader—Hon. Kevin Michael Rudd MP

Deputy Leader—Hon. Julia Eileen Gillard MP

Chief Government Whip—Hon. Leo Roger Spurway Price MP

Government Whips—Ms Jill Griffiths Hall MP and Mr Christopher Patrick Hayes MP

Liberal Party of Australia

Leader—Hon. Malcolm Bligh Turnbull MP

Deputy Leader—Hon. Julie Isabel Bishop MP

Chief Opposition Whip—Hon. Alexander Michael Somlyay MP

Opposition Whips—Mr Michael Andrew Johnson MP and Ms Nola Bethwyn Marino MP

The Nationals

Leader—Hon. Warren Errol Truss MP

Chief Whip—Mrs Kay Elizabeth Hull MP

Whip—Mr Paul Christopher Neville MP

Printed by authority of the House of Representatives

Members of the House of Representatives

Members	Division	Party
Abbott, Hon. Anthony John	Warringah, NSW	LP
Adams, Hon. Dick Godfrey Harry	Lyons, Tas	ALP
Albanese, Hon. Anthony Norman	Grayndler, NSW	ALP
Andrews, Hon. Kevin James	Menzies, Vic	LP
Bailey, Hon. Frances Esther	McEwen, Vic	LP
Baldwin, Hon. Robert Charles	Paterson, NSW	LP
Bevis, Hon. Archibald Ronald	Brisbane, Qld	ALP
Bidgood, James Mark	Dawson, Qld	ALP
Billson, Hon. Bruce Fredrick	Dunkley, Vic	LP
Bird, Sharon Leah	Cunningham, NSW	ALP
Bishop, Hon. Bronwyn Kathleen	Mackellar, NSW	LP
Bishop, Hon. Julie Isabel	Curtin, WA	LP
Bowen, Hon. Christopher Eyles	Prospect, NSW	ALP
Bradbury, David John	Lindsay, NSW	ALP
Briggs, Jamie Edward	Mayo SA	LP
Broadbent, Russell Evan	McMillan, Vic	LP
Burke, Anna Elizabeth	Chisholm, Vic	ALP
Burke, Hon. Anthony Stephen	Watson, NSW	ALP
Butler, Hon. Mark Christopher	Port Adelaide, SA	ALP
Byrne, Hon. Anthony Michael	Holt, Vic	ALP
Campbell, Jodie Louise	Bass, Tas	ALP
Champion, Nicholas David	Wakefield, SA	ALP
Cheeseman, Darren Leicester	Corangamite, Vic	ALP
Chester, Darren	Gippsland, Vic.	Nats
Ciobo, Steven Michele	Moncrieff, Qld	LP
Clare, Hon. Jason Dean	Blaxland, NSW	ALP
Cobb, Hon. John Kenneth	Calare, NSW	Nats
Collins, Julie Maree	Franklin, Tas	ALP
Combet, Hon. Gregory Ivan, AM	Charlton, NSW	ALP
Coulton, Mark Maclean	Parkes, NSW	Nats
Crean, Hon. Simon Findlay	Hotham, Vic	ALP
Danby, Michael David	Melbourne Ports, Vic	ALP
D'Ath, Yvette Maree	Petrie, Qld	ALP
Debus, Hon. Robert John	Macquarie, NSW	ALP
Dreyfus, Mark Alfred, QC	Isaacs, Vic	ALP
Dutton, Hon. Peter Craig	Dickson, Qld	LP
Elliot, Hon. Maria Justine	Richmond, NSW	ALP
Ellis, Annette Louise	Canberra, ACT	ALP
Ellis, Hon. Katherine Margaret	Adelaide, SA	ALP
Emerson, Hon. Craig Anthony	Rankin, Qld	ALP
Farmer, Hon. Patrick Francis	Macarthur, NSW	LP
Ferguson, Hon. Laurie Donald Thomas	Reid, NSW	ALP
Ferguson, Hon. Martin John, AM	Batman, Vic	ALP
Fitzgibbon, Hon. Joel Andrew	Hunter, NSW	ALP
Forrest, John Alexander	Mallee, Vic	Nats
Garrett, Hon. Peter Robert, AM	Kingsford Smith, NSW	ALP
Gash, Joanna	Gilmore, NSW	LP
Georganas, Steven	Hindmarsh, SA	ALP

Members of the House of Representatives

Members	Division	Party
George, Jennie	Throsby, NSW	ALP
Georgiou, Petro	Kooyong, Vic	LP
Gibbons, Stephen William	Bendigo, Vic	ALP
Gillard, Hon. Julia Eileen	Lalor, Vic	ALP
Gray, Hon. Gary, AO	Brand, WA	ALP
Grierson, Sharon Joy	Newcastle, NSW	ALP
Griffin, Hon. Alan Peter	Bruce, Vic	ALP
Haase, Barry Wayne	Kalgoorlie, WA	LP
Hale, Damian Francis	Solomon, NT	ALP
Hall, Jill Griffiths	Shortland, NSW	ALP
Hartsuyker, Luke	Cowper, NSW	Nats
Hawke, Alexander George	Mitchell, NSW	LP
Hawker, Hon. David Peter Maxwell	Wannon, Vic	LP
Hayes, Christopher Patrick	Werriwa, NSW	ALP
Hockey, Hon. Joseph Benedict	North Sydney, NSW	LP
Hull, Kay Elizabeth	Riverina, NSW	Nats
Hunt, Hon. Gregory Andrew	Flinders, Vic	LP
Irons, Stephen James	Swan, WA	LP
Irwin, Julia Claire	Fowler, NSW	ALP
Jackson, Sharryn Maree	Hasluck, WA	ALP
Jenkins, Harry Alfred	Scullin, Vic	ALP
Jensen, Dennis Geoffrey	Tangney, WA	LP
Johnson, Michael Andrew	Ryan, Qld	LP
Katter, Hon. Robert Carl	Kennedy, Qld	Ind
Keenan, Michael Fayat	Stirling, WA	LP
Kelly, Hon. Michael Joseph, AM	Eden-Monaro, NSW	ALP
Kerr, Hon. Duncan James Colquhoun, SC	Denison, Tas	ALP
King, Catherine Fiona	Ballarat, Vic	ALP
Laming, Andrew Charles	Bowman, Qld	LP
Ley, Hon. Sussan Penelope	Farrer, NSW	LP
Lindsay, Hon. Peter John	Herbert, Qld	LP
Livermore, Kirsten Fiona	Capricornia, Qld	ALP
McClelland, Hon. Robert Bruce	Barton, NSW	ALP
Macfarlane, Hon. Ian Elgin	Groom, Qld	LP
McKew, Hon. Maxine Margaret	Bennelong, NSW	ALP
Macklin, Hon. Jennifer Louise	Jagajaga, Vic	ALP
McMullan, Hon. Robert Francis	Fraser, ACT	ALP
Marino, Nola Bethwyn	Forrest, WA	LP
Markus, Louise Elizabeth	Greenway, NSW	LP
Marles, Hon. Richard Donald	Corio, Vic	ALP
May, Margaret Ann	McPherson, Qld	LP
Melham, Daryl	Banks, NSW	ALP
Mirabella, Sophie	Indi, Vic	LP
Morrison, Scott John	Cook, NSW	LP
Moylan, Hon. Judith Eleanor	Pearce, WA	LP
Murphy, Hon. John Paul	Lowe, NSW	ALP
Neal, Belinda Jane	Robertson, NSW	ALP
Neumann, Shayne Kenneth	Blair, Qld	ALP
Neville, Paul Christopher	Hinkler, Qld	Nats

Members of the House of Representatives

Members	Division	Party
Oakeshott, Robert James Murray	Lyne, NSW	Ind
O'Connor, Hon. Brendan Patrick John	Gorton, Vic	ALP
Owens, Julie Ann	Parramatta, NSW	ALP
Parke, Melissa	Fremantle, WA	ALP
Pearce, Hon. Christopher John	Aston, Vic	LP
Perrett, Graham Douglas	Moreton, Qld	ALP
Plibersek, Hon. Tanya Joan	Sydney, NSW	ALP
Price, Hon. Leo Roger Spurway	Chifley, NSW	ALP
Pyne, Hon. Christopher Maurice	Sturt, SA	LP
Raguse, Brett Blair	Forde, Qld	ALP
Ramsey, Rowan Eric	Grey, SA	LP
Randall, Don James	Canning, WA	LP
Rea, Kerry Marie	Bonner, Qld	ALP
Ripoll, Bernard Fernand	Oxley, Qld	ALP
Rishworth, Amanda Louise	Kingston, SA	ALP
Robb, Hon. Andrew John, AO	Goldstein, Vic	LP
Robert, Stuart Rowland	Fadden, Qld	LP
Roxon, Hon. Nicola Louise	Gellibrand, Vic	ALP
Rudd, Hon. Kevin Michael	Griffith, Qld	ALP
Ruddock, Hon. Philip Maxwell	Berowra, NSW	LP
Saffin, Janelle Anne	Page, NSW	ALP
Schultz, Albert John	Hume, NSW	LP
Scott, Hon. Bruce Craig	Maranoa, Qld	NP
Secker, Patrick Damien	Barker, SA	LP
Shorten, Hon. William Richard	Maribyrnong, Vic	ALP
Sidebottom, Peter Sid	Braddon, Tas	ALP
Simpkins, Luke Xavier Linton	Cowan, WA	LP
Slipper, Hon. Peter Neil	Fisher, Qld	LP
Smith, Hon. Anthony David Hawthorn	Casey, Vic	LP
Smith, Hon. Stephen Francis	Perth, WA	ALP
Snowdon, Hon. Warren Edward	Lingiari, NT	ALP
Somlyay, Hon. Alexander Michael	Fairfax, Qld	LP
Southcott, Andrew John	Boothby, SA	LP
Stone, Hon. Sharman Nancy	Murray, Vic	LP
Sullivan, Jonathan Harold	Longman, Qld	ALP
Swan, Hon. Wayne Maxwell	Lilley, Qld	ALP
Symon, Michael Stuart	Deakin, Vic	ALP
Tanner, Hon. Lindsay James	Melbourne, Vic	ALP
Thomson, Craig Robert	Dobell, NSW	ALP
Thomson, Kelvin John	Wills, Vic	ALP
Trevor, Chris Allan	Flynn, Qld	ALP
Truss, Hon. Warren Errol	Wide Bay, Qld	Nats
Tuckey, Hon. Charles Wilson	O'Connor, WA	LP
Turnbull, Hon. Malcolm Bligh	Wentworth, NSW	LP
Turnour, James Pearce	Leichhardt, Qld	ALP
Vale, Hon. Danna Sue	Hughes, NSW	LP
Vamvakinou, Maria	Calwell, Vic	ALP
Washer, Malcolm James	Moore, WA	LP
Windsor, Anthony Harold Curties	New England, NSW	Ind

Members of the House of Representatives

Members	Division	Party
Wood, Jason Peter	La Trobe, Vic	LP
Zappia, Tony	Makin, SA	ALP

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

ALP—Australian Labor Party; LP—Liberal Party of Australia;
Nats—The Nationals; Ind—Independent

Heads of Parliamentary Departments

Clerk of the Senate—H Evans
Clerk of the House of Representatives—IC Harris AO
Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services—A Thompson

RUDD MINISTRY

Prime Minister	Hon. Kevin Rudd MP
Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Education, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and Minister for Social Inclusion	Hon. Julia Gillard MP
Treasurer	Hon. Wayne Swan MP
Minister for Immigration and Citizenship and Leader of the Government in the Senate	Senator Hon. Chris Evans
Minister for Defence and Vice President of the Executive Council	Senator Hon. John Faulkner
Minister for Trade	Hon. Simon Crean MP
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Deputy Leader of the House	Hon. Stephen Smith MP
Minister for Health and Ageing	Hon. Nicola Roxon MP
Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs	Hon. Jenny Macklin MP
Minister for Finance and Deregulation	Hon. Lindsay Tanner MP
Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government and Leader of the House	Hon. Anthony Albanese MP
Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy and Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate	Senator Hon. Stephen Conroy
Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research	Senator Hon. Kim Carr
Minister for Climate Change and Water	Senator Hon. Penny Wong
Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts	Hon. Peter Garrett AM, MP
Attorney-General	Hon. Robert McClelland MP
Cabinet Secretary, Special Minister of State and Manager of Government Business in the Senate	Senator Hon. Joe Ludwig
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	Hon. Tony Burke MP
Minister for Resources and Energy and Minister for Tourism	Hon. Martin Ferguson AM, MP
Minister for Human Services and Minister for Financial Services, Superannuation and Corporate Law	Hon. Chris Bowen MP

[The above ministers constitute the cabinet]

RUDD MINISTRY—*continued*

Minister for Veterans' Affairs	Hon. Alan Griffin MP
Minister for Housing and Minister for the Status of Women	Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP
Minister for Home Affairs	Hon. Brendan O'Connor MP
Minister for Indigenous Health, Rural and Regional Health and Regional Services Delivery	Hon. Warren Snowdon MP
Minister for Small Business, Independent Contractors and the Service Economy, Minister Assisting the Finance Minister on Deregulation and Minister for Competition Policy and Consumer Affairs	Hon. Dr Craig Emerson MP
Assistant Treasurer	Senator Hon. Nick Sherry
Minister for Ageing	Hon. Justine Elliot MP
Minister for Early Childhood Education, Childcare and Youth and Minister for Sport	Hon. Kate Ellis MP
Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science and Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change	Hon. Greg Combet AM, MP
Minister for Employment Participation and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Government Service Delivery	Senator Hon. Mark Arbib
Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government	Hon. Maxine McKew MP
Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support and Parliamentary Secretary for Water	Hon. Dr Mike Kelly AM, MP
Parliamentary Secretary for Western and Northern Australia	Hon. Gary Gray AO, MP
Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children's Services and Parliamentary Secretary for Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction	Hon. Bill Shorten MP
Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance	Hon. Bob McMullan MP
Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs	Hon. Duncan Kerr SC, MP
Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Parliamentary Secretary for Trade	Hon. Anthony Byrne MP
Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and Parliamentary Secretary for Voluntary Sector	Senator Hon. Ursula Stephens
Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Settlement Services	Hon. Laurie Ferguson MP
Parliamentary Secretary for Employment	Hon. Jason Clare MP
Parliamentary Secretary for Health	Hon. Mark Butler MP
Parliamentary Secretary for Innovation and Industry	Hon. Richard Marles MP

SHADOW MINISTRY

Leader of the Opposition	The Hon. Malcolm Turnbull MP
Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and Deputy Leader of the Opposition	The Hon. Julie Bishop MP
Shadow Minister for Trade, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government and Leader of The Nationals	The Hon. Warren Truss MP
Shadow Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy and Leader of the Opposition in the Senate	Senator the Hon. Nick Minchin
Shadow Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research and Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate	Senator the Hon. Eric Abetz
Shadow Treasurer	The Hon. Joe Hockey MP
Shadow Minister for Education, Apprenticeships and Training and Manager of Opposition Business in the House	The Hon. Christopher Pyne MP
Shadow Minister for Infrastructure and COAG and Shadow Minister Assisting the Leader on Emissions Trading Design	The Hon. Andrew Robb AO, MP
Shadow Minister for Finance, Competition Policy and Deregulation	Senator the Hon. Helen Coonan
Shadow Minister for Human Services and Deputy Leader of The Nationals	Senator the Hon. Nigel Scullion
Shadow Minister for Energy and Resources	The Hon. Ian Macfarlane MP
Shadow Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs	The Hon. Tony Abbott MP
Shadow Special Minister of State and Shadow Cabinet Secretary	Senator the Hon. Michael Ronaldson
Shadow Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Water	The Hon. Greg Hunt MP
Shadow Minister for Health and Ageing	The Hon. Peter Dutton MP
Shadow Minister for Defence	Senator the Hon. David Johnston
Shadow Attorney-General	Senator the Hon. George Brandis SC
Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	The Hon. John Cobb MP
Shadow Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations	Mr Michael Keenan MP
Shadow Minister for Immigration and Citizenship	The Hon. Dr Sharman Stone
Shadow Minister for Small Business, Independent Contractors, Tourism and the Arts	Mr Steven Ciobo MP

[The above constitute the shadow cabinet]

SHADOW MINISTRY—*continued*

Shadow Minister for Financial Services, Superannuation and Corporate Law	The Hon. Chris Pearce MP
Shadow Assistant Treasurer	The Hon. Tony Smith MP
Shadow Minister for Sustainable Development and Cities	The Hon. Bruce Billson MP
Shadow Minister for Competition Policy and Consumer Affairs and Deputy Manager of Opposition Business in the House	Mr Luke Hartsuyker MP
Shadow Minister for Housing and Local Government	Mr Scott Morrison MP
Shadow Minister for Ageing	Mrs Margaret May MP
Shadow Minister for Defence Science and Personnel and Assisting Shadow Minister for Defence	The Hon. Bob Baldwin MP
Shadow Minister for Veterans' Affairs	Mrs Louise Markus MP
Shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education, Child-care, Status of Women and Youth	Mrs Sophie Mirabella MP
Shadow Minister for Justice and Customs	The Hon. Sussan Ley MP
Shadow Minister for Employment Participation, Training and Sport	Dr Andrew Southcott MP
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Northern Australia	Senator the Hon. Ian Macdonald
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Roads and Transport	Mr Don Randall MP
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development	Mr John Forrest MP
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance and Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Indigenous Affairs	Senator Marise Payne
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Energy and Resources	Mr Barry Haase MP
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities, Carers and the Voluntary Sector	Senator Mitch Fifield
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Water Resources and Conservation	Mr Mark Coulton MP
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Health Administration	Senator Mathias Cormann
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Defence	The Hon. Peter Lindsay MP
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Education	Senator the Hon. Brett Mason
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Justice and Public Security	Mr Jason Wood MP
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	Senator the Hon. Richard Colbeck
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration and Citizenship and Shadow Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Leader in the Senate	Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells

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Monday, 16 November 2009

The **DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms AE Burke) took the chair at 12.00 pm and read prayers.

MAIN COMMITTEE

Private Members' Bill

The **DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms AE Burke)—In accordance with standing order 41(e), and the recommendations of the whips adopted by the House on 28 October 2009, I present the Assisting the Victims of International Terrorism Bill 2009, for which notice has been given by the member for Warringham. The bill will be considered in the Main Committee later today.

Private Members' Motions

The **DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms AE Burke)—In accordance with standing order 41(h), and the recommendations of the whips adopted by the House on 28 October 2009, I present copies of the terms of motions for which notice has been given by the members for Oxley, Cook, Lindsay and Kalgoorlie. These matters will also be considered in the Main Committee later today.

FEDERAL COURT OF AUSTRALIA AMENDMENT (CRIMINAL JURISDICTION) BILL 2009

FUEL QUALITY STANDARDS AMENDMENT BILL 2009

CORPORATIONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (FINANCIAL SERVICES MODERNISATION) BILL 2009

Assent

Message from the Governor-General reported informing the House of assent to the bills.

CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME BILL 2009 [No. 2]

Cognate bills:

CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME (CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS) BILL 2009 [No. 2]

AUSTRALIAN CLIMATE CHANGE REGULATORY AUTHORITY BILL 2009 [No. 2]

CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME (CHARGES—CUSTOMS) BILL 2009 [No. 2]

CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME (CHARGES—EXCISE) BILL 2009 [No. 2]

CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME (CHARGES—GENERAL) BILL 2009 [No. 2]

CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME (CPRS FUEL CREDITS) BILL 2009 [No. 2]

CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME (CPRS FUEL CREDITS) (CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS) BILL 2009 [No. 2]

EXCISE TARIFF AMENDMENT (CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME) BILL 2009 [No. 2]

CUSTOMS TARIFF AMENDMENT (CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME) BILL 2009 [No. 2]

CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME AMENDMENT (HOUSEHOLD ASSISTANCE) BILL 2009 [No. 2]

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 29 October, on motion by **Mr Combet**:

That this bill be now read a second time.

upon which **Mr Turnbull** moved by way of amendment:

That all words after “That” be omitted with a view to substituting the following words: “the House:

- (1) believes that the Government's proposed emissions trading scheme is flawed and in its current form will cost Australian jobs and investment, and simply export rather than reduce global greenhouse gas emissions;
- (2) supports the Coalition in again calling on the Government to defer consideration of this legislation, which will impose the single largest structural change to the Australian economy, until after the Copenhagen Climate Change Summit has concluded in less than 50 days time;
- (3) notes that as the Government remains determined to keep an utterly artificial and self-imposed deadline of this Parliamentary year and as such before the world meets to address the important issue of global action, the Coalition has proposed changes to the Government's ETS to ensure the following critical matters are addressed:
 - (a) that emissions-intensive trade-exposed industries remain on a level playing field with competitors in other advanced economies;
 - (b) that agriculture is excluded from the scheme, rather than included after 2015, and farmers have access to agricultural offset credits;
 - (c) that the impact of higher electricity prices on small businesses be moderated;
 - (d) that the coal industry is required to reduce fugitive emissions as technically feasible, but not be unfairly financially penalised;
 - (e) that transitional assistance to coal-fired electricity generators is sufficient to ensure that electricity supply security is maintained and the generators remain viable; and
 - (f) that complementary measures such as voluntary action and energy efficiency are encouraged".

Mr GIBBONS (Bendigo) (12.02 pm)—Two things we humans are not very good at dealing with, and they are related, are risk and uncertainty. In our everyday lives we

constantly see examples of this lack of understanding. We happily buy billions of dollars worth of tickets in lotteries that statistically we have no hope of winning. We pay for insurance on things that are extremely unlikely to occur but leave other, more likely risks uninsured. We have particular difficulties coming to terms with those risks that have a very low probability of occurring but that have catastrophic consequences if they do occur. Earthquakes, cyclones, floods, droughts, bushfires and man-made disasters like coalition governments are all things we would rather not spend our time thinking about. As Australians, we also have that well-known tendency to think 'She'll be right' and then head off to the beach, the footy or the cricket. We are often only jolted out of our complacency when one of these events actually happens.

In my own state of Victoria, I have never seen as much preparation going on at the start of a bushfire season as there is this year. This, of course, has been prompted by the tragic events of Black Saturday last February, when so much destruction took place. Unfortunately, this particular reassessment of risks and implementation of contingency plans is too late for the many lives that were lost on that day.

Our inability to get our minds around the complex issues of uncertainty and risk concerning climate change is made even harder because of their magnitude and the very long time frame over which they are happening. But there is no escaping the fact that the fourth assessment report of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change—the largest assessment of climate science ever undertaken—concludes that warming of the earth's climate is unequivocal and that it is 90 per cent likely that this warming is being caused by human activity. Given this, 'she' definitely will not 'be right' unless we take action while we still can to

reverse these effects. The impact on our environment and on our economy is not something we can just brush aside. We live in the hottest and driest continent in the world and we will be among those hit hardest and fastest by climate change. By the end of the 21st century, global warming could see irrigated agriculture production in the Murray-Darling Basin fall by more than 90 per cent. By mid-century, heat related deaths in Australia could increase by 5,000 a year.

Just last week we received more warnings about the potential consequences with the release of a report on the risks to our national coastline. This report provides new scientific analysis on projected rises in sea level, coastal erosion, and storm surges, and the risks they pose. The science tells us that our climate is changing faster than previously thought and that the impacts are likely to be more severe as rises in sea level, extreme storms and floods become more frequent. These changes are already happening, and we cannot afford to ignore the findings of that report. It details the homes and other assets at risk from climate change, including major coastal infrastructure that underpins our economy, such as airports and ports. Its findings are truly frightening. Between 157,000 and 247,000 existing residential buildings will be at risk from inundation by the year 2100 if the sea level rises by 1.1 metres. The replacement value of these homes at risk of inundation is about \$63 billion. The report also lists infrastructure, such as airports and ports, that are at risk, including Sydney Airport, the largest airport in the country.

We know from modelling work by Lord Stern, Professor Garnaut and the Australian Treasury that the costs of delaying action are greater than the costs of taking responsible action now. Countries that act early to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions will face costs lower than those of countries that do

not act until later. Economies that defer putting a price on carbon will become more emissions intensive and when a global carbon price is introduced they will face even higher costs. This explains why the world's leading developed and developing economies are moving to take action now. The time for prevarication in this country is well and truly over. The continuing demands from climate change sceptics for certainty about the science before acting are patently ridiculous. Do we wait for certainty that our house will burn down before we take out insurance against fire? Do we wait until we are sick before taking out health insurance? Do we demand certainty before we bet on the Melbourne Cup? Of course we don't, because, as Benjamin Franklin famously said, the only certainties in life are death and taxes.

Instead, we assess the risks and probabilities and make our decisions accordingly. We take a precautionary approach. We follow the precautionary principle, a principle that is well established in international legal systems and is followed by the United Nations in matters concerning climate change. The declaration from the 1992 Rio conference, or Earth Summit, says:

In order to protect the environment, the precautionary approach shall be widely applied by States according to their capabilities. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.

This precautionary principle is also well established in the Australian courts. In the 2006 case of Telstra Corporation Ltd and Hornsby Shire in New South Wales, Justice Preston said:

The principle permits the taking of preventative measures without having to wait until the reality and seriousness of the threat become fully known.

Any credible preventative measures to tackle climate change rely on two fundamental

elements: limiting the carbon pollution that causes climate change and putting a cost or price on that carbon pollution. By implementing these two elements we will not only start to slow down global warming; we will also open up new opportunities for investment in low-carbon technology that will drive the clean-growth economy of the future.

We can tackle climate change and grow our economy at the same time. But this requires difficult, but necessary, decisions, and leadership from all sides of politics. We need to fundamentally change the way our economy works, so it no longer relies on the carbon-intensive energy and processes that have fuelled it until now. We know what we need to do. We know we need a price on carbon pollution. We know we need a cap and trade system for emissions trading.

On this side of the House the Rudd government is providing the leadership that is needed after more than a decade of inaction by its predecessor. We are providing the leadership necessary to address what Lord Stern described as a failure of markets, a failure to factor in all the costs that climate change is imposing on the planet and the world's economies. Turning this around requires an unprecedented global economic transformation. Only when the cost of climate change is reflected in a price on carbon will we be able to achieve the massive change that is required. We need to give an economic value to the planet by putting a price on the things that are doing harm to it. Doing this means changing the way we do business. It requires putting a price on carbon because only then will there finally be the incentive that is needed to drive investment in a low-carbon, clean economy of the future.

But time is running out. If we do not make this change now there will be no economic

penalty for polluting until it is far too late. Our children and grandchildren will pay the price of our inaction and our prosperity will suffer if we let other nations take the front-running in building a low-carbon economy of the future. The only way we can deliver the scale of reductions we need is with legislation that puts a limit on carbon pollution and makes those that produce carbon pollution pay for it.

We on this side of the House know what needs to be done. We need the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, which the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme Bill 2009 [No. 2] will deliver. Addressing the consequences of a warming planet is far too important to be derailed by a few recalcitrant climate change sceptics. This is not the time to gamble with our future and with the future of our children and others who come after us. On this side of the House we believe Australia's future is worth too much to take that risk. Now is the time to follow the lead of the United Nations and follow the precautionary principle. I encourage the Leader of the Opposition, and others opposite who know what needs to be done, to support this legislation. I will be voting for this bill and I urge them to do likewise for the sake of our country's future.

Ms VAMVAKINO (Calwell) (12.12 pm)—I rise today to speak on possibly the most important piece of legislation that has been introduced in this place since I was elected in 2001. The Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme Bill 2009 [No. 2] is significant, far-reaching and progressive legislation that is evidence that this government is serious about tackling climate change. The bill before us today is not only proof that the Rudd Labor government is serious about confronting the harsh and challenging realities that this country, along with the rest of the world, is faced with; it also serves as a reflection of the government's commitment to our children as well as to future genera-

tions of Australians. The world's leading climate scientists, along with Australia's most respected scientists, are increasingly telling us that we need to act with greater urgency when dealing with the crucial issues of climate change. The CPRS is the first step on the road to a low-carbon future, but it is only a first step. The Copenhagen summit, due early next month, will provide the world with the opportunity to dramatically reduce its carbon emissions. As such, the CPRS Bill before the House today will make Australia one of the few nations in the world with legislated carbon emission targets. As a highly industrialised nation with the largest carbon footprint per capita, this is a hugely important and timely statement. With this bill this government is again demonstrating that Australia is prepared to take the lead on the international stage when leadership is most needed.

The science of climate change is being updated all the time and we now know significantly more than we did in 2007 when the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report was released and the Garnaut report was commissioned. The latest scientific evidence on climate change from this year is telling us that the pace of climate change is much faster than we expected and that the severity of its effects are matching our worst-case scenarios. There are of course many in this place who have closed their minds, their ears and their eyes to the realities of climate change. Although differences of opinion are a healthy part of our democratic debate, there is a point you get to on some issues—and this is one of them—when, faced with overwhelming evidence, that scepticism needs to give way to the realisation that something very real and significant is happening to the Earth's climate and that it is incumbent on us, the inhabitants of this great planet, to resolve to do something about it. But there are people in this

place who display a blatant and misguided denial, a denial that is an ideologically driven blindness, which seeks to obstruct our collective capacity to move forward as a parliament and as a community, thus holding future generations hostage to the short-sightedness of those in the coalition who will not be moved.

When I speak to my children about the challenges that global warming creates, I have to be honest with them. I have to tell them that, if realised, the worst case scenarios of climate change could result in a dramatically changed environment and that this dramatically changed environment will have consequences for all aspects of their lives. I have to tell them that there will be increased displacement of people in our region as a result of more extreme weather events; that many people in this region and around the world will be displaced by rising sea levels; that there will be increased conflict in our region and around the world as a result of water, food and resource shortages; that Australia is highly exposed to the impacts of climate change and these international, regional and domestic effects will not result in the happy, healthy and prosperous Australia that they know today. And that is why I then tell them that it is beholden on this government and on parliamentarians to make tough decisions—that in acting now, we will be able to ensure that their generation and their children's generation will have the opportunity to enjoy the same quality of life that we have been lucky enough to enjoy. Like many young people, my children understand this. They understand the urgent need to act now.

As I engage with my electorate of Calwell, I have been consistently impressed by how young people in particular have a heightened sense of the need to protect the environment. They understand almost instinctively that we need to preserve the finite resources of our planet; these matters are

very much a part of their psyche. It gives me great hope when I see their level of understanding. I know that we can feel optimistic about a future in their hands. But the reality is that at this moment their future is in our hands. We are the generation that actually has the power to make the important decisions on their behalf. In effect, they rely on us. We are the generation that needs to overcome our own prejudices, our crystallised perspectives, even our day-to-day habits and we must break free from our old paradigms to act to address this urgent issue.

We must remind ourselves that this challenge is an intergenerational challenge. The decisions we make now are not just about ensuring Australia's short-term financial and overall prosperity, but about ensuring that this prosperity is sustainable into an uncertain future. And we must not underestimate just how uncertain that future may be. The alarm bells are ringing. The recently released government report *Climate change risks to Australia's coast* clearly states that rising sea levels place at risk of inundation up to 250,000 Australian homes. These findings are based on a sea level rise of 1.1 metres by the turn of the century that could result in \$60 billion worth of residential property facing flooding, and 120 ports, 1,800 bridges, power stations, water treatment plants and airports close to the coastline being under threat—a dire prediction for a country like Australia whose major population centres are located along its coastlines.

I welcome the government's appointment of Professor Tim Flannery as the head of the newly formed Coast and Climate Change Council. While the opposition is unfortunately wracked with dissent and obstinacy, this government is moving forward. We join with leading scientists and indeed the Australian community who are increasing their passionate calls to action. Many leading scientist are now warning that unless dramatic action

is taken immediately we are facing worst-case scenarios, with the world carbonising at an unprecedented rate. Advances in climate science are painting an increasingly grim picture.

Critics, and in particular coalition MPs, continue to press the charge that an emissions trading scheme will hurt the economy and destroy jobs. They claim that, being nothing more than another tax, an emissions trading scheme would lift costs for consumers and businesses while doing nothing to halt climate change. Some simply assert that climate change is not an issue, in fact that it is just not happening at all. Research from both Australia and the recent international research conducted by the World Wide Views on Global Warming project found that Australians are more likely to support paying for the cost of climate change through higher petrol and electricity prices than any other developing country. This research involved a survey of people in 38 countries and it found that Australians want the federal government to take tough action on climate change here at home and they want the government to take a strong position at the Copenhagen summit in December. If ever there was evidence of the clear will of the Australian people, this is it, and coalition MPs would do well to heed this will.

The government is responding to this call from the Australian people, but it also understands that while we must act now, we must not do so at the expense of our most vulnerable. In my electorate of Calwell there are many low- and middle-income households. As is the case around the world, it is the working class, the less fortunate or the disadvantaged that are going to bear the brunt of the impact of climate change and it is in their interests that we must also act. Under this legislation, low-income households will receive additional support above indexation

to meet the expected overall increase in the cost of living flowing from the scheme.

This will also be the case for middle-income households. For middle-income families receiving family tax benefit part A, the government will provide assistance to meet at least half those costs. As part of the Excise Tariff Amendment (Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme) Bill 2009 [No. 2], households will be protected from higher fuel costs through a mechanism to provide cent-for-cent reductions in fuel tax for the first three years of the scheme's operation. Also, while this government is willing to make the hard decisions and face these threats and challenges, it is also able to recognise the opportunities that present. This government is very well placed to grasp those opportunities. We are committed to innovation at a time when innovation is sorely needed. There are opportunities for broad-ranging innovations across a range of industries and opportunities for job creation, both in green jobs and in traditional sectors. They are opportunities that marry the need to act now with the economic imperatives that we all recognise are essential to Australia's continued prosperity.

In closing, I would like to say that, yes, there are costs with the substantial changes that the CPRS will bring upon its implementation, but they are costs that we have to resolve as a parliament to bear. I would like to ask members of the opposition who are wavering to reconsider and understand the important moment that has befallen this chamber and the decision that it has to make at some stage this week. With these bills before the House we are executing our moral duty, our obligation to future generations. We should be proud of our determination and commitment, not shun it. We cannot allow ourselves to become victims of our own progress, so by acting now we are taking control

over our and this planet's destiny. I commend the bills to the House.

Mrs MOYLAN (Pearce) (12.22 pm)—It is very hard for one to focus this morning on the work in this place after having attended the apology to forgotten Australians this morning in the Great Hall at Parliament House. My heart goes out to all of those Australians who were affected as child migrants in this country. I thought it appropriate to mention that given that I have just come from that place to speak here. It is a sobering moment and I hope we all continue to reflect on it in the years to come and to be sure that the decisions we make in this place always have a basis in humanity and we genuinely seek to do what is right for the people, particularly the children of this nation.

I am pleased to have another opportunity speak on this matter, in this case in relation to Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme Bill 2009 [No. 2] and the cognate bills. Earlier this year I wrote a report to my electorate, and I thought it might be worthwhile reflecting on some of the points I made in that article. At the time that I wrote, there were two packages of proposed legislation before the House of Representatives which, as I put to my constituency, are hugely significant in their implications for the national destiny—the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme bills and the Renewable Energy (Electricity) Amendment Bill 2009. Apart from the legislation we debate today, I recall few bills since I entered this parliament in 1993 that have engendered more anxiety in the community. Like so many of my Liberal colleagues, I have endeavoured in anticipation of the legislation to cast my reading as widely as possible with a view to offering a responsible and reasoned viewpoint to the political debates in this House and in the community at large.

There seems no escaping the view that, on balance of probability, human induced, or anthropogenic, activity is a prime contributor to change—change which will wreak catastrophic effects on our planet if nothing is done. I have said it in other speeches in this place: I am not a climate change sceptic. I do think that the public expect a responsible parliament to take some action, but it is important that that action is taken with care and consideration and in the full spirit of robust debate that brings us in this place so often to improved approaches to legislation.

Furthermore, I believe the time has come to revise the convention that our economic wellbeing must continue to rest on industrial and commercial practices that historically have led to environmental degradation. Of course, with a change of such magnitude, there will be significant cost and not a little pain, and the best of our scientific and socially innovative brainpower will need to be enlisted to mitigate difficulties before they arise. The worst outcome, it seems to me, is to do nothing, for that will exact the highest penalty of all. The next worst outcome is to act impulsively and, therefore, prematurely. That is the crucial error of judgment that is the besetting sin of the government's current approach to climate change and emissions control. It is deeply regrettable that the government was initially unwilling to negotiate the passage of this legislation with the coalition, the Greens and the Independents, all of whom voted against these bills when they were before the Senate.

While a carbon pollution reduction scheme may send important price signals and lead the push to a robust renewable energy future, conservation and adaptation should share the centre stage. Much more can be done to reduce emissions from motor vehicles, to build energy-efficient buildings and to ensure the retrofitting of solar panels on existing structures where that is feasible.

This was a strong policy initiative of the coalition government which, I think, has now been cynically compromised by the current administration. Promoting energy efficiency to the maximum makes good sense all around: it reduces costs, boosts the economy, conserves finite resources and reduces emissions. Equally, we should firmly limit the destruction of our forests and promote more revegetation projects so as to reduce atmospheric carbon while simultaneously conferring benefits to the environment and to soil quality.

The government's initial decision to tie the Renewable Energy (Electricity) Amendment Bill, which aimed to increase the use of renewable energy in Australia to 20 per cent by 2020, to its flawed and highly contentious CPRS legislation was, I think, a major mistake—which, thankfully, we saw undone. As is well known, the coalition totally supported the Renewable Energy (Electricity) Amendment Bill and, if the government had not taken the perverse path of linking it to the CPRS legislation, it would have had a much smoother passage through this place. But, thankfully, common sense prevailed and we are here today debating the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme Bill 2009 [No. 2].

It is little wonder that potential investors hesitate to lend to CPRS exposed industries and that significant projects promising much-needed employment are left in limbo, because around this suite of bills has come a great deal of confusion and I do not think the government has been very clear in the way it has put these measures before the Australia people. Given the crucial importance of this legislation to enable our country to make its contribution to a cleaner and greener planet, one would hope that the government will see fit to review its current tactics and negotiate an acceptable compromise that will provide greater certainty. Australia's contribution to the world's CO₂ emissions is 1.4 per cent.

While we should, and undoubtedly will, make a genuine contribution to emissions reduction through self-amelioration, our greater and most serious mission must be to lend our voice and our effort in global forums to facilitate global resolutions with global outcomes.

Like so many of my coalition colleagues who have eloquently explained the government's proposed emissions trading scheme and highlighted the fact that it can and must be improved, I support the amendments that have been put forward by the Leader of the Opposition and, in good faith, these amendments have been negotiated and are being negotiated at this current time. It is not out of vanity that we bring these amendments but out of a sense of duty to the people of Australia, to do the right thing by them and to consider what could be described as the most important piece of non-wartime legislation in our history. The coalition is seeking to focus on a number of key areas in Labor's CPRS. I feel one of the most important of these is agriculture. Fortunately, we have seen again today commonsense prevail. I think those in the agricultural sector have a great opportunity to participate in a very major way to reducing our carbon emissions, but they need clear guidance and direction from the government and from the opposition and they need to know that they are supported in the work that they do. These are people who know the cost of not acting to preserve the environment. Their livelihoods depend upon it.

The coalition moves to permanently exclude agricultural emissions from the CPRS while obtaining government agreement to the introduction of an agricultural offset scheme in line with similar offset schemes to be introduced in comparable economies such as the United States and the European Union. This is a logical decision, as the difficulties in including agriculture in any carbon ac-

counting system relate to measurement and accountability. Firstly, methodologies for measuring and monitoring emissions from most agricultural activities are inaccurate. There are also significant variances in emissions levels associated with the techniques and technologies employed.

The Prime Minister once said he did not want to be the Prime Minister of a country that did not make anything. If we do not protect our agriculture, then that is exactly the kind of country we could live in. That does not mean the agricultural sector does not have a part to play in the low-carbon economy. Mr Crombie, President of the National Farmers Federation, asserted in the *Countryman* that agriculture has the potential to be a major player, reminding us that the only reason the Australian government can currently say it came close to meeting its Kyoto targets is on the back of agriculture's contribution.

In conclusion, under the approach that has been outlined by the coalition in its amendments, the CPRS would be amended to allow farmers to generate emission permits equal to the amount of carbon that is sequestered through their activities. I commend to the House the amendments that have been put forward by the Leader of the Opposition and that are currently being negotiated because, while I think that most Australians expect we will do everything possible to deal with this problem, we need to do so carefully and with consideration for all the implications for Australian industry and Australian agriculture.

Ms COLLINS (Franklin) (12.34 pm)—I am pleased to rise in support of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS Fuel Credits) Bill 2009 [No. 2] and cognate bills. The Rudd government is introducing these bills because we have a mandate to act on climate change. It was an election promise

we made to the Australian people. The Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme is the Rudd government taking action to tackle climate change. These bills are a gateway to a low-carbon economy for our future and our children's future. We know climate change is a global problem caused by carbon pollution. The Australian people expect us in this place to address this growing threat. They expect leadership on this issue—not bickering, fighting, disagreement or even disbelief. The Australian public want to know that the planet will be saved for future generations and that we in Australia are all doing our bit.

Climate change is a real threat. It is a threat to people and property and is a threat to our way of life. It will impact on rich and poor, young and old and those living in both developed and undeveloped countries. Climate change will not discriminate. To reduce our carbon pollution today will help the generations of tomorrow. We must act. Carbon pollution is causing the world's climate to change. It is resulting in extreme weather, higher temperatures, more droughts and rising sea levels. Globally, 13 of the 14 hottest years in history have all occurred in the last 14 years. Australia has experienced warmer than average mean annual temperatures for 17 of the past 19 years. The average temperature in Australia has increased by 0.9 degrees Celsius between 1910 and 2007. CSIRO projects an increase of one to five degrees Celsius by 2070.

We are already experiencing extreme weather conditions. We have droughts, floods, storms, water shortages and changes in rainfall patterns that are already impacting on our people and property. Climate change will impact on agriculture. Exports are projected to fall. Our sea levels are rising. Some Pacific atolls are slowly disappearing. In Australia, climate change will result in storm surges and rising sea levels, putting at risk over 250,000 homes around our coastline.

Tourism, a vital component of Australia's economy, will be affected not only on an economic level but sadly on a level that means we could also lose many of our natural wonders. On the health front, a small increase in temperature will impact on the number of heat related deaths in our capital cities. The prediction that deaths will double by 2020 and triple by 2050 is dire indeed. The cost of inaction around climate change may well be incalculable. We literally cannot afford to ignore it any longer.

With one of the hottest and driest continents on earth, Australia's environment and economy will be one of the hardest and fastest hit if we do not act now. Australia pollutes at very high levels for a country of its size. In fact, we are the sixth largest polluter on a per capita basis in the world. It is not really a title we should be proud of. Australians understand that climate change is a threat, and they worry about it. They understand that this problem impacts not only on the environment and our flora and fauna but also on Australia's economic prosperity.

The CPRS is scheduled to start in 2011 and for the first time will put a cost on carbon pollution, which will encourage major polluters to lower their emissions. The funds raised through the sale of permits will be used to help households and businesses adjust to the scheme. The CPRS will build on the Rudd government's investment in renewable energy to create low-pollution jobs of the future. Solar energy, wind energy and new technologies like clean coal and geothermal energy will see the renewable energy sector grow to 30 times its current size by 2050. This will create thousands of green-collar jobs. If we do not act, Australia's economy will be left behind. Australia is not the first country to introduce a CPRS or a carbon cap and trade system. Schemes are already operating in 27 European countries and 28 states and provinces in the USA; also,

Canada is introducing schemes, as is New Zealand.

I would like to give you a local perspective on the potential costs and impacts in my home state of Tasmania if we choose to do nothing. For those of you who have not visited Tasmania, it is a unique place with a unique environment, but like many places in this country Tasmania will be exposed to more extreme weather events due to climate change. It is predicted that Tasmania is likely to experience moderate rises in temperatures. Rainfall is likely to increase by seven to 11 per cent in the west and central areas, while in the north-east there may well be a decrease of around eight per cent. This year we have just experienced one of our wettest winters in 50 years. Changing rainfall patterns will be a constant worry for our farmers and small business operators and owners who rely on consistent weather patterns to produce crops, and there are those who require a reliable water source to continue their businesses. Tasmania boasts viable primary industries: agriculture and aquaculture. Scientists predict that climate change will impact on Tasmania's output.

Now I want to talk about something quite bizarre in relation to my electorate. A couple of weeks ago we had a visit by a rogue iceberg that was visible from Macquarie Island. Macquarie Island is part of my electorate. So, from part of my electorate you could see a large chunk of Antarctic ice, around 50 metres high and 500 metres, floating by.

A report released last weekend showed that three out of the four local government areas worst affected in Tasmania are in the electorate of Franklin. Seventy-five per cent of Tasmanians live in local government areas on the coastlines. The report estimates that between 8,700 and 11,000 residential buildings could be at risk. The current value of these buildings is between \$2.4 billion and

\$3.3 billion. Between 1,850 and 2,000 residential buildings in the city of Clarence may be affected by 2100. This is equivalent to approximately 10 per cent of existing residential dwellings in the city. The city of Clarence has 191 kilometres of coastline and much of that is low-lying. That is why it is going to be affected badly.

Nobody said developing a carbon pollution reduction scheme was going to be easy. There is a challenging balance between reducing carbon pollution and supporting economic growth. To delay implementing a carbon pollution reduction scheme would be irresponsible for our economy and environment. We have been upfront with the Australian people: acting now to introduce a carbon pollution reduction scheme will cost money. But in saying this, if we act in five, 10, 20 or 30 years time, it will cost Australians much, much more. There will be some costs to Australian consumers as we transition to a low-pollution economy, but we will provide assistance to those who need it most: pensioners, seniors, carers and people with a disability will receive additional support. Low- and middle-income earners will also receive support. Motorists will be protected from higher fuel costs for the first three years. Community organisations and small businesses will be eligible to apply for assistance to invest in energy-efficient equipment and Australian workers will be supported through targeted assistance for industry and investment in the green economy. So it is not just about putting in place a carbon pollution reduction scheme; it is also planning, developing and implementing other supportive measures that will assist us to move forward towards a low-carbon economy. Our renewable energy targets will also support the introduction of the CPRS.

The Rudd government is establishing the \$75.8 million Australian Carbon Trust to help all Australians to do their bit to reduce

Australia's carbon pollution and to drive energy efficiency in commercial buildings and businesses. We will also take into account the contribution of individual households that purchase accredited green power in setting carbon pollution reduction scheme caps.

I put on the public record that I am a firm believer in the science around global warming, the impacts of climate change and the urgent need to reduce our carbon pollution. Reducing the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is the right thing to do. Australians know there are significant challenges ahead. Regardless of these challenges, Australia needs to be part of the global climate change solution, not part of the problem. I urge those opposite to support these bills so they can tell their children that they were part of the solution, not part of the problem. Otherwise I believe it will be hard for them to face the Australian people who have given their trust to their federal representatives to act decisively and immediately on climate change. We should not leave this place in the knowledge that we could have made a difference but did not. These bills give certainty to the Australian people and Australian businesses. It will not be easy, but we must act and act now. I commend these bills to the House.

Dr STONE (Murray) (12.43 pm)—I rise to also speak on the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme Bill 2009 [No. 2] and related legislation. Let me say that as a rural and regional member you can understand how deeply concerned regional and rural Australians are that we agree to a scheme which does not destroy the opportunity for future generations of food producers and fibre producers to be competitive and which, on the other hand, gives them a sustainable future in terms of climate management, soil fertility and protection, biodiversity protection and so on. We have to come up with a solution that

is win-win for this country and at the same time contributes to a better global outcome.

I personally have no doubt that we are in times of extraordinary climatic variation. In the state of Victoria we have very bad fires. We have had them before, a century or so ago, and there were times when we saw the Dandenongs and Gippsland burn. In the last 12 to 18 months we saw vast areas of our forests burn and we are looking at a potential burning of the Dandenongs this summer. Mercifully, they were saved last year. We look at the potential of that with great horror and expectation of great devastation.

What I am most concerned about, as a rural and regional member, is that agriculture and food processing are not rendered non-competitive through the unfortunate extra impost of costs—that there will be no capacity for these two great industries to compete in the future with their competitive international opposition from places like the EU and the USA and from places that are even closer, such as New Zealand. We must have a complementary set of conditions that will help improve the capacity of agriculture to survive intergenerationally but will not render our own sector even less able to compete because costs are imposed upon them, with no capacity for them to do their best through, for example, offsets in the future.

I am pleased to hear where some of the current negotiations are going and that the government now recognises that agriculture was going to be devastated and beggared through its CPRS program. It is absolutely almost beyond belief that agriculture should have been put on the shelf in the way it was by the Labor government. But that comes as no surprise because we have seen agriculture hit for six by water policy failures and the complete absence of any future for the exceptional circumstances program when we have vast numbers of people in irrigated ag-

riculture still dependent on exceptional circumstances to get through their seventh year of drought. They are being told to sit and wait, and perhaps they will have a new program to do with climate change coming through. Meanwhile, they have no means of support, whether to put food on their table or to pay their debts, while they wait for some sense of future security.

We are concerned that this government does not understand the realities of what it was proposing, which in fact would not have produced a better environmental outcome and would not have changed the planet in ways which we were told must be the case, given that it was a Labor Party putting up the CPRS. We were very suspicious, and we remain so, that the business of Copenhagen was used as a device simply to bully and pressure much of the Australian public to think that there was a time frame here that was important and significant. We are now told that nothing much will come out of Copenhagen, given that other countries have also pulled back on all but a political decision to say, 'Yes, this is a problem,' with the detail to come down the track.

I hope that this government listens very carefully to the amendments proposed by the coalition. They are amendments based on the fact that we represent small business and large business. We the coalition represent those who generate the employment and wealth of this nation. We represent the men and women who are actually the custodians of the environmental services of this nation. These are the people who risk their own hard effort and family capital to try to make sure that environmental biodiversity, water quality and so on are protected for generations. These are the people whom the coalition represent, and we know from them that what was being proposed by the Labor government would have done nothing more than export jobs and carbon emissions and create

extraordinary additional costs in the very near and long term in this country. So we are very hopeful that, while negotiations continue, there will be a series of improvements to this legislation. We will then look very hard at it, and let us hope we can march forward, hand in hand, to a win-win scenario for a better future for Australia and the planet.

Debate (on motion by **Dr Emerson**) adjourned.

FORGOTTEN AUSTRALIANS

Ms MACKLIN (Jagajaga—Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs) (12.48 pm)—by leave—I move:

That the House support the apology given on this day by the Prime Minister, on behalf of the nation, to the Forgotten Australians and former Child Migrants in the following terms:

We come together today to deal with an ugly chapter in our nation's history.

And we come together today to offer our nation's apology.

To say to you, the Forgotten Australians, and those who were sent to our shores as children without your consent, that we are sorry.

Sorry – that as children you were taken from your families and placed in institutions where so often you were abused.

Sorry – for the physical suffering, the emotional starvation and the cold absence of love, of tenderness, of care.

Sorry – for the tragedy of childhoods lost – childhoods spent instead in austere and authoritarian places, where names were replaced by numbers, spontaneous play by regimented routine, the joy of learning by the repetitive drudgery of menial work.

Sorry – for all these injustices to you as children, who were placed in our care.

As a nation, we must now reflect on those who did not receive proper care.

We look back with shame that many of you were left cold, hungry and alone and with nowhere to hide and nobody to whom to turn.

We look back with shame that many of these little ones who were entrusted to institutions and foster homes – instead, were abused physically, humiliated cruelly and violated sexually.

We look back with shame at how those with power were allowed to abuse those who had none.

And how then, as if this was not injury enough, you were left ill-prepared for life outside – left to fend for yourselves; often unable to read or write; to struggle alone with no friends and no family.

For these failures to offer proper care to the powerless, the voiceless and the most vulnerable, we say sorry.

We reflect too today on the families who were ripped apart, simply because they had fallen on hard times.

Hard times brought about by illness, by death and by poverty.

Some simply left destitute when fathers, damaged by war, could no longer cope.

Again we say sorry for the extended families you never knew.

We acknowledge the particular pain of children shipped to Australia as child migrants – robbed of your families, robbed of your homeland, regarded not as innocent children but regarded instead as a source of child labour.

To those of you who were told you were orphans, brought here without your parents' knowledge or consent, we acknowledge the lies you were told, the lies told to your mothers and fathers, and the pain these lies have caused for a lifetime.

To those of you separated on the dockside from your brothers and sisters; taken alone and unprotected to the most remote parts of a foreign land – we acknowledge today the laws of our nation failed you.

And for this we are deeply sorry.

We think also today of all the families of these Forgotten Australians and former child migrants

who are still grieving, families who were never reunited, families who were never reconciled, families who were lost to one another forever.

We reflect too on the burden that is still carried by your own children, your grandchildren, your husbands, your wives, your partners and your friends – and we thank them for the faith, the love and the depth of commitment that has helped see you through the valley of tears that was not of your making.

And we reflect with you as well, in sad remembrance, on those who simply could not cope and who took their own lives in absolute despair.

We recognise the pain you have suffered.

Pain so personal.

Pain so profoundly disabling.

So, let us therefore, together, as a nation, allow this apology to begin healing this pain.

Healing the pain felt by so many of the half a million of our fellow Australians and those who as children were in our care.

And let us also resolve this day, that this national apology becomes a turning point in our nation's story.

A turning point for shattered lives.

A turning point for Governments at all levels and of every political colour and hue, to do all in our power to never let this happen again.

For the protection of children is the sacred duty of us all.

A nation's most fundamental obligation, its most solemn and sacred duty, is to keep safe and cherish its children. For half a million children, our nation failed to do this—for those who were born here and for those taken from their families and brought here from Britain and Malta. Through this failure, they were deprived of their childhood. Through this failure, they were condemned to grow up in cold, cruel, loveless places without a voice, with no-one to protect them, no-one to speak out for them. That is why today, as a nation, we are saying sorry.

Today I want to acknowledge the suffering of the forgotten Australians and the for-

mer child migrants using their own words so that the words of those who were abandoned and voiceless when they should have been protected and defended are forever inscribed in the national record, telling it the way they have told me and the way it was told to the Senate over the course of many inquiries. Today I want their voices to be heard in the words they use to describe the loneliness of childhoods lived without love, never being—as a child must be—at the loving, caring centre of family life.

As one person said:

... I was never offered or given anything that even vaguely resembled nurturing. No affirmation of the person I was becoming, no encouragement, no warmth, and absolutely no affection, not under any circumstances ...

Another said:

I never experienced the rich routines of everyday life with a much-loved adult. Without this bonding and learning I was unable to give and receive affection. I saw adults as powerful, strong brutes to be feared.

And another said:

While in care there was an extreme lack of physical contact, I remember loving hair washing day. It was the only adult's touch we ever felt...The nuns dried our hair with a towel, with the child facing in towards them and sometimes our heads would lean on their chests.

For these children there was no love, just the pain of separation from mothers, fathers and siblings:

My brother was put in a separate area away from us. I could only see him from behind a glass window. He was never held or picked up. When he was 18 years old, he committed suicide. My sister was mentally unstable. Neither of them survived the orphanages.

Why did they separate us from our brothers and sisters? It was only recently that I found out I had two brothers, but because we had no contact during our formative years normal bonding is no longer possible.

And with the loss of family came the loss of identity:

I had been denied all knowledge of my natural family, about the existence of my siblings, aunts, uncles, grandparents, mother and father. I had no knowledge of who I was or where I belonged. From this background I have nothing, no photos of me as a child, no school reports, no special toy. What I was left with was shame, insecurities, anger. They took my family and my confidence.

Today we all look back in national shame at horrific physical cruelty—the brutal beatings, the systematic humiliation and sexual violation of children.

She would beat girls with her fists and feet. I saw her hit a girl over the head with her bunch of keys and knock her out cold. She seemed to enjoy inflicting pain and humiliation. My brother, who has an intellectual disability, was physically abused and sodomised. We were just throw-away children.

Understandably, this treatment broke the spirit of many children.

Constantly put down and verbally abused, we crept around wishing for invisibility. I and the other children there would always be looking around and listening in fear. I was a child and powerless. There was no-one to turn to for help.

At five years of age I had adapted to institutional life. I maintained an outward appearance of being together, conforming while unaware of my inner turbulence, anger and impenetrable grief.

To this day many forgotten Australians and former child migrants vividly recall the shame and stigma of being orphaned or institutionalised.

We were different. Our clothes were different, our haircuts were different. We had no money for tuckshop. We were constantly reminded that we had no mothers.

I was constantly told by home staff, teachers, host families that I was stupid, recalcitrant, disobedient, totally unworthy of love and always facing threats that I would be put away permanently.

When it came time to leave these institutions, these teenagers floundered and struggled alone in the world outside.

They kicked me out at 15 years old with no life skills, very little education, but I was luckier than most—at least I could read and write.

After four years of working in the nuns' commercial laundry and nearing our 18th birthdays we were called out of the workrooms, given a small suitcase containing our possessions and a £1 note and shown the door.

Today we also acknowledge the loss of country and the lies that were told to the former child migrants and their families.

While I was out here in Australia my mother went to pick me up from the orphanage and they told her I had a good Christian burial. They told me that I was illegitimate, I had no relations, no friends. They were all killed in the war. When I went to England in 1997 I had two half-brothers and sisters who I never knew existed. And the discovery of family that came too late, a photograph is the only link I have with my mother. She passed on five or six months prior to my finding out that she had been alive all these years. Why was I told that she was dead? Why was I told that she had been killed during the war? All I have left now is a photograph and a death certificate.

As adults, forgotten Australians and former child migrants have told me so many times that the past is always with them and with their families.

My wife suffers from my often irrational behaviour and my lack of knowledge as to what a family is. My children suffer from my not understanding ... I cannot hold onto friendship.

I have brought up three children. I have been overindulgent and overprotective, but I have never been able to say to them, "I love you."

As another person said:

I did get married and then divorced. I couldn't hack it. Anybody who put their arm around me or put their hand on me, even gave me a hug, I would tell them straight out, "Don't put your hands on me."

But they speak with love and gratitude for those who stood by them and who stand by them and with them today—partners, friends and children—who helped them restore their trust in the world and faith in themselves. As one person said:

I often wonder if I hadn't married my husband, how my life would have turned out. He has loved me through all the emotional turmoil.

And as another said:

He loves me unconditionally. We have laughed and cried, laughed and screamed in anger and in joy. He has saved me from a lifetime of bad choices.

I think all of us in this place today would like to add our thanks and gratitude to these wonderful husbands and wives, partners, friends and children.

Those are some of the stories of damaged lives, past and present, of little children who were never permitted to know the innocence and exuberance of childhood—children who were thrown into a world where the only adult touch that they felt was brutal, cruel or sexually violating. Stories of children abandoned by the nation—half a million children on whom society coldly turned its back. For this, we are deeply and truly sorry. So today, in sorrow and in acknowledgement of this dark and shameful chapter in our nation's history, we offer this apology and stand in shared resolve to do all in our power to make sure that this never happens again.

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah) (1.06 pm)—May I say how pleased I am to have this chance to add something to the fine speech which we have just heard from the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and to the very moving speeches that we heard earlier today in the Great Hall from the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition. Let me begin by thanking all of those forgotten Australians who have graced us with their presence in

this building today. There was obviously a lot of pain in the Great Hall earlier, but there was a fine spirit. Let me say to all those members of that generation that they have clearly suffered but they have not been defeated, as was obvious today. They are rightly proud today, as they should be, to take centre stage here in the national parliament and to, perhaps, bring out a rare touch of bipartisanship and even a little tenderness from our national leaders.

When all is said and done, it is the job of this parliament to help bring out the best in Australians, so this apology is important and necessary. It should bring healing to people who have suffered greatly, but it should also help this generation to avoid at least some of the mistakes of our forebears. We are apologising to those 500,000 Australians put into institutional care as children. Many were mistreated; some were sexually abused; almost all were denied the support, the companionship, the encouragement, the tenderness and the love which should be the birthright of every child.

Today we are not especially singling out the institutions and the individuals who directed these former centres of institutional care. Inevitably, some were worse than others; some were oppressive, even by the harsher standards of those days. The bad food, the harsh discipline, the floggings and the sexual predatoriness were not the whole story, but there was more than enough of that for this generation to feel rightly ashamed of what has happened. Perhaps as bad as anything were the lies that were deliberately told by officials to reinforce the sense that these children were utterly alone and had been abandoned.

In general, this generation is not morally superior to those who have gone before us. Still, there are some important lessons that we have assimilated: that the support we give

to people is as important as the demands we make of them; that people's duties and obligations matter, but so also do their needs, especially the need to feel loved, sustained and nurtured by a system of human relationships.

I would like to make a personal confession. In the aftermath of the announcement of this apology, I was taken to task for stressing the ideals of at least some of the institutions concerned, and the good intentions of at least some of the people who worked there. Some people were indeed helped, while many were damaged. For many individuals there were entries on both sides of the ledger. But as David Hill, a former Fairbridge boy as well as a former managing director of the ABC, was at pains to point out to me, there had been a fundamental failure of humanity, which compromised the entire system. I want to thank David Hill for bringing this to my attention, and also for his fine book, *The Forgotten Children*, which is a thoroughly researched, deeply humane, balanced and moving account of the experience of those children. As David Hill's mother remarked after visiting the Fairbridge school at Molong in New South Wales, 'it was like something out of *Oliver Twist*'.

Although many Fairbridge children have good memories as well as bad, and although most Fairbridge staff had strengths of character as well as flaws, there was no love. There was no love. As one of the children told David:

Fairbridge taught us to work hard from 6.00 am until after tea. You did not show any emotion and you never let anyone know you were upset about anything. I don't think anyone would have put an arm around a child there. I don't recall hearing anyone ever say to a child, "You did well."

David says:

The typical Fairbridge children had no-one. They arrived in Australia alone and later left to go out into the world, still completely on their own.

They were likely to be poorly educated; socially and emotionally incomplete; lost, alienated and poor; and some went on to suffer mental illness, spend time in prison or even to commit suicide.

The children of Fairbridge are lucky to have found such a champion, and in telling their story, David Hill has helped to tell the story of all the forgotten children, of all the forgotten Australians to whom we apologise today.

There was this institutional coldness that affected all of them, but it was not just the emotional distance characteristic of that period that some people endured. Alas, there was psychological cruelty, physical torment and, in some cases, terrible sexual abuse, including repeated rape. In some cases these horrors went on for years because people refused to believe that those in authority were capable of such evil. I am personally indebted to Shane Nicholls, who has made this something of a personal crusade, for alerting me to the depravity that characterised some institutions of that period. Even the different standards of care prevalent in those days were clearly breached in his and in many other cases. Wherever possible, the perpetrators of these crimes against children should be brought to justice, and I applaud those state governments that have launched royal commissions into these abuses and call on those states that have not yet done so to have royal commissions, which can demand documents, can cross examine witnesses and, where necessary, recommend charges. Where the standards of care have clearly been breached, restitution should be made by those institutions and their successors.

For all Australians who have been subjected to the austerities of institutional care, today should be a day of healing. But for those of us who are making this apology, I fear there are no grounds for self-congratulation, because there are as many children in care as ever. Today, thankfully, little of it is institutionalised care, but that

does not mean that every child's needs are being fully met. We cannot be confident, for all our good intentions and for all our deeper understanding, that future generations, with their insights, will not be as critical of us as we now are of our forebears.

Today, though, should be an occasion to renew our commitment to all children in care. We can never do enough for them, but we should always be looking for ways to do more. Every day in this place all of us in our own way struggle with the largeness and the smallness of humanity, with our own flaws as well as the flaws of others. I think all MPs have been both humbled and uplifted by the proceedings so far. Our forebears let down those forgotten Australians and today we are indebted to them for the lessons that they have taught us. I should say, in closing, how pleased I am that the next speaker for the coalition will be a member of the forgotten generation: Steve Irons, the member for Swan, who is testimony that it is possible to draw strength even from great adversity.

Mr CLARE (Blaxland—Parliamentary Secretary for Employment) (1.16 pm)—In 1957, a little girl's life was changed forever. She was three years old when her family was torn apart, when she was separated from her brothers and sisters and sent to St Catherine's Orphanage in Geelong. For the next 13 years she lived in constant fear of being punished for every minor indiscretion, and with the empty feeling of a childhood deprived of love. She would not see her brother again for 40 years. Hers is one of half a million stories. Today is an important day for that little girl and the brave and determined woman that she became. Her name is Leonie Sheedy and for the past nine years she has been fighting for an apology for that little girl and for others like her.

In 2000 she established a support group with Joanna Penglase called Care Leavers

Australia Network—CLAN—and from a tiny office in Bankstown in my electorate they have helped hundreds of forgotten Australians. In 2004 their courage and tenacity prompted a Senate inquiry. In 2007 it earned both of them an Order of Australia. And now it has delivered an apology. Today I want to pay tribute to them and the hundreds of thousands of Australians who they have spent so many years fighting for—this really is your day.

This morning the parliament shone a light on a dark chapter of our history, until now unacknowledged and very much forgotten. For half a million children who were placed into institutions in the 20th century, the memories of their childhood cast long shadows. For many, silence was their best friend. A woman named Kayleen told the Senate inquiry: ‘As a child you learn to be quiet out of fear. Nobody will hurt you if you’re not heard.’ This apology means that people like Kayleen need not be silent anymore. An apology cannot undo the suffering. Nothing we say can undo the damage. For some, today will be like ripping off a scab, reviving hurtful memories they have spent a lifetime trying to forget. But for so many others it will help to heal these scars and start to set things right. One lady I met this morning said that since she had heard that the nation was apologising the nightmares had finally stopped.

I rang Vera Fooks on the weekend. Vera is the oldest member of CLAN. She has cancer and the doctors keep telling her that she does not have long to live, but she has been determined to hang on to hear her nation apologise. She told me, ‘I’m going on 99. I’ve been waiting a lifetime for this day.’ Vera is not here today—she is too frail—but she wants you to know that she is here in spirit.

There are many people who deserve the thanks of this House for bringing this day about. There are the senators who were forever changed by the evidence they heard. One of those was Andrew Murray, who took up this cause and is perhaps more responsible for this day than any other. In his valedictory speech he asked Richard Marles and me to carry on his work. We have both taken this responsibility very seriously. On behalf of hundreds of thousands of forgotten Australians, I want to thank you, Richard, for everything that you have done. Steve Irons, one of my best friends on the other side of the House, has brought his own personal experience to bear and has helped to ensure that this day is everything that it is and that it should be. I thank Jenny Macklin for her caring heart and steely resolve. I thank Abbie Clark and Corri McKenzie for their support and assistance. I thank our Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition for their understanding and their stirring words. I thank Caroline Carroll and the Alliance for Forgotten Australians; Harold Haig and Ian Thwaites; and, finally, Leonie and Joanna. I was first drawn to this cause by them, by the force of Leonie’s personality and by the force of Joanna’s words. They helped me to understand.

If you do not understand what we are doing here today, take out your childhood photos, tear them up and throw them out the window when you are driving home tonight. Then come back tomorrow and try and pick up the pieces and put them back together. That is what Leonie has been doing for the past 40 years. A few weeks ago there was a story about Leonie in the *Women’s Weekly*. Last week she received an email from a woman who read that story. It reads:

Dear Leonie, I read your article and what caught my attention was the photo of your grandparents, and what attracted me was that I have the exact same photo, as they are my grandparents

also. It appears that your father and my mother were siblings; therefore we would be cousins.

This is the power of what we are doing here today. 'Sorry' might be an easy word to say, but an apology has the power to change lives.

Mr IRONS (Swan) (1.22 pm)—Today I rise to speak on the motion put to the House by the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Ms Jenny Macklin, and responded to by the coalition shadow minister, Mr Tony Abbott. I also thank the member for Blaxland for his kind words and I look forward to the member for Corio's address after mine. I support this motion. Personally it is a privilege and an honour to be able to do so. I only hope that, in the time that I have, I can do justice to the people who so richly deserve the apology delivered this morning by the Prime Minister of Australia and the Leader of the Opposition, Malcolm Turnbull, in such a bipartisan manner. Wasn't it just an emotionally charged, electric situation? I think it was just fantastic. Well done to you, Malcolm, and well done to the Prime Minister.

I would first like to acknowledge a few people today, on indulgence. I would like to say hello to the CLANNies, to the forgotten Australians, to the Maltese and UK migrants who are in this chamber today and to those across Australia watching or listening. I welcome you and hope this day begins a new journey for you. I know the apology will never take away the memories and the pain of your childhood, but I live in hope that we will see the Australian community embrace you and we will see you, our fellow Australians, as our sisters and brothers and we as a nation will love you as sisters and brothers.

Talking about brothers and sisters, I would also like to welcome my brother Robert Dix, who was at the apology this morning and is in the chamber now. Hi, Bobbi. Robert and I

were separated when I was six months old and reunited when I was 35 years of age. I am proud to have you here today, Bobbi. It is special for me. I am pleased you could make it here today to see the apology to our fellow Australians. Even though we missed 34 years of our lives together, we will make up for it with our remaining years. We can never make up for the loss of our brother Raymond and our sister Jennifer, who are both deceased. Both of them suffered in orphanages. I am fortunate to be here today to speak on their behalf.

The disconnection from family that many people experience when institutionalised or removed from their family and placed in care is something that only someone who has been in that situation could understand. The family—the mothers, the fathers, the grandparents and the siblings—left behind also experience disconnection and pain from the separation. I know from discussions with Robert that this deeply affected him when he was younger. He did not know where his siblings were, if they were being looked after or if he would ever see them again. Then he had to deal with his own levels of abuse at home—physical abuse from our dad and mental abuse from our mother. This is just an example of the dilemma and confusion and sorrow of thousands of Australian families and siblings who were left behind to ponder and wonder about the fate of the children entering orphanages.

But today is about an apology to all of you here today and to all those who could not make the journey but who are watching and listening. This apology has not just occurred without years of hard work by some very dedicated people. Some of them are here today. I acknowledge my parliamentary colleagues Richard Marles, Jason Clare, Senators Claire Moore, Rachel Siewert and Gary Humphries and, especially, former senator Andrew Murray, who drove this process

from a parliamentary point of view from the start, single-handed. I also acknowledge Jo Gash, who I know has taken a particular interest in this. I acknowledge Leonie Sheedy—how are you, Leonie? Where are you? Do not hide up there! How are you going?—and Joanna Penglase, the co-founders of CLAN, otherwise known as the Care Leavers Australia Network. They have toiled for nearly 10 years with this apology at the top of their agenda. About eight months ago I received a call from Leonie saying: ‘Hello, Steve. I have searched you. I have brought up your speech in parliament. You’re a homie. You’re one of us.’ I did not know what she was talking about, but I do now. It has just been a great pleasure to have been involved with this last eight months of the journey. Leonie is a fantastic person. You deserve everything you get, Leonie. I acknowledge Harold Haig, whom I met through this apology process, and Caroline Carroll, from the Alliance for Forgotten Australians. To Caroline Carroll and Harold Haig, well done. They served on the apology committee. To Minister Macklin and the FaHCSIA staff who are also on the committee, I acknowledge your work and the dedication to bring this event to fruition.

As we know, today is about the forgotten Australians and the lost innocents. This is your day. I would now like to relate some stories I have heard from these people. They are graphic, but it is important that these stories are told and that all Australians know about the physical, mental and sexual abuse that you suffered. Ralph Doughty today gave me some background information and I promised I would read one part of it. The report of the Senate inquiry into children in institutional care report concluded:

... that there has been wide scale unsafe, improper and unlawful care of children, a failure of duty of care, and serious and repeated breaches of statutory obligations.

It found:

Such abuse and assault was widespread across institutions, across States and across the government, religious and other care providers.

In other words, the abuse and cruelty occurred nationally, as was the case in Ireland.

Now I am going to talk about Cheryle Warner, who wrote to me recently about a redress scheme. Part of her letter was very powerful, and I thought I would read it out today. Cheryle, are you here in the chamber? Welcome, Cheryle. Cheryle recently spent some time in my office to tell her story to the local newspaper. She also took the time to send me this note. I will take some of those thoughts and relate them to you:

I was 49 when I began my redress application. I am 51 now.

I am standing at my third REDRESS.WA rally now, thinking how I had tried to tell the government they had opened a Pandora’s Box. We are talking about restoring peoples honor, dignity and self worth. We were talking about possibly the most abused child generation in the state, we are certainly talking about one of the most impoverished, both economically and psychological target groups in the state.

... ..

This REDRESS.WA idea, as honorable and genuine as I believe it was, has never been important in the eyes of this Government.

There has been no processes or procedures implemented.

We are still in wading through the bleak black ice we know as “bleak depression” in limbo waiting for something....ANYTHING... to happen. Some sort of show of good faith, at least,...like where is the memorial we were promised, at the very least where is the blueprints or pictures of ideas for this memorial...where are the free psych sessions, how do you access them, etc...

Instead, here we are two years later, still attending Rallies outside Parliament house, crowds of fragmented, damaged and broken people waiting for Moses to lead us out of misery.

... ..

The plan was to make amends to those thousands of forgotten, abused and not afforded the duty of care all child have a born right to, by previous governments. These applicants had been wards of the state and had been neglected by the governments of their times. Consequently children and babies were left open to the mercy of predatory, cruel, tortuous inhumane foster placements and subsequently these once innocent children's lives had been affected socially, psychologically, physically, for decades, and some continue to be to date, and others that may never thrive. Some have passed down their demons to their children without awareness.

Many countries around the world that have taken steps to acknowledge, apologise and make amends offer genuine support, with most countries offering an ex gratia payment. I have never made any secret that I see this as an obscene amount from the WA government—between \$10,000 and \$80,000. It was an indecent proposal to begin with. Good Lord! How does one arrive at any fair dollar value on these sorts of heinous crimes against children? What price for lost opportunities, lost childhoods and lost lives? Who can say?

Cheryle goes on to say:

Hence there was no negotiating. I knew from the start \$80,000 would seem like a lot of money to the lower socioeconomic group. In reality I knew it could make things a bit more comfortable for the abused and their immediate families for the short term but would not be life changing for the majority. Many applicants have subscribed to my views about the money but if you look at it in real dollars it just does not add up. When you consider that on average I was beaten and tortured 6,000 times between the ages of 13 months and 16 years, this works out at about \$6 a beating, a rape, an indecent assault, assault and battery and, in some cases, torture in all of its military style. I have spent over \$50,000 in psych fees. I am only one of the thousands with stories like this, and others have worse. However, I chose to go along with the Redress process. I figured I would get some benefit from it, be it emotional or cathartic, but I got that wrong. I thought I would be able to help my kids out—give them a small holiday and

a small investment somewhere. Thus I chose to put in an application. Money is a great motivator to those in lower socioeconomic brackets. However, greater than this is the opportunity for me to reclaim my sense of dignity and autonomy. With these thoughts I opened the application form and began writing.

This is another letter written by Brad, who wrote about his experience in care:

During the Christmas period of 1979, in the early days of my admission to Parkerville, all the kids left in the home who had no-one to go to for Christmas were herded into one of the old disused cottages, St Pat's. From memory there were approximately 20 children, possibly more, aged from younger than me to late teens, crowded into a cottage, and two hippie social worker types were employed to look after us. There were a few other adults who dropped by but they seemed to be friends of the two hippie types. This was a small one-bedroom cottage across from the cottage in a chapel. It was called Blue Cottage. It was rented by an ex-resident who was around 17, I guess. He used to hang around the group cottage a fair bit and some of the others had been to his cottage with him to listen to records. On my visit to Blue Cottage he played Pink Floyd's album *The Wall* album, at my request, and after smoking either a cigarette or a joint, I can't remember, he had a bit of a play around with my penis. By this time I had been regularly abused by my stepfather so he wasn't exactly Robinson Crusoe in my sex life, and thus it's never really been a big deal for me in the context of things. And therein lies the problem. Isn't it a bit sad that a nine-year-old boy can push the situation of being abused to one side both mentally and emotionally without a second thought? As an adult, I think that's sad.

From Bruce, one other Western Australian who contacted me:

I called your office last week as you are a friend who knows my journey and the effect it has had on my life. I thought I was one person who really needed to hear the 'sorry' word. I am a retired minister of religion currently on a disability support pension due to ill health. I was made a ward of the state of Victoria in 1954, born 1952. I was in St Anthony's Home in Kew, St Joseph's

Home in Surrey Hill and the Taurana Boys Home. These days what I do recall has had a huge effect on my life in every way—ways that have seen much trauma, depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, loss and separation in my life. I recall my days as a little boy working at Surrey Hills from the age of four in a laundry, being bashed and beaten, always being filled with fear, having one meal a day, no toys and no mummy or daddy to say they loved me and tuck me in of a night in a warm and secure home. No Christmas, no birthdays, just being beaten, seeing your little mates falling down in the laundry exhausted from malnutrition and at times falling down dead. Just the regimental discipline of the Black Cape Brigade (the nuns) waiting with canes to flog us again. Steve, we ate the moss off the walls, we drank our own urine and even at times tried to eat our own faeces. We were so hungry and neglected, while in the distance we could smell in the air the kitchen that provided them with their daily meals, while at night we were locked up like animals in cages, with a cyclone gate and padlock, to await another day of the same.

I have said in this place before that I began my life as a ward of the state of Victoria. I spent three years in an institution as a child and I was then taken into foster care. Even as a foster child I was a ward of the state; a responsibility of the Victorian government. All the children who were wards of state—and there were those who entered institutions without being made a ward of state: all the child migrants from Britain and Malta, all the children in foster care—were the responsibilities of the governments of the day.

I welcome this apology and support the motion and encourage all my fellow colleagues to support it and the forgotten Australians. We must not forget reparation. I call on the governments, churches and charities to deal with this now, not later. We can now only be judged as a nation by our ability to repair and rebuild these Australian lives, because we have failed these children in the construction of them. We have failed them in the nurturing and care that they would have

expected to get from institutions, the nurturing and care they would have got in a family home. We have failed them by treating them with systematic abuse.

Everyone asks about the reasons for children being in orphanages—whether it was an economic situation or a breakdown of the family unit. There are numerous reasons, and I have even heard of people putting their children into orphanages to prevent them from being a burden on the rest of their family.

In closing, today we have heard stories from forgotten Australians with a range of emotions and experiences. We have heard about having trouble creating relationships, about having trouble trusting particularly authorities but anyone, about the abuse that these individuals suffered and about the lack of nurturing and care and love. They all have their own stories. They are all stories that must be told, and we need to recognise them, particularly in our role as parliamentarians as we go out into the community to make sure that we advise and look after those people and create an environment where all future children in Australia will be nurtured and cared for and loved. To all the forgotten Australians I can only say that I will continue to work to make sure that you are remembered.

Mr MARLES (Corio—Parliamentary Secretary for Innovation and Industry) (1.37 pm)—Mr Deputy Speaker, what you have just heard—the stories of Steve Irons—are just a few among half a million: each just as sad, each just as powerful. Collectively they represent a well of pain and a great wrong which today our country acknowledged. The member for Blaxland, Jason Clare, gave thanks to a number of people who have been involved in the apology on this day and I add my voice in thanking Andrew Murray, Steve Irons, Abbie Clark, Corrie McKenzie, Caroline Caroll, Harold Haig, Ian Thwaites,

Leonie Sheedy, Joanna Penglase and all the senators who heard the initial inquiry. I would also like to extend my thanks to Jason, whose wisdom and perseverance have been critical to this day. The journey that we have walked together has given me the gift of his friendship, which I cherish greatly. I would particularly like to thank the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Jenny Macklin, who has been devoted to this cause. I would like to thank the Leader of the Opposition for his dignified words today and I would like to thank the Prime Minister for giving the apology and accompanying it with a beautiful speech. It will change the lives of hundreds of thousands.

Today is Andrew Murray's day. Today is Steve Irons's day. Today is Rod Currie's day. Today is Trish Sumic's day. It is the day of half a million Australians. But it is also Joanna Penglase's and Leonie Sheedy's day. These two have been at the core of this. They were the driving force behind the Senate inquiry. They were the driving force behind today's national apology. Their shoulders have provided support for a multitude of forgotten Australians. Their ears have heard a thousand stories and in the process they have provided relief. They are great Australians. They are an example of a truth that I have come to learn in all the work that I have done with the Care Leavers of Australia Network: that the forgotten Australians and child migrants as a people, having dealt with the greatest adversity at the outset of their lives, are a determined and courageous people. Amidst all that we do on this day it is so important that we honour and celebrate that fact, because the forgotten Australians and child migrants are wonderful Australians and our country is much the richer for their being among us.

I have spoken with many forgotten Australians over the last few weeks in the lead-

up to today's national apology. Naturally forgotten Australians deal with their childhood experience in different ways. There are some who carried it as a weeping sore into their adult life. Many talk of feeling ashamed when thinking about their childhood and of feeling embarrassed to tell their story. For these people the national apology has not come a day too soon. Then there are others who I have particularly spoken to and who have buried their childhood experience deep inside and have said to me how unexpectedly emotional they feel about today's national apology. While they know that this is a moment of great national significance, a great national act, it is also an act that comes with pain. In all cases it has been impossible to talk to the forgotten Australians about today's national apology without tears. In each case people talk of this day as being a new beginning.

And so to those forgotten Australians and child migrants who do feel ashamed about their childhood, all of us here say to you that you do not deserve to feel shame. The shame is upon your nation, and today it has been acknowledged. To those of you who feel embarrassed to tell your story, all of us say to you that your story, good and bad, now forms a part of the nation's story, good and bad. And to those of you for whom today opens a door into a painful part of your heart: it is so vital that all Australians—in the weeks, months and years ahead—stand shoulder to shoulder with you to help the healing. To all the forgotten Australians and child migrants: for all the embraces that you did not receive in childhood today—with all its failings and inadequacies and in the knowledge that what was taken away can never be given back—we give, with the deepest sincerity of heart, an embrace at last from your country. Today we say to the forgotten Australians and child migrants: we will not forget what you have suffered; as a

nation we are sorry, and what you have endured is no longer a dark secret but a period of history on record for all Australians to remember.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms JA Saffin)—I ask that members please rise to signify support for the motion.

Honourable members having stood in their places—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—I thank honourable members.

Debate (on motion by **Mr Albanese**) adjourned.

MAIN COMMITTEE

Forgotten Australians

Reference

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the House) (1.45 pm)—by leave—I move:

That the resumption of debate on the motion relating to the national apology to the forgotten Australians and former child migrants be referred to the Main Committee for debate.

I say, particularly for the benefit of the members of the gallery who honour us with their presence here today, that we are doing this so as to enable further debate by members of the House of Representatives. I am sure many from both sides of the chamber will wish to participate in ongoing parliamentary debate on this important issue.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—Before I put the question, can I thank all of the honourable members for their contribution on this historic day on an historic motion before this House. I acknowledge former Senator Andrew Murray and all of the members in the chamber.

Question agreed to.

CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME BILL 2009 [No. 2]

Cognate bills:

CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME (CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS) BILL 2009 [No. 2]

AUSTRALIAN CLIMATE CHANGE REGULATORY AUTHORITY BILL 2009 [No. 2]

CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME (CHARGES—CUSTOMS) BILL 2009 [No. 2]

CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME (CHARGES—EXCISE) BILL 2009 [No. 2]

CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME (CHARGES—GENERAL) BILL 2009 [No. 2]

CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME (CPRS FUEL CREDITS) BILL 2009 [No. 2]

CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME (CPRS FUEL CREDITS) (CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS) BILL 2009 [No. 2]

EXCISE TARIFF AMENDMENT (CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME) BILL 2009 [No. 2]

CUSTOMS TARIFF AMENDMENT (CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME) BILL 2009 [No. 2]

CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME AMENDMENT (HOUSEHOLD ASSISTANCE) BILL 2009 [No. 2]

Second Reading

Debate resumed.

Mr SULLIVAN (Longman) (1.46 pm)—I rise to support the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme Bill 2009 [No. 2] as presented to the parliament by the minister, and also the nine related bills that are being debated simultaneously with the bill. It has been quite a moving chapter in this parliament this morning as we have dealt with a very impor-

tant issue in a way that is much more than just mere symbolism or a gesture. I am enormously proud to have been part of a government to have moved in this way.

To move on to the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, let me lay my cards on the table straight away: I am one of those many Australians who are convinced by the weight of scientific evidence and by the opinion brought forward that this planet and its oceans are warming. I know that the permafrost is defrosting and that large amounts of methane are expected to be emitted into the atmosphere as a consequence—methane being one of the greenhouse gases around four times more potent than carbon dioxide.

In saying that I am convinced of that view, I accept the point of view of others who are convinced by those who may be entitled to be regarded as eminent scientists who express a different view. In that context, it is important for us as a parliament and as a people to examine the consequences of our actions in relation to two very strongly held points of view, although, as I said, I feel the weight of evidence comes down on the side of the beliefs that I hold. What happens if we take action and discover in 50 years time that we did not need to take action? We have rejigged the economy of the world, and that has happened previously. But what happens if we do not act and we find out in 50 years time we should have? That is when the legacy of this parliament will be most felt by the people that we most care about: our children and our children's children, and even their children. Future generations of not only Australians but also children from every nation on this planet require us, as a part of governments around the world, to act in unison and to act now.

In thinking about this issue, I am reminded of a young girl who I saw at what was a nuclear bomb protest in Cairns in the

early eighties. Her mother had made a T-shirt for her and she wore it proudly at that march. The slogan on the T-shirt was 'When I grow up I want the world to be here'. I think we should require that for our children and our children's children. When they grow up, let us make sure that there is a world here for them.

There is absolutely no wonder that people in the broader community are disillusioned with politics and with those of us who practise that profession. What are we doing here in relation to this bill? This bill has been through the parliament once, went to the Senate and came back. It is being debated here again preparatory to being considered once again in the Senate. What are we doing? We are quibbling over details that will change a dozen times in the next 40 years. If there is anybody who can point me to a piece of legislation that has stood the test of time, please do so. And if you want to talk about the Constitution, it really has not stood the test of time; it is just too bloody difficult to change. It does not suit us any more. This legislation ought to be seen for what it is, which is the foundation stone of what is going to be one of the most important pieces of legislation that is passed by this government or any government in this part of the century.

Ross Garnaut does not think that the legislation is perfect, but what is his comment? 'Just pass the thing'. That is what Ross Garnaut wants us to do, just past the thing, because he understands that what I am saying is right: we need to make the start. It is urgent to make the start—too right it is urgent that we make the start. It is unquestionably the most serious issue that the world has faced, and we need to face it together—rich nations and poor nations, side by side—and part of that is this parliament passing this bill.

Is it possible for us to walk down this low-carbon economy path without some pain being felt? Probably not. There will probably be a degree of pain as we restructure our economy for a low-carbon future. That will mean some difficulty for some people during the change phase. Does it mean permanent pain? I think it certainly does not. Our economy has undergone some radical changes in the past. The general services tax is one example where we made a fairly massive change to our economy. While I contend that the GST is an unfair tax, people and the economy have adapted. I understand it cost something like \$6 billion to \$8 billion to introduce, but the people have adapted to the new circumstances in our economy.

Obviously our job is to minimise sectoral pain, to minimise personal hardship and to create new opportunities—and renewable energy is a classic example of new opportunity. We are being urged by those opposite to wait until after the Copenhagen conference to pass our own laws. The question is: why? Why should we wait to be told what to do by the rest of the world? The Australia that I want for myself, my children and their children is one where we are a leader nation, not a follower nation. Why should we wait to see what everybody else is doing before we decide what we want to do? In passing our own law, we can go to Copenhagen with a very firm debating position. Whilst we are looking after those things that are necessary for the world, we need to make sure that our own national interests are protected. As a leader nation we can encourage others to join in; as a follower nation we join the others. Australia has a moral obligation to be a leader in carbon pollution reduction throughout the world. Although we are a small nation, on a per capita basis we are among the greatest emitters of carbon dioxide in the world. We also have a heavy reliance on coal exports. Exporting carbon emissions makes

this country wealthy. The coal industry understand that. They are investing heavily in technology designed to reduce carbon pollution emissions. It is in their best interests; it is what they need to do to survive. Like others, they have some issues. They would like to feel the least pain possible, but they understand. For many years, including in the FutureGen project in the United States, the industry have been investing heavily to bring down carbon emissions from coal fired power stations.

We hear from those opposite: why should we be the only ones to put in place a carbon pollution reduction scheme? The reality is we are not. Around the world there are already some 60-odd schemes in operation. We would by no means be the only kid on the block. We would in no way be going it alone on this issue. In taking this step we would be joining a rather large group of nations. People talk about the prospect that the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme will impact radically on jobs. It is quite clear there will be some impact, just as the introduction of the GST impacted on some businesses. I have made many representations on behalf of a fellow who is still trying to get some recognition that the introduction of the GST destroyed his business in the earlier part of this century.

I believe that at this point permits are to be set at \$10 per tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent, and we are told that will destroy jobs. As I look across the chamber, I see people who unwittingly brought me into this chamber by supporting the introduction of nuclear power in this country, something that I am totally opposed to.

Mr Albanese—Hear, hear!

Mr SULLIVAN—Thank you very much. I say to those opposite: just go back and look at what you were doing then, because, in all the documentation that was produced on nu-

clear power, nuclear power was only seen as economically viable if the tax on coal fired power stations was set at \$40 per tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent—four times what we are proposing now. And you think we are job destroyers and you guys are not. But the nuclear power debate is for another day—and it is interesting to note that it may be a debate sooner rather than later, because Mr Switkowski is going on his merry way at the moment.

In this package of bills, the government proposes a number of things to assist industry and to support jobs, including permits for emissions-intensive trade-exposed industries, the Electricity Sector Adjustment Scheme and the Climate Change Action Fund. Treasury, the experts, tell us that the longer we wait before we do this the more it is going to cost. That is what Treasury say; that is what Professor Stern says; that is what Professor Garnaut says; but members opposite say, 'Let's wait.'

Carbon capture and storage is possible—it is happening now. Carbon reuse is possible. We have been doing that with sulphur for years. Members opposite would remember the acid rainfall in North America and Europe. It does not happen anymore because we have been able to remove the sulphur emissions from the smokestacks and still create saleable products. My colleague the member for Deakin, Mike Symon, told me that on a recent trip to China he visited a plant that is removing the carbon dioxide from the emissions and using that carbon in the manufacture of soft drinks—though I hope there are one or two processes in between! It is happening now in China. It has happened before. The world signed up to the Montreal agreement in relation to ozone-depleting gases and we now no longer have those gases entering the atmosphere.

The SPEAKER—Order! It being 2 pm, the debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 97. The debate may be resumed at a later hour and the member for Longman will have leave to continue speaking when the debate is resumed.

MINISTERIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Mr RUDD (Griffith—Prime Minister) (2.00 pm)—I inform the House that the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry will be absent from question time today as he is attending the World Summit on Food Security and the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation ministerial meeting in Rome. The Minister for Resources, Energy and Tourism will answer questions on his behalf.

CONDOLENCES

Mr Allan William Mulder

The SPEAKER (2.00 pm)—I inform the House of the death on 7 November 2009 of Mr Allan William Mulder, a member of this House for the division of Evans from 1972 to 1975. As a mark of respect to the memory of Allan Mulder I invite honourable members to rise in their places.

Honourable members having stood in their places—

The SPEAKER—I thank the House.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Forgotten Australians

Mr TURNBULL (2.01 pm)—My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer the Prime Minister to the apology we have both spoken for on behalf of the government, the opposition and all members of the parliament in the Great Hall today to those forgotten Australians now remembered—never to be forgotten Australians—and child migrants. Would the Prime Minister explain to the House the significance of this apology and the significance of the bipartisan spirit in which it has been made, and convey to the House and to the Australian people the sen-

timents, the sympathy and the compassion of all of us here assembled?

Mr RUDD—I thank Leader of the Opposition for his question. Today we saw, I believe, the national institutions working at their best through the assembly of members both from the government and opposition in the Great Hall as we sought to right a great wrong, which is the extraordinary mistreatment extended to the forgotten Australians and Australian child migrants over the better part of a century. We the government and the Leader of the Opposition representing the opposition extended on a bipartisan basis an unqualified national apology to those Australians who had experienced this abuse and neglect.

We forget the numbers of those involved here and sometimes we are desensitised to this. But let us all remember that we are talking about half a million Australians during the course of last century who were placed in institutional or foster care in this country. This is a very large number of Australians. Regrettably, through the Senate inquiry reports—three of which have been done, two under the previous government and one under our own—we see example after example of physical abuse, of emotional abuse, of sexual abuse and the consequent damage to such a large number of our fellow Australians over such a long period of time. This morning it was important to reflect to the gathered representatives of these forgotten Australians and these former child migrants that the House and the parliament is at one in extending this national apology to them. Some have asked, ‘Why is this necessary? What is the point? These are things which happened a long time ago.’ For those who have received such mistreatment over time, the actual extension of the simple words ‘we are sorry’ of itself contains within it a healing balm to exceptionally raw

wounds—raw wounds which have been left to fester for so many decades.

We also spoke about the impact on child migrant Australians. Here we have a group of some 7,000 who came from the United Kingdom and Malta and who were settled here from the 1920s on as part of a resettlement program by the UK in particular to various countries across the world including Australia. But the problem was this: children were often taken without their consent or in the absence of the full knowledge of what was happening, and often without the consent of their parents as well. For those child migrant Australians this has been an extraordinarily brutal experience: ripped away from one part of the world and taken to another, ripped away from childhood family and friends, and often losing forever connections with the family which gave birth to them.

The government of the United Kingdom has indicated that it too will now extend an apology to those thousands of children from Britain who were sent around the world. I understand Prime Minister Brown, in a letter to the relevant House of Commons committee which outlined the intention of his government this morning to apologise, has recognised the importance of giving voice to the traumatic experiences of many former child migrants:

It is important that we take the time to listen to the voices of the survivors and the victims of these misguided policies.

The chair of the House of Commons select committee noted the importance of the Australian apology in the decision of Prime Minister Brown to apologise himself on behalf of the government of the United Kingdom. To quote the chairman of the Commons committee:

The reason why this is happening now is that Australia itself has decided to recognise ... what it did to some of its Indigenous population and to child migrants.

... ..

There is now a Government in Australia that's prepared to go the extra mile as it were to apologise for what happened to its own children and to ours when they got there.

If our apology today in our parliamentary building has in some way influenced the decision by the British government to apologise, it is a good thing. As the Leader of the Opposition and I found today from speaking personally with so many of these victims of abuse, the extension of simple words of sorrow, remorse and apology on behalf of governments, who are responsible ultimately for the laws of this nation and for the institutions which provide care, so-called, is so important.

In addition to the extension of apology in both these respects, what I also outlined today on behalf of the government was some practical measures for the future. One was to say this: the stories told by this group of Australians should be recorded for the future. As I noted this morning in my remarks—and we are familiar with this quote from the historical sages of times past—any nation which forgets its history is condemned to relive it. Therefore, the extraordinary record contained already in the Senate reports is good, but what we have extended today through specific programs on behalf of both the National Library and the National Museum is an opportunity for those forgotten Australians and former child migrants to place their oral history or written history on the record and to have it there for the future so that we might reflect in generations to come on what went radically wrong in this country over the last 100 years. On top of that, I also indicated to those assembled today—and, I note, with support from the opposition—that we intend to provide a special category or recognition of assistance within the aged-care framework of the nation to deal with those who have come from this institutional background.

This has been a particular request on behalf of so many of the peak bodies who have represented this group of abused Australians.

What we hear so often from groups across Australia is: 'How do we find contact with those from whom we have been disconnected?' So many times we hear the stories of those who have spent decades trying to track down a mother, a father, a brother or a sister. Decades later, they find that person, only to discover that they have just died. So what we are seeking to do is to establish a national find and connect service aimed at supporting the activities of the wounded Australians in these fields to make contact with their loved ones. This will not always be possible, but we can provide some practical means of assistance.

Finally—and the Leader of the Opposition was kind in his remarks on this today—we show bipartisan support for the advocacy groups which have stood up for so long in support of the interests of these abused Australians. These are groups like CLAN, the Alliance for Forgotten Australians and the Child Migrants Trust. What I indicated today on behalf of the government—and, again, with the support of the opposition—is that we will continue to provide funding support for these organisations in the future as they continue to advocate for the interests of their number.

I conclude where I began. This has been a good day for our parliamentary institution. We recognise on both sides of the House the extraordinary burden placed on anyone in public office to do whatever is physically possible to provide for the protection of children. We have seen, from governments of all political persuasions and all levels in the past, that task not having been properly performed. So this has been one exercise in bringing about some healing for these Australians. As I said this morning, the Senate, in

their report, described these half a million Australians as the forgotten Australians. Let us henceforth instead regard these Australians, these precious Australians, as the remembered Australians.

Asylum Seekers

Mr TURNBULL (2.10 pm)—My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister explain to the House and to the Australian people precisely what the terms are of the preferential deal that was offered, apparently in writing, to entice the 22 asylum seekers to disembark from the *Oceanic Viking*?

Mr RUDD—I will happily table, for the information of the House, as I understand it is already in circulation, the text of a note signed by the relevant official from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Mr Jim O'Callaghan, minister-counsellor for immigration at the Australian Embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia. It is not a remarkable document, and I will table it for the Leader of the Opposition's information.

The second thing I will comment on in response to the honourable member's question is his reference to preferential treatment. I say to the honourable gentleman the following: he should take note of a letter, which I will also table, from the Secretary of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. It reads as follows:

I would like to confirm the following matters regarding the procedural and other arrangements applying to the group—

referring to the group of individuals on this vessel. The letter says, among other things:

The group is being treated in a manner consistent with that afforded to any other asylum seeker or refugee in Indonesia. Secondly, they have been, are being or will be, assessed by the UNHCR in accordance with the usual processes. Thirdly, the Indonesian government and the Australian government have agreed to a set of arrangements

regarding the time frames for the processing of the group in Indonesia, consistent with international practice and settlement procedures.

That, among other things contained in the letter, which I am about to table, clearly articulates from the perspective of the Secretary of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship that these are not preferential arrangements; they are consistent with normal process. I commend this letter to the honourable gentleman for his information. As soon as I have a copy of the other document that I referred to before, in answer to his question I will table it presently.

Forgotten Australians

Mr CRAIG THOMSON (2.12 pm)—My question is to the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Will the minister update the House on today's national apology to the forgotten Australians and former child migrants?

Ms MACKLIN—I thank the member for Dobell for his question. I want to take this opportunity to say a few thank-yous to all the people who have made today's very, very moving occasion possible. First and foremost, I thank all those members of the forgotten Australians. As the Prime Minister has said to everyone today, we need to now start to describe the people who were part of this generation as the remembered Australians. But I want to thank all of those people: the former child migrants, their families, all of the people who came to support them here in Canberra and all of the people who participated right around Australia. We had events in each of the capital cities and many of our regional towns. To each and every one of you, for being prepared to participate in what was, and I think will continue to be for some time, a very emotional day, we thank you very, very deeply.

To the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, I say thank you. If everyone else does not mind, I will say on behalf of the whole parliament: thank you to both of you for the way in which you contributed today. You have made it the special day that half a million Australians had been hoping for. We all thank you very much for that.

None of this would have been possible without a lot of guidance. I asked Andrew Murray a few months ago if he would head an advisory committee to the government to help us make sure that we had a very serious occasion that recognised the importance of what we did today. He was joined by a number of people: Ian Thwaites from the Child Migrants Trust, Harold Haig from the International Association of Former Child Migrants and Their Families, Caroline Carroll from the Alliance of Forgotten Australians, and Leonie Sheedy and Joanna Penglase from the Care Leavers Australia Network. These are people with enormous hearts who are from what can only be described as advocacy groups, people who have done so much over such a long time, listening to and caring for people who are in many, many cases extremely damaged from their terrible lives in institutions, orphanages and foster care.

Andrew did a wonderful job as a senator heading various inquiries into these issues, along with all the senators who helped him on those inquiries, and we do thank him and them. As for the advocacy groups, we would not have got it right without them. We would not have been able to express ourselves in the way that we all have today without their guidance, and I sincerely thank them all.

I do particularly want to thank the members for Corio and Blaxland—who have in some ways been first-class pests!—for making sure that today happened. If you want something done and you want something

done passionately, those two know how to make sure it happens. You have been wonderful advocates for and wonderful friends to the forgotten Australians and the former child migrants.

I also want to single out the member for Swan, who I think might have gone to join the people out the front. He spoke very movingly here just half an hour or so ago, partly about his own personal experience—and it was wonderful to know that his brother was able to be here with him today. He has a very deep understanding of many of these people, whose suffering he shared. I am sure he is representing us all very well out on the lawns in front of Parliament House now, as people listen to music, share stories and, we hope, together begin the healing process.

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah) (2.17 pm)—On indulgence, Mr Speaker, I would like to associate myself with the minister's comments.

Asylum Seekers

Mr TURNBULL (2.17 pm)—My question is to the Prime Minister, and I refer to the two documents that he has just tabled. The first is the document which is headed 'Message to the 78 passengers on the *Oceanic Viking*' and states in item 1:

If UNHCR has found you to be a refugee—Australian officials will assist you to be resettled within four to six weeks from the time you disembark the vessel.

I also refer him to the letter from the Secretary of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship to the minister, dated today, which states in the passage he quoted:

The group is being treated in a manner consistent with that afforded to any other asylum seeker or refugee in Indonesia.

My question to the Prime Minister is: given the statement in that letter, how many other refugees in Indonesia found to be so by the

UNHCR will be resettled in Australia within four to six weeks?

Mr RUDD—I thank the honourable member for his question. The first thing I would say about the document he refers to, which is signed by the Minister-Counsellor for Immigration, the Australian Embassy, Jakarta, is that my advice—though I have been out of the country for some days—is that it has been in the public domain for some time. The question refers to paragraph 1 in the document, which is one of three conditionalities: the first is if the UNHCR has found an individual to be a refugee, the second is if they have already registered with UNHCR but their status has not been determined and the third is if they have not yet registered with UNHCR and their status is yet to be determined. It prescribes a general overall approach of different time frames between the first and the second and third categories, one of four to six weeks and the other of around 12 weeks.

The honourable gentleman then referred in his question to the letter from the secretary of the department of immigration to the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship today. Again, the introduction to that is:

I would like to confirm the following matters regarding the procedure and other arrangements applying to the group.

The secretary of the department goes on to say:

The group is being treated in a manner consistent with that afforded to any other asylum seeker or refugee in Indonesia.

The further dot point which is in the letter which I referred to before says, and it goes specifically to the question of time frames—that is what the honourable member has asked about:

The Indonesian government and the Australian government have agreed to a set of arrangements regarding the time frames for the processing of

the group in Indonesia, consistent with international practice and resettlement procedures.

In other words, there is nothing remarkable about the time frames. Therefore, we can act on the basis of the advice of the secretary of the department. He has provided us with that advice, and therefore the government, in seeking to resolve this complex matter and other complex immigration matters, will do so according to normal procedures, as confirmed by the secretary's advice contained in this letter today.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER (2.21 pm)—I inform the House that we have present in the gallery this afternoon His Excellency, Mr László Mandur, Deputy Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly. On behalf of the House I extend to him a very warm welcome.

Honourable members—Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Climate Change

Mr TURNOUR (2.21 pm)—My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister update the House on global and domestic efforts to tackle the challenge of climate change?

Mr RUDD—I thank the excellent member for Leichhardt for his question. Not only has he been active in making representations on the part of his constituency, but can I say in the various visits I have made as Prime Minister to Cairns and been with him and received the representations from his community that he is held in the highest regard by his community as well. The honourable member asked me about a question which goes to the heart of the interests of the people of Far North Queensland. It is climate change and its impact on the Barrier Reef as well. If you are concerned about climate change it would follow that you are concerned about the Barrier Reef—

Dr Southcott—What's the unemployment in Leichhardt?

Mr RUDD—Right on cue, the member for Boothby intervenes—and jobs. Let me think: how many people are employed in tourism on the Great Barrier Reef? Tens of thousands. What happens if you do not have a Barrier Reef? You do not have tens of thousands of jobs in tourism, which is why people in Far North Queensland are so desperately concerned about the impact on coral bleaching and other factors coming off climate change on what is not just an enormous environmental asset for Australia and the world but also, critically, a generator of jobs in Far North Queensland.

The honourable member asked me specifically about national and global action on climate change. I have just returned this morning from the APEC meeting in Singapore. In Singapore it was my privilege together with the President of Mexico to co-host a meeting of leaders from the APEC economies with the Prime Minister of Denmark. The Prime Minister of Denmark is the President of the Conference of Parties which will be convened in Copenhagen in about three weeks time. The clock is ticking as far as climate change is concerned, but the clock is also ticking when it comes to concluding an agreement at Copenhagen, and that is what we were talking about. Some weeks ago, as I have indicated in various public interviews and possibly in the parliament itself, the Prime Minister of Denmark asked the Mexican President and me to become Friends of the Chair—

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr RUDD—to assist in what we can possibly do to bring about an agreement in Copenhagen. And it is good to see there is such a strong level of interest on the part of those opposite in sealing a deal! I understand the National Party may have reflected their view

on these matters. I thought the Liberal Party was still supposed to be seriously engaged in these negotiations on climate change. Perhaps the script has already been lost on the part of those opposite. This meeting, which is so derided, it seems, by some of those opposite, was attended by the President of the United States, the President of China, the Prime Minister of Japan, the President of Indonesia, the President of Korea and others. The object was this: how do we use a leaders-level process—

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER—Order, those on my left! The Prime Minister has the call.

Mr RUDD—How do we bring about a leaders-level process to try and obtain an agreement at Copenhagen, given the fact that the officials-level progress so far has become bogged down? What we were able to do then, in consultation with one another, was to listen carefully to the briefing by the Danish Prime Minister, Prime Minister Rasmussen, on how we could bring about a framework agreement for Copenhagen, a strong global agreement in which the world agrees to the global goal of keeping global temperature rises within two degrees and where individual nations commit to specific actions to reduce emissions; one in which a global agreement is built on the basis of individual national actions, which becomes entirely relevant to the debate we have in this parliament on what happens with the future of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme.

Sunday's meeting of 19 leaders, co-chaired between the Mexicans and us and with the Prime Minister of Denmark in attendance, was an important step forward in seeking to bring about such a framework agreement. This will be difficult. It is also part of the challenge which the President of the United States now takes to Beijing for his bilateral visit to the People's Republic of

China, where the climate change discussions there are of such fundamental relevance to what now transpires in the lead-up to Copenhagen.

There were two clear and important outcomes from yesterday's meeting in Singapore. One is that many leaders have for the first time indicated that they will be attending the Copenhagen meeting.

Mr Tuckey interjecting—

Mr RUDD—The Prime Minister of Japan, which apparently obtains the scoffing interjection of the member for O'Connor, confirmed that he would be attending. In addition to the Prime Minister of Japan, the President of Korea, the President of Indonesia—himself so much the author of the Bali roadmap—together with the Chileans, together with us, together with others. The second important outcome was that there was a broad agreement among leaders to support a framework political agreement. President Obama spoke in support of such a proposal. In fact, he cautioned the group not to let the 'perfect' become the enemy of the 'good' in the agreement that we can seek to realise in Copenhagen. Prime Minister Rasmussen made an important contribution to this meeting. But the underlying logic is clear: a global deal is the sum of the national contributions which underpin it, including the Australian national contribution.

Mr Tuckey interjecting—

Mr RUDD—Again the member for O'Connor scoffs. I thought the Liberal Party were engaged in serious negotiations with us. Without clear national positions, including strong national commitments, there can be no deal, which is why we must work on our national commitments as well, which brings us to the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. In an exercise of good faith on the part of the government, what we have indicated to the opposition in their good faith

negotiations with us is that we are prepared to act on their concerns relating to agriculture. In the positions which have been put forward by the coalition to us up until now, the advice that we have obtained from the coalition is that agriculture was, frankly, a red line issue for them. Therefore, because we are determined to try and bring about a deal on the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme and because we recognise some of the internal political realities within the coalition, we have made this as a good faith gesture on our part in our determined efforts to bring about an outcome.

The final two weeks of sittings in the Senate will be devoted to the legislation. The legislation will be voted on in the House of Representatives and introduced to the Senate at the beginning of this week. There will be time for every single senator to speak on this bill—every single senator—if they so choose: two weeks. Further, the government will be prepared to extend parliamentary sittings as I know so many senators will want to speak on this bill. But the key thing is this: after so long of not acting on an emissions trading scheme within this country, the time has come to act, as those opposite have consistently argued themselves in recent years.

I say to all those opposite: continue your good faith negotiations with the government. I urge your negotiator the member for Groom, my good friend from Queensland, not to lose heart but to remain engaged in these negotiations, because we have some global interests at stake which will ultimately so much hang, as far as Australia is concerned, on our national actions as well. There is also the minor matter of business certainty. We will continue these good faith negotiations with the coalition. In the national interest and for business certainty we want this outcome. For the international interest and to underpin a global framework agreement at Copenhagen we need this outcome. The

clock is ticking for the planet, it is ticking for Australia and it is ticking for this parliament.

Asylum Seekers

Mr TURNBULL (2.30 pm)—My question is again to the Prime Minister. I refer to his answer to my previous question and the correspondence to which it related. Is it not the fact that, far from the 22 asylum seekers who have left the *Oceanic Viking* being treated, as he states, 'in a manner consistent with the treatment of any other asylum seeker in Indonesia', they are in fact being treated in a wholly inconsistent manner, because they are the only refugees in Indonesia to whom the Australian government has guaranteed resettlement within four to six weeks? Why won't the Prime Minister come clean on his special deal?

Mr RUDD—I note the Leader of the Opposition continues to gainsay the advice provided to the government by the Secretary of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship and to the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship. I referred before to what it said: that the Indonesian government and the Australian government have agreed to a set of arrangements regarding the timeframes for the processing of the group in Indonesia consistent with international practice and resettlement procedures.

The special deal which the Leader of the Opposition seems to refer to would be a special deal sought by individuals on that vessel to bring the vessel to Australia and not have it processed in Indonesia. We took the view, given the circumstances surrounding this vessel and where it was located, that it is entirely appropriate, and the Indonesians agreed for this to occur, for the vessel to go to Indonesia. The special deal being sought by those on the vessel was for the vessel to come to Australia. We have not responded to that pressure.

Honourable members interjecting—

Mr RUDD—Am I taking the interpretation from those opposite that they would wish to respond to that special pressure for a special deal and have the vessel come to Australia? They intervene that that is not their position. I seem to have heard the Liberal Premier of Western Australia say that that was precisely his position—that that vessel should come directly to Australia for processing. That is the position we have heard from them and I wait with interest for a position to be clearly articulated by the Leader of the Opposition: does he believe that this vessel should be processed in Indonesia or Australia? I have not heard him utter one clear statement on this, because yielding to special pressure, yielding to special deals, would be yielding to the demand that this vessel be processed in Australia rather than Indonesia. This government did not respond to that demand.

Climate Change

Mr PERRETT (2.32 pm)—My question is to the Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science and the Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change. Will the minister outline why the parliament needs to pass the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme now and why Australia needs to take action on climate change?

Mr COMBET—I thank the member for Moreton for his question. Today the House will vote on one of the most important economic and environmental reforms that this country has ever undertaken, in the form of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. As the Prime Minister indicated earlier, the science on climate change is absolutely clear. It is real and the impacts will be significant, particularly in this country as a hot and dry continent. A failure to act will have adverse effects on our ecosystems and our economy.

The recently released report, *Climate Change Risks to Australia's Coasts*, makes

this need to act very clear indeed. The report predicted that up to 247,600 individual residential buildings worth \$63 billion are at risk of inundation from a 1.1 metre sea level rise. That is modelled at the upper level of risk. Even with a midrange rise of 0.5 metres, current one-in-100-year extreme weather events, including inundation of coastal areas, could occur several times a year. It is very clear evidence of the importance of acting. At a 1.1 metre sea level rise major coastal infrastructure such as airports and ports will be at risk from inundation and more frequent extreme weather events. To mitigate this risk it is very important that we start reducing our emissions now. That is why the government is determined to pass the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme in this sitting period. The costs of further delay are unacceptable.

The International Energy Agency predicts it will cost an additional \$500 billion to cut global emissions for each year that global action is delayed. That is of course due to the increasing costs of adaptation that will occur and of the investment that will be needed in mitigation and abatement technology. The chairman of Shell Australia, Russell Caplan, recently made this observation about the issues concerning delay. He indicated that further delay:

... would create a climate of continuing uncertainty for industry and potentially delay the massive investments that are required ...

This is a problem that we are dealing with and that the business community is dealing with. This is why the government are working hard in good faith negotiations with the opposition to try and secure passage of this important legislation. It is also why the government announced yesterday that we will agree to exclude agricultural emissions from the CPRS indefinitely as part of a package agreed with the opposition. In addition, the government indicated that we would consider a range of ways in which the agricul-

ture sector can reduce its emissions, including by being able to generate offsetting credits. These are very significant statements of policy; ones that the government have made in their determination to see a solution achieved. The National Farmers Federation is out today, along with other farming groups, supporting and welcoming these important moves.

It is now time that we came together and passed this extremely important reform. It is time to get on with taking action on climate change. I call upon members of the opposition to take responsibility in this respect. Support emissions reductions in our economy. Support the government's efforts internationally. Rise above your internal squabbling, act in the interests of the Australian people and support the CPRS.

Asylum Seekers

Mr TURNBULL (2.37 pm)—My question is this to the Prime Minister—we are just getting over a lecture on internal squabbling from that distinguished trade unionist there.

Ms Gillard interjecting—

Mr TURNBULL—The Deputy Prime Minister is being very unruly, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER—The Leader of the Opposition will ignore the interjections, and the Deputy Prime Minister will sit there more quietly.

Mr TURNBULL—She is defying you, Mr Speaker. She is not sitting there quietly at all.

The SPEAKER—I encourage the Leader of the Opposition to ignore that, and the Deputy Prime Minister will sit there quietly.

Mr TURNBULL—My question is to the Prime Minister. Can the Prime Minister point to any other refugees in Indonesia, other than those from the *Oceanic Viking*, to whom the Australian government has guaranteed reset-

tlement within four to six weeks? If he cannot do so, will he agree that his claim that no preferential deal has been offered is patently false?

Mr RUDD—Mr Speaker, I note that the Leader of the Opposition routinely disputes the advice provided to us by the independent Public Service of Australia. It is part of a routine behaviour: attack the Secretary of the Treasury when you do not like what the Treasury advice is, and on this day, attack the Secretary of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship because you happen to disagree with what his advice is. The Secretary of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship has said very simply that the Indonesian government and the Australian government have agreed to a set of arrangements regarding the time frames for the processing of the group in Indonesia consistent with international practice of resettlement procedures. I would suggest that he pays attention to that advice.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER (2.49 pm)—I inform the House that we have present in the gallery this afternoon members of a delegation from the Financial and Economic Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China led by the Honourable Mr Mu Xing Sheng. On behalf of the House I extend a very warm welcome to our visitors.

Honourable members—Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Climate Change

Ms CAMPBELL (2.49 pm)—My question is to the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts. What threats do Australia's World Heritage sites face from climate change and what is the government doing to address those threats?

Mr GARRETT—I thank the member for her question. Australia is very lucky to have 17 World Heritage places like the Great Barrier Reef, magnificent natural and cultural assets, sites of global significance. The fact is we keep them in trust for the future whilst we benefit from them now in many ways. In particular, our 17 World Heritage places are places of significant economic value. They are economic assets that generate annually around \$12 billion and support around 120,000 jobs. That is a lot of employment for this country.

I am asked about threats to our World Heritage sites. In August I released a report that says that our iconic World Heritage properties face increased threats from climate change. This report, *The implications of climate change for Australia's World Heritage properties*, assesses the likely impacts of climate change on these places. Sites including the Sydney Opera House, the Great Barrier Reef, Kakadu National Park, the Tasmanian Wilderness and the Greater Blue Mountains area are identified as particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts. Effects include reduced rainfall, higher sea and land surface temperatures, more severe storm events, ocean acidification and rising sea levels. The most concerning thing about this report is that many properties listed for their natural values, amongst them the Great Barrier Reef, the Gondwana Rainforests, Fraser Island and Shark Bay, have a low capacity to adapt to climate change impacts. They are going to be difficult to protect from those effects of climate change.

I am asked what the government is doing to address these threats. The answer, Mr Speaker, is plenty, including building up the resilience and capacity of these places to adapt to the dangers that climate change presents. We are preparing the first ever climate change adaptation plan for Australia's World Heritage and iconic areas. We are also pro-

viding significant funding to better manage individual World Heritage areas of which the \$200 million Reef Rescue program under Caring for our Country is one example.

Today I have announced that the Rudd government will invest an additional \$38 million in the conservation and preservation of Australia's World Heritage places through the Caring for our Country program. The Caring for our Country World Heritage funding will address a range of environmental challenges, from eradicating pests on Macquarie Island in the Southern Ocean to protecting the biodiversity of Shark Bay in Western Australia. In the Gondwana Rainforests, stretching up the north-east coast of New South Wales into the south-east of Queensland, we will provide almost \$3.2 million over four years to help protect these ancient forests that house more than 200 rare and threatened plant and animal species. In western New South Wales private landholders in the Wallangra Lakes region will be assisted to combat erosion and pest plants and animals, helping ensure that the World Heritage values of this ancient region, which has been home to Aboriginal people for more than 50,000 years, remain intact.

The government is profoundly committed to safeguarding these special places. We can do that directly through good management, adequate funding and a heightened awareness of the need to act. But we must also act by introducing a Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme so that Australia can play its part in addressing dangerous climate change here at home and globally. With support from those opposite, we can bring through this important measure. It is in the national interest, it is in the international interest, and, critically, we can give upcoming generations the best chance of experiencing some of our most cherished places, our World Heritage areas.

Mr Chester interjecting—

The SPEAKER—Order, the member for Gippsland—I can give him a free kick for Movember at the moment—settle down!

Asylum Seekers

Mr TURNBULL (2.44 pm)—(2.44 pm)—My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer again to the message to the 78 passengers on the *Oceanic Viking* document that he tabled earlier. Will the Prime Minister inform the House whether he was made aware of the written offer and its contents before it was made to the asylum seekers on the *Oceanic Viking*? Did the Prime Minister approve the terms of the offer?

Mr RUDD—The answer to the honourable gentleman's question is no and no.

Sri Lanka

Mr CHEESEMAN (2.45 pm)—My question is to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Would the minister update the House on his recent visit to Sri Lanka?

Mr STEPHEN SMITH—I thank the member for his question. Last week on Monday I visited Sri Lanka, Colombo, together with the government's special representative to Sri Lanka, John McCarthy, the Ambassador for People Smuggling, Peter Woolcott, and also the acting Director-General of AusAID, Peter Baxter. There I met with President Rajapaksa, my counterpart Foreign Minister Bogollagama and also the Sri Lankan Minister for Law and Justice and the Minister for Human Rights and Disaster Management. As members of the House would appreciate, Sri Lanka has been through a terrible conflict, a civil war lasting over 25 years where thousands of people were casualties and thousands of people were displaced. We have only recently seen the end of that conflict. The challenge for Sri Lanka, with the assistance of the international community, is now to win the peace.

There were three areas of discussion that I had with the president and his ministers: firstly, cooperation on people-smuggling; secondly, how Australia could assist on the resettlement of displaced people and also reconstruction of considerably damaged territory, particularly in the north and in the east; and, finally, a reconciliation or a healing process so that all people in Sri Lanka would feel as though they had a role in Sri Lanka's future. So far as people-smuggling cooperation is concerned, Australia already cooperates well with Sri Lanka on people-smuggling matters but a memorandum of understanding was signed between Australia and Sri Lanka, by the special representative on Australia's side and a senior Sri Lankan official on Sri Lanka's side, to enhance our cooperation, particularly in legal areas, particularly with building capacity so far as prosecutions and disruptions are concerned.

Secondly, we also agreed that it was important, given that we are dealing with very difficult and complex issues so far as source and transit and destination countries are concerned, that both Australia and Sri Lanka continue to work very hard within the Bali process, the regional institution for dealing with people-smuggling and human-trafficking matters. In Australia in the middle of December, officials, under the guise of the Bali process, will consider some of the difficult people-smuggling matters associated with Sri Lanka. Dealing with that matter, there was a memorandum of understanding, as I have said, but Foreign Minister Bogollagama and I released a joint statement which dealt not just with those matters but also with questions of resettlement and also questions of reconciliation.

So far as displaced people are concerned, members would be aware that thousands of people were displaced and earlier in the year we had anywhere up to a quarter of a million Sri Lankans in displaced people's camps.

Initially Australia, together with the international community, was very, very concerned about lack of international agency access to those camps. Over time that access has improved. Indeed, special representative McCarthy last week visited one of the displaced people's camps. We have welcomed very much the fact that in recent weeks, in the last month or so, a substantial number of people have been resettled from those camps, but there is still a substantial job to be done. In the past Australia has rendered assistance to this. Some \$35 million worth of humanitarian and development assistance has been given by Australia to Sri Lanka over the last two years or so and in very recent times \$10 million to improve conditions in the camps but, more importantly, to resettle. I announced when I was there a further contribution by Australia of \$11 million: \$6 million to assist in de-mining to ensure that the areas where people are resettled to are free from the terrible blight of landmines; also \$3 million to help through the United Nations with housing to resettle these people from displaced camps into accommodation; and, thirdly, \$2 million worth of food through the World Food Program.

I very much made the point to the President and his ministers that, in ensuring this resettlement occurs, freedom of movement so far as those displaced people are concerned is absolutely essential. I also made the point that Australia was looking favourably to assisting both the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank on its reconstruction projects in the north and in the east, and in Singapore in the margins of APEC I had a conversation with Mr Zoellick, the executive director of the World Bank, indicating Australia's in-principle support for those reconstruction efforts so far as the World Bank is concerned.

Finally, it is absolutely essential—and here Sri Lanka needs both the urgings and

the assistance of Australia and the international community—that, having won the war, the Sri Lankan government now needs to win the peace. That can only be done through a process of reconciliation, through a process of political rapprochement, through a process of healing. It is very important that the Sri Lankan government continues to move on this front, continues to look seriously at questions of devolution, continues to ensure that all Sri Lankans have a view that they have a share in the country's future. I made the point that Australia has made publicly in the past, that at the end of the conflict there are very many allegations of atrocities and breaches of human rights. We expect that these atrocities will be independently and credibly investigated. We welcome the fact that Sri Lanka has responded to the report of the United States Department of State by establishing a commission of inquiry. We will watch that very closely and we hope that that will be a credible and independent investigation of these allegations made on both sides of the conflict.

Lastly, the special representative, Mr McCarthy, will submit a full report to me of his visit. We are proposing to share this report with our friends and partners in the region, with our like-minded friends. It is very important that Australia not only holds Sri Lanka to account on these key issues but renders as much assistance as we can to help Sri Lanka win the peace.

Asylum Seekers

Ms JULIE BISHOP (2.51 pm)—My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister inform the House whether he sought to have a formal bilateral meeting with the Indonesian President at the APEC summit last weekend to discuss the *Oceanic Viking* and people-smuggling? If not, why not?

Mr RUDD—My dealings with President Yudhoyono of Indonesia are in first-class working order right across the spread of the bilateral relationship, including on border security matters—and I will come back to the question of our meetings at the recent APEC gathering. Can I say to the member for Curtin that, notwithstanding the opposition's preoccupation with this individual vessel—which some would say is a legitimate preoccupation—we are, with the Indonesians, on a rolling basis engaged in a series of interruptions of people-smuggling activities. In fact, together with other countries in the region, in the last 12 months we have engaged in some 90 interruptions of such activities.

In the course of the APEC meeting the President of Indonesia and I discussed a range of things, including his visit to Australia which will occur at either the end of this year or early next year—we are working on dates, and it is currently likely to be in February. Can I suggest to those opposite that as a further mark of respect for the Indonesian President—and I have had some early consultations with the Presiding Officers about this—and given that he was recently elected as the democratically elected President of his country, when he visits it would be good if he were extended the honour of addressing the Australian parliament. We think that is entirely appropriate, as it would be the first time he has done so.

On the question of the APEC meetings and the discussions with the President of Indonesia—

The SPEAKER—Order! The Prime Minister shall resume his seat.

Mr Pyne—You're wriggling on the hook!

The SPEAKER—I am not sure whether the Manager of Opposition Business is trying to bait me, but he will sit there quietly. The

Deputy Leader of the Opposition on a point of order.

Ms Julie Bishop—Mr Speaker, I asked whether the Prime Minister had sought a formal bilateral meeting at APEC. If not, why not?

The SPEAKER—Order! The Prime Minister is responding to the question.

Mr RUDD—At the APEC meeting, I was aware of the fact that I would be seeing the President of Indonesia informally on a number of occasions. In total, there were about five occasions. We discussed everything from border protection to asylum seekers, the individual vessel in question, the President's visit to Australia, his possible address to the parliament as well as world peace.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER—The House will come to order! I am not sure whether world peace goes to pacifying the House, but if President Yudhoyono wants to help me I will take his help.

Economy

Mr NEUMANN (2.54 pm)—My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer update the House on the latest forecast for the economy and the challenges ahead?

Mr SWAN—I thank the member for Blair for his question about the latest forecast for the economy, because I think there is something very special that we have seen in our recent forecasts. The impact of the economic stimulus, combined with all Australians, both employers and employees, working together, and a better global outlook, has meant that we are the fastest growing advanced economy. That is something we should all be proud of, because it has been the efforts of all Australians, working together, that have delivered that outcome. It is an outcome that has meant unemployment has been lower than it otherwise would be. It is an outcome

that has meant we have had fewer business bankruptcies than we otherwise would have had. What that has meant is that there has been less skill destruction in the Australian economy, fewer long-term unemployed and less of a legacy of destruction for communities. And many more businesses have kept their doors open as a result of our economic stimulus. All of these outcomes were particularly underlined for me during my meetings at the G20 in Scotland and also at APEC in Singapore last week. What they show is the effectiveness of the economic stimulus and, as I said before, improved prospects in the global economy.

That has also meant we have performed better than expected. Only a week or two ago I released our Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook, which forecast stronger growth, lower unemployment, lower deficits and lower debt compared to the budget. Our growth will continue to be stronger than any other advanced economy, growing by 1½ per cent in 2009-10, when every other advanced economy will this year contract. Unemployment in Australia is now expected to be 6¾ per cent by June 2010. That is much lower than the peak of 8½ per cent forecast in the budget and well below the double digit rates of unemployment in many other advanced economies. This is the result of community resilience, the success of the stimulus and the combined impact of economic stimulus by other governments around the world, including conservative governments, who understand the importance of intervening in these circumstances to support their economies. The result is that more than 200,000 Australians have kept their jobs and Australia has avoided a very deep recession. But there are some hefty challenges ahead. As we have seen—and as the Prime Minister indicated before—from the meetings over the weekend, there are still challenges and uncertainties in the global economy. The IMF cau-

tioned again this month that the global recovery is uneven, it is not yet self-sustaining and it certainly does remain dependent on policy support.

Domestically, our economy does have spare capacity. This was demonstrated yet again by last week's unemployment figures. Unemployment rose a little, with some 670,000 Australians still looking for work. We have to be aware that domestic incomes are still under pressure. There has been a sharp decline in global commodity prices. There has been a cut in hours worked. Company profits are expected to shrink by 3¼ per cent. The reduction in hours worked is equivalent to a loss of around 200,000 full-time jobs. All of these things weigh heavily on incomes. And business investment is expected to fall by 6½ per cent in 2009-10.

All of these things mean that we must continue with our stimulus. We judge a gradual withdrawal of stimulus is still the best way to go to support employment and to support small business, unlike those opposite, who want to rip it out and rip out the rug from underneath the recovery. Gradual withdrawal has the full support of the business community in this country. That is why I think all Australians can be proud of what we have achieved together. We have come through the worst of the global recession in a stronger position than any other advanced economy. The government is working just as hard on the post-crisis economy as we did on surviving the crisis itself. We did the hard yards to position ourselves as the strongest performing advanced economy and will do the hard yards to turn this into something much more enduring. In many ways we are just beginning.

Asylum Seekers

Dr STONE (3.00 pm)—My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer the Prime Minister to comments made by his Minister for Immi-

gration and Citizenship, Senator Evans, about resettlement of asylum seekers who have disembarked from the *Oceanic Viking*: 'I would expect us to be taking the larger proportion of the group.' I next refer the Prime Minister to his own comments made on radio 3AW:

The United Nations High Commissioner for refugees, working with us and working with the other resettlement countries, could send these individuals to any particular country, and we do not know where that would occur at this stage.

Prime Minister, is Australia taking the larger proportion of the group or not?

Mr RUDD—The member for Murray struggles today on this one. The bottom line is that when it comes to resettlement arrangements, as I have said consistently and as the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship has said consistently and as the Minister for Foreign Affairs has said consistently—and as it applied under those opposite when they were in government—there is a collective responsibility across all 16 resettlement countries. It has been so since the earliest days of the operation of the UNHCR convention back in the 1950s. That is the operation under which we conduct ourselves. We think it is the right way to go. These things will be resolved as appropriate with the UNHCR.

We have full confidence in the way in which our officials are handling these matters. We have a border protection committee in the cabinet, chaired by the minister for immigration, which is meeting on a regular basis not simply concerning this particular vessel but against the entire range of challenges in the archipelago, including the large number of interruptions that I referred to before. It is chaired by the minister and has a national security adviser on it and also representatives of the various ministries and agencies and representatives of staffs, who are in there all the time working through the detail of this, as it should be.

Building the Education Revolution Program

Mrs D'ATH (3.02 pm)—My question is to the Minister for Education, the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and the Minister for Social Inclusion. How is Building the Education Revolution and government stimulus supporting jobs and local schools?

Ms GILLARD—I thank the member for Petrie for her question. I know that in her electorate she is supporting her 33 schools, which have received \$85 million for 118 projects—great news for Petrie. I had the opportunity last week to visit, with the member for Petrie, two of her local schools: Redcliffe State High and Bald Hills State School, a primary school. Both of these are being transformed by Building the Education Revolution money. I was very impressed when I talked with the principal, the teachers and the students about the difference that these new facilities will make for their education. At Bald Hills State School I talked to the principal, Mr Keith Warwick, about what they were using their \$200,000 National School Pride money and their \$3 million Primary Schools for the 21st Century money for, and it is being devoted to a new resource and multipurpose hall. The importance of this multipurpose hall—and I am sure members in this place who care about education will be interested—is that this primary school currently has nowhere where it can bring the whole school together. If they want to have a whole-school activity they run the risk of the weather—whether it will be too hot to have children sitting outside or whether it will rain on the event. For events where they do not want to run any weather risk, it now costs them around \$1,000 a time to bus the children to adjacent community facilities. No wonder they are identifying this new building as a transformation of their school.

As well as transforming schools, this is a program that is supporting jobs. At Bald Hills primary school, we know that that project, which is nearing completion, is currently employing around 15 people. Jobs are going to local firms like Kingswood Cabinets, the G. James roofing company and In-tech Security. This is local evidence of what is happening around the nation: the government's nation-building economic stimulus, through Building the Education Revolution, supporting jobs in local communities.

We know that unemployment currently stands at around 670,000 Australians. Whilst the peak of unemployment has been revised downwards, we expect unemployment to peak at 6.75 per cent. We need to continue to support Australian jobs by continuing economic stimulus. I can say that, on this side of the House, we will not give up on supporting jobs during the days of the global recession. Clearly, those on the other side of the House already have. Does anybody remember the days when the Leader of the Opposition used to wander around saying, 'It's all about jobs, jobs and jobs.' He does not do that any more. On this side of the House, we will not give up on supporting Australian jobs. On that side of the House, they already have.

Nation Building for Recovery: Kalgoorlie Electorate

Mr HAASE (3.06 pm)—My question is directed to the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government. In a motion appearing on the *Notice Paper* in the minister's name calling on the House to support borrowing for his nation building for recovery program, every electorate in Australia is listed, except Kalgoorlie. Will the minister explain to the House and the hardworking people of the electorate of Kalgoorlie why they, when they represent the current powerhouse of the nation and make up 91 per cent of Western

Australia and nearly one-third of the Australian landmass, have been excluded from the minister's list?

Mr ALBANESE—I sincerely thank the member for Kalgoorlie for his question. I can assure the member for Kalgoorlie of this: his electorate is benefiting from this government's economic stimulus plan. His electorate is benefiting from the jobs that are going into Kalgoorlie right now as a result of this government's economic strategy. He clearly is not aware of what is going on in his electorate, but of course he might be aware of a little project called the Oakajee Port project, the Commonwealth's first ever investment in our ports.

Mr Haase—Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It is a matter of relevance. The minister was asked simply why Kalgoorlie was excluded from his list. It was not meant as an opportunity to pontificate on other matters.

The SPEAKER—The minister has the call. The minister is responding to the question.

Mr ALBANESE—I thank the member for Kalgoorlie for his question. I repeat that I am happy for the member for Kalgoorlie to have a debate on the motion that we have put forward, and we might be able to arrange that at some time in this coming fortnight. What those opposite have done is voted against economic stimulus in their own electorates, voted against community infrastructure, voted against the Black Spot Program increase, voted against the rail safety programs, voted against the new ports infrastructure—

Mr Pyne—Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order on relevance. The minister was not asked a general question about infrastructure. He was asked a specific question about why Kalgoorlie was the poor cousin of the parliament when it came to the list of seats named in the motion, and he should either

explain why Kalgoorlie was left off the list or sit down.

The SPEAKER—The minister is responding to the question.

Mr ALBANESE—I assure those members opposite—because clearly their tactics committee has decided that they want the opportunity to vote on this motion—that we will be giving them the opportunity over the coming fortnight to vote on this motion, to vote on whether they support infrastructure funding in their own electorates.

The SPEAKER—Order! Has the minister concluded his answer?

Mr ALBANESE—No, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER—The minister will resume his seat. The member for Mackellar on a point of order.

Mrs Bronwyn Bishop—Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order on the question of relevance. Clearly, to be relevant to this question the minister must at least use the word 'list' on at least one occasion. He has yet to do it. Why was Kalgoorlie left off the list?

The SPEAKER—The minister is responding to the question.

Mr ALBANESE—We have got lists, Mr Speaker. We have got lists of projects right around the nation—33,000 of them. That is what is on our list: 33,000 economic infrastructure projects that are supporting jobs today in each and every electorate around the nation while building the infrastructure that Australia needs for tomorrow.

Infrastructure Funding: Wayside Chapel

Mr MURPHY (3.11 pm)—My question is to the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government. As part of its economic stimulus plan, why is the government providing infrastructure funding for the Wayside Chapel in Sydney?

Mr ALBANESE—I thank the member for Lowe for his question. Indeed, on Friday I was in the electorate of Wentworth announcing funding for an infrastructure project as part of our economic stimulus plan—important funding for the Wayside Chapel in Kings Cross. This is an important community institution that has been providing services in Sydney since 1964 for the most vulnerable in our community. But this is also an institution that is in dire trouble. It is in dire trouble because, since 1964, there has been very little physical improvement to the building. The product of ageing, fires and wear and tear on that facility has meant that 40 per cent of it is uninhabitable, meaning that the very existence of this institution was under threat.

On Friday I announced that \$3 million would be made available—in principle—from the government in order to fund the capital improvement of the Wayside Chapel. It will support jobs in the short term—some 50 jobs. This is a project that is shovel-ready; it is ready to go. The DA has been approved and we can expect work to begin in the first half of 2010.

There are also important contributions from the New South Wales government and from individuals and donors in the community. Along with Reverend Graham Long we call upon people—and I am sure the Leader of the Opposition would join this call—to contribute funds so that the fit-out can be made as good as possible and so that the services that Wayside can provide can continue to be provided into the future.

This project will also provide opportunities for apprenticeships and traineeships. It is an investment, because, of course, if this facility were not available it would result in a real drain on public finances due to the increased costs of looking after people who

would simply fall through the cracks if that facility were not there.

It was a very proud day for me on Friday to be with Reverend Long and Tanya Plibersek, the Minister for Housing, and many of the volunteers who make such an extraordinary contribution at Wayside. I spoke to the Leader of the Opposition prior to making the announcement and I know that he was supportive of Wayside, as he has been, along with the member for Sydney, for a long time. Lucy Turnbull is of course also a strong supporter of Wayside. I pay tribute to Reverend Long and all the others. This is an example of the government's economic stimulus projects making a real difference—in the short term, in job creation and in providing an important facility in Sydney and, in the long term, making sure that Wayside Chapel can continue to provide the best of services to the most vulnerable in our community for many years and decades ahead.

Bushfire Safety

Mr WOOD (3.15 pm)—My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister explain to the Dandenong Ranges school community that, in the event of a bushfire, schools will have no fire bunkers, many will only have minor upgrades to fire shelters and, I am informed, no school will be equipped with an external sprinkler system?

Mr RUDD—I thank the honourable member for his question. The honourable member will be fully aware of the fact that he is actually meeting with the Attorney-General at 3.30 on this very matter. I would have thought it was better to prosecute the conclusion of those discussions with the minister on the basis of the correspondence which has already occurred between the minister and the honourable member to bring this to a satisfactory conclusion. Our concern, like all members in this place, is to do whatever is physically possible to support

safety and security in communities across Australia, but I would draw your attention to the fact that a meeting is supposed to occur in 15 minutes.

The SPEAKER—Order! The Prime Minister has concluded. The member for La Trobe.

Mr Wood—We actually tried to have a meeting with the Prime Minister.

The SPEAKER—Does the member for La Trobe have a point of order?

Mr Wood—The point of order is: the Prime Minister previously said I could have a meeting with him. This is a crucial issue in my electorate. It is regarding children's safety.

The SPEAKER—Order! The member will resume his seat.

Honourable members interjecting—

Mr Albanese interjecting—

The SPEAKER—Order! The Leader of the House will resume his seat. Members on both sides will dampen their emotions on things that need to be discussed with much more rational behaviour.

Housing

Mr BIDGOOD (3.17 pm)—My question is to the Minister for Housing. How is the government's investment in housing supporting jobs in regional Australia and building the nation?

Ms PLIBERSEK—I very happy to report that the nation-building economic stimulus package social housing component is bang on track to deliver three-quarters of the homes that we are set to deliver by the end of 2010. More than 3,200 have started and almost 200 are complete, and in the repairs and maintenance area work has been done on 40,000 homes already. In fact, 15,000 homes have benefited from repairs to common areas and 5,500 homes have had major work done

to them, the sort of major work that has meant that these houses have been returned to active use where they would have fallen into disrepair and disuse otherwise or where they were already vacant.

It was terrific to visit the member for Dawson's electorate recently and see a brand-new housing construction project starting off there in Cannonvale. One of several projects that we visited on that particular trip was six two-bedroom apartments including three units that will be accessible for people with disabilities. The slab had been laid, the external walls were going up and the internal framing was starting on that day as well. I met the project manager for that development, Eamon Carey. His company is a small family-run business on the Whitsunday Coast. He told me that 14 local subcontractors were working on that site every day. The work started in September and will go until April 2010. These are absolutely vital jobs at a time when companies like Eamon Carey's family-run business would have been in trouble with the global financial crisis. That story has been repeated right across the country and right across Queensland. Eighty homes from the nation-building economic stimulus program have been approved in Mackay, Bowen, Proserpine and Cannonvale; 304 homes will be built in Townsville; 300 in Far North Queensland, including 200 in the Cairns region and 80 in the Atherton Tablelands, Innisfail and Ingham; and 571 homes on the Gold Coast.

Of course, it is not just the nation-building economic stimulus package that is supporting jobs in housing and construction. In Cairns, when I went to visit the member for Leichhardt's electorate, I met a lovely couple, Sam and Margaret Costa, who had moved into one of the first homes through our National Rental Affordability Scheme. They were a farming couple who had lost their farm due to many years of drought and

they had moved to Cairns to be closer to family supports. They had been sleeping with relatives in lounge rooms and I asked Margaret where she thought she would be if she had not found the National Rental Affordability Scheme property. She told me that she thought she would be sleeping under a bridge. This is a couple in their 60s—Margaret is very ill and her husband, who had a tractor roll onto him, is her carer—and they are the type of people who are benefiting from the 100 new affordable rental homes that will be built through the National Rental Affordability Scheme in their area.

In Mackay I announced 59 National Rental Affordability Scheme properties. I went to the site where 35 three-bedroom townhouses will be built. They are going to be rented out for \$300 a week, a \$100 saving for the people who will be moving into those properties—almost \$5,000 a year. That makes a huge difference to a family struggling to keep their heads above water. It may even mean some of those families can start saving a deposit for a home of their own. Eighteen months ago when I visited Mackay people told me all the time about rental stress in that area and how residents of Mackay who had been there all their lives were moving out because they could no longer afford a place to rent in Mackay. Conditions are a little better now. Because of the economic downturn, there is less pressure on rentals in that area but, as the economy recovers, that rental pressure will return. I am happy to report that, with each of these National Rental Affordability Scheme properties, tradespeople, architects and planners are involved in their construction and that they will make a huge difference as that rental pressure returns. With each of these homes, the repairs and maintenance and the new construction are supporting jobs right across the trades, including planning and architects. All of them are contributing to a future

where people will find an affordable home to rent just a little bit easier.

Consultancies

Mrs BRONWYN BISHOP (3.22 pm)—My question is to the Minister for Finance and Deregulation. I refer the minister to a report in last week's *Australian* newspaper that the total value of consultancy contracts for policy advice, research and audits let by this government to date is \$940 million. Is this figure correct and does the minister agree that this government has failed to fulfil its election promise to reduce spending on consultants?

Mr TANNER—I genuinely thank the member for Mackellar for her question, because unfortunately there has been a degree of inaccurate reporting over the past few months on this matter and I am in a position to set the record straight.

Ms Gillard—Surely not!

Mr TANNER—Some members will be astonished to hear that, Mr Speaker. The facts that are available from the annual reports that have recently been presented to the parliament do indicate that of the top 40 agencies' spending on consultancies—and typically that covers virtually the vast bulk of overall spending on consultancies—the figure for the final full year of the Howard government, the 2006-07 year, was \$511 million. The figure for the 2007-08 year was \$426 million and the figure for the 2008-09 year was \$460 million. In other words, in both cases the spending of the Australian government under the Rudd government was substantially lower than that under the Howard government. We are currently completing in the department the analysis of the total figures, but I can indicate that the amount—that is, the total figure for the 2008-09 year for all government agencies—is still well below the figure for the top 40 in the last full year of the Howard government. So the truth is that,

under the Rudd government, contrary to media reports in various newspapers, including the *Australian Financial Review* and the *Australian*, consultancy spending has gone down very significantly.

In a broader sense, it is worth noting that, as a result of the government's reform agenda with respect to procurement, we are seeing savings on a variety of fronts, including IT purchasing, including travel purchasing and including arrangements with respect to both ownership and tenancy of property. We are also seeing savings as a result of the two per cent one-off efficiency dividend that was put in place in last year's budget. In overall terms—and this is a figure that I would commend to the attention of members on both sides of the House—we are seeing savings of approximately \$7 billion over six years in the costs of administering government in this country. One modest component of that is a reduction in spending on consultancies. We inherited government from a government that was rolling in money and that was wasting a lot of money on the costs of government, and we are tackling the waste and inefficiency that we inherited and we are substantially reducing the cost of government to Australian taxpayers.

Timor Sea Oil Spill

Ms PARKE (3.26 pm)—My question is to the Minister for Resources and Energy and the Minister for Tourism. Will the minister update the House on progress with the Montara commission of inquiry and work to secure the Montara well now that the flow of oil and gas has been stopped?

Mr MARTIN FERGUSON—I thank the member for Fremantle for her question. I understand the close attention she has paid to the Montara oil and gas leak. On that note, I am pleased to advise the House that on 3 November PTTEP Australasia, the operator of the Montara oil field, successfully killed

the leaking well and the fire that had broken out on the Montara wellhead platform. I extend my appreciation to all those involved for the assistance and hard work they put into killing the well.

Bringing the well under control was a great relief to all those involved and to the Australian community. I am also required to advise the House that there is more work to be done to secure the well and to make the facilities safe. For those reasons, on Friday of last week, I met with PTTEP Australasia in Perth to discuss the work that still needs to be done. Unfortunately, the impact of the fire on both the West Atlas drilling rig and the Montara wellhead platform means that this work will take longer than initially expected. Technical options are still under review and PTTEP Australasia is working with the relevant regulators, particularly the National Offshore Petroleum Safety Authority to ensure that the work is done safely and as soon as possible. All options require access to the Montara wellhead platform and therefore safety case revisions will have to take into account the new hazards introduced following the fire, requiring very careful consideration by PTTEP Australasia and careful assessment by NOPSA.

I also emphasise that, before personnel are able to undertake any activity at either facility, the operator must provide NOPSA with evidence that all risks have been comprehensively assessed and that control measures are in place to reduce the risk to a level that is as low as is reasonably practical. Concurrent with this work, I announced the commencement of the Montara commission of inquiry on 5 November, although I first flagged this on 7 September.

Honourable members interjecting—

Mr MARTIN FERGUSON—I appreciate the interest of the House in this important matter.

The SPEAKER—Order! I am listening intently, Minister.

Mr MARTIN FERGUSON—As I was indicating—and I am sure that the member for Sturt is very interested in this matter—it is important that we seek to understand the cause of the incident, that we learn from it and that we put in place any measures that could stop it from happening again. For those reasons I appointed Mr David Borthwick, the former secretary of the department of the environment, to conduct the inquiry in accordance with the amendments supported by the House to the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act. Those amendments provide a broad-ranging major incident investigation power for the commissioner.

I also note that the commissioner will consider the environmental impacts of the incident including reviewing environmental monitoring laws. In the last couple of years there have been four serious oil and gas incidents, two during tropical cyclone Billy involving vessels used in petroleum production activities, the recent Montara accident and the Varanus gas explosion, which effectively meant Western Australia lost 30 per cent of its energy supplies for a considerable period.

I note that these facilities involve incidents which are regulated by a combination of Commonwealth, Western Australian and Northern Territory agencies. Each of these events has been or will continue to be subject to independent investigations. I can assure the House that I will be acting on the recommendations of those independent investigations.

Mr Rudd—Mr Speaker, I ask that further questions be placed on the *Notice Paper*.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE: ADDITIONAL ANSWERS

Bushfire Safety

Mr RUDD (Griffith—Prime Minister) (3.31 pm)—Mr Speaker, I seek the indulgence of the chair to add to an answer.

The SPEAKER—The Prime Minister may proceed.

Mr RUDD—The member for La Trobe asked a question which dealt with fire refuges at schools in his electorate. In asking the question, I would assume the member for La Trobe would be aware of a detailed letter from the Attorney-General going through this in two pages of length concerning the specific issues which he raised. It goes to serious concerns about refuges at schools, and I would draw to the House's attention part of the content of the Attorney's letter which says:

The Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission recently released its interim report. In relation to the safety of schools during fires, the commission noted that:

Since 7 February, DEECD—

the department of education in Victoria—

has implemented significant policy changes:

- a new procedure for school closures on TFB days and days of extreme fire risk
- a safety audit of refuges in schools in the Eastern and Northern Metropolitan Regions
- provision of the Bushfire Safety Checklist to children's services.

The letter goes on to say:

With respect to the safety audit of the 35 refuges so far ordered, eight were assessed as totally unacceptable, seven were assessed as marginal and 20 were assessed as acceptable but with higher urgent priority rectification required in most cases. School principals have been provided with a copy of the report relating to the refuge at their school. The Victorian government is now in the process of costing the rectification works.

This letter then goes on for two pages in similar levels of specificity concerning refugees. I would think that in raising a question in the manner in which it was raised in this place, it would be useful to reflect on the specific information which the Attorney-General has provided in response to the honourable member on behalf of his constituents. I am sure that the Attorney-General will have a productive meeting with the member for La Trobe given that these concerns relating to bushfire affected areas are of genuine concern to all the members.

Asylum Seekers

Mr RUDD (Griffith—Prime Minister) (3.32 pm)—Mr Speaker, I seek the indulgence of the chair to add to a further answer I gave earlier today.

The SPEAKER—The Prime Minister may proceed.

Mr RUDD—The Leader of the Opposition asked a question about the note provided by the ministerial councillor for immigration at the Australian embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia. He asked me whether I was aware of its contents and whether I approved of them. The answer was no and no, and that remains the case. As the honourable Leader of the Opposition will be familiar, lest there be any doubt, these matters are considered by the border protection committee of the cabinet. That is where it is handled. It is chaired by the immigration minister. That is where the processing lies. There are other ministers represented on the committee. There are ministerial staff on the committee, including my own staff. This government and I as Prime Minister fully endorse the handling of this matter including this document from the immigration councillor in Jakarta. It has been discharged by officials through that official process, and, as I have said before, as Prime Minister, I accept full responsibility for the government's border protection policy.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

Mr WOOD (La Trobe) (3.33 pm)—Mr Speaker, I wish to make a personal explanation.

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

Mr WOOD—Absolutely.

The SPEAKER—Please proceed.

Mr WOOD—First of all, regarding a meeting with the Attorney-General, my office is not aware of that meeting. Secondly, regarding the letter the Prime Minister refers to, since that letter I actually contacted your office making you aware of 11 schools which are not happy with what is happening with the fire upgrades.

The SPEAKER—Order! The member will resume his seat. You cannot debate the issue.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE: ADDITIONAL ANSWERS

Kalgoorlie Electorate

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government) (3.34 pm)—Mr Speaker, I seek the indulgence of the chair to add to an answer.

The SPEAKER—The minister may proceed.

Mr ALBANESE—In response to a question from the member for Kalgoorlie about a motion that I have on the *Notice Paper* about the Nation Building and Jobs program, I can inform the member for Kalgoorlie that the following funding is coming to his electorate: Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program funding, \$11.96 million; Black Spot Program funding, \$2.67 million; Boom Gates program funding, \$2.53 million; and Building the Education Revolution program funding for a total of 166 schools—

Mr Haase—Mr Speaker, on a point of order, I seek information: how could this be considered in any way to be an addition to an answer?

The SPEAKER—The member for Kalgoorlie will resume his seat.

Mr Pyne—Mr Speaker, without wishing to test the patience of the Speaker, since this lead answer on the projects in Kalgoorlie was not relevant to the question in the first place, how can it be relevant in adding to an answer to a question? The question was why Kalgoorlie was not on the list. It was not about spending in Kalgoorlie. So how can adding to an answer be relevant when answering it in this manner was not relevant in the first place?

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER—Order! The member for Braddon and the Chief Government Whip at this late stage are not helping and I cannot believe everybody is waiting around for this. The member for Kalgoorlie asked a question that was in order. As part of that question he referred to a question on the *Notice Paper*. That then opens the door for the minister to make references to that motion. I hope that he is now going to conclude his addition to his answer in a very short time period.

Mr ALBANESE—I am, Mr Speaker. The total number of schools in Kalgoorlie benefiting from the Building the Education Revolution is 166. The total number of projects is 426, worth \$206 million—

Mrs Bronwyn Bishop—Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

The SPEAKER—The member for Mackellar will resume her seat. I have ruled on the point of order.

Mrs Bronwyn Bishop—I have a different point of order.

Mr ALBANESE—On top of that, the nation-building program is delivering \$695 million for Kalgoorlie.

Mrs Bronwyn Bishop—Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order which goes to relevance. The minister, by his adding of material, is implying to the House that Kalgoorlie is in fact on the list. Whether it is on the list or not is what we need to know if he is adding to the answer. Otherwise, he is misleading the House.

The SPEAKER—Order! There is no point of order.

Mr ALBANESE—Those opposite have a very odd sense of priorities.

Mr Truss—He's debating the question.

The SPEAKER—He is answering the question.

Mr ALBANESE—Their obsession is whether or not something is on the list, when there is a billion dollars of funding going into the electorate of Kalgoorlie that they voted against.

QUESTIONS TO THE SPEAKER

Questions in Writing

Mr RANDALL (3.37 pm)—Mr Speaker, under standing order 105(b), I draw your attention to the fact that questions in writing Nos 959, 960, 961 to the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, the member for Grayndler, have not been answered. The 60 days expired on 6 November. I ask that you write to him and have them answered.

The SPEAKER—If the answers remain outstanding I will do as required under the standing orders.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS

Reports Nos 9 and 10 of 2009-10

The SPEAKER (3.38 pm)—I present the Auditor-General's Audit reports Nos 9 and 10 of 2009-10, entitled: *Airservices Aus-*

tralia's upper airspace management contracts with the Solomon Islands government, Airservices Australia, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government; and Processing of incoming international air passengers, Australian Customs and Border Protection Services.

Ordered that the reports be made parliamentary papers.

DOCUMENTS

Mr STEPHEN SMITH (Perth—Minister for Foreign Affairs) (3.39 pm)—Documents are presented as listed in the schedule circulated to honourable members. Details of the documents will be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*, and I move:

That the House take note of the following documents:

Auditing and Assurance Standards Board-Report for 2008-09.

Australian Accounting Standards Board-Report for 2008-09.

Australian Reinsurance Pool Corporation-Report for 2008-09.

Australian Securities and Investments Commission-Report for 2008-09.

Companies Auditors and Liquidators Disciplinary Board-Report for 2008-09.

Corporations and Markets Advisory Committee-Report for 2008-09.

Department of Immigration and Citizenship-Report for 2008-09.

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government-Report for 2008-09.

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts-Reports for 2008-09-

Volume 1-Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts.

Volume 2-Legislation.

Department of the Treasury-Report for 2008-09.

Financial Reporting Panel-Report for 2008-09.

Private Health Insurance Administration Council-Report for 2008-09.

Takeovers Panel-Report for 2008-09.

Debate (on motion by **Mr Hartsuyker**) adjourned.

CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME BILL 2009 [No. 2]

Cognate bills:

CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME (CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS) BILL 2009 [No. 2]

AUSTRALIAN CLIMATE CHANGE REGULATORY AUTHORITY BILL 2009 [No. 2]

CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME (CHARGES—CUSTOMS) BILL 2009 [No. 2]

CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME (CHARGES—EXCISE) BILL 2009 [No. 2]

CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME (CHARGES—GENERAL) BILL 2009 [No. 2]

CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME (CPRS FUEL CREDITS) BILL 2009 [No. 2]

CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME (CPRS FUEL CREDITS) (CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS) BILL 2009 [No. 2]

EXCISE TARIFF AMENDMENT (CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME) BILL 2009 [No. 2]

CUSTOMS TARIFF AMENDMENT (CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME) BILL 2009 [No. 2]

CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME AMENDMENT (HOUSEHOLD ASSISTANCE) BILL 2009 [No. 2]

Second Reading

Debate resumed.

The SPEAKER—The original question was that these bills be now read a second time. To this the honourable member for Wentworth has moved as an amendment that all words after ‘That’ be omitted with a view to substituting other words. The question now is that the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question.

Mr SULLIVAN (Longman) (3.40 pm)—Earlier today I commented that the world had dealt with ozone-depleting gases and sulfur and neither of those had led to any catastrophe. I believe that we can do the same with the capture and reuse, or sequestration as required, of carbon dioxide.

I want to conclude my comments by talking a little bit about the weather. I think people are aware that the weather events that we are experiencing these days are unusual. In my own electorate quite recently we had a hot spell that occurred during winter, which decimated the strawberry industry. I do not know to what extent the strawberry industry was able to operate, but it normally contributes about \$100 million annually to our local economy, and that has gone. Cyclones are becoming more frequent in Queensland and are moving south, and it is not just in Australia that the weather patterns are unusual. Throughout Australia we expect to have an increased frequency of heatwaves, which have tragic consequences for elderly people. Drought conditions are expected to be extended, particularly in the south-west of the country. We also have hail. These things are changing the way we are able to manage our country. They are changing the way that agriculture operates. They are changing what we can anticipate for our future, irrespective of the broader issues of global warming which spread out over a much larger time frame.

In question time the Prime Minister spoke of the effects on tourism. I will not repeat

those comments so soon after they have been made. But this issue is something that this government, this parliament, this nation and this world need to deal with and deal with now. We cannot afford to continue to dilly-dally. I note that the Prime Minister has set a timetable for the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme Bill 2009 [No. 2] to be considered in the other place. I encourage those in the other place to listen to Ross Garnaut and just pass the thing.

Mr FARMER (Macarthur) (3.43 pm)—I rise today to speak on behalf of my constituents on the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme Bill 2009 [No. 2] and related bills. They have conveyed to me their fears and concerns via phone, email and letter. They warn about the potentially damaging effects of rushing into the ETS and the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. Their concerns are in regard to the haphazard nature of the Rudd government’s actions. Senator Penny Wong and the government are trying to force through their proposed ETS—a scheme that would tax every man, woman and child in this country.

Most people, including me, believe the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme and the ETS are directed towards the reduction or cleansing of heavy particles in the atmosphere. However, further investigation has illustrated that this may not be the case. In fact, what may be behind all of this is simply a policy that will tax not only Australians but people worldwide so that governments will have a source of income to get them through the tough period of financial difficulty that they are experiencing at this point in time.

My fears and those of my constituents are that the ETS and the CPRS are about amassing taxpayer funds—from the very constituents that you and I represent, Madam Deputy Speaker Bird—so that governments around the world can use those funds to trade their

way out of the debt that they find themselves in of late. None of us should be fooled that the ETS and the CPRS are anything other than a revenue raising exercise in the guise of green credentials.

The government continue to ignore the objections and concerns of the many constituents that we represent, and their motive appears to be nothing more than a strategy to collect revenue. If the ETS is a tax in the clothing of an environmental initiative, then why don't the Labor government simply state that they have spent the surplus handed to them by the coalition, they have driven us into billions of dollars of debt and the only way that they can see to get out of this mess is to tax their way out?

The New South Wales state government have overspent and consequently they are looking to tax the public to remedy this mess. They have done so to such an extent that they are forcing many residents and constituents of New South Wales to migrate to Queensland—hence the need for the redistribution of a seat. The numbers in Queensland have increased so much that we have actually lost a seat in New South Wales to Queensland. Just as Nathan Rees continues to create new taxes, calling them levies or tolls, in order to plug a black hole that he describes as consolidated revenue, so too do the federal Labor government see that as the way out of their economic mismanagement.

I have travelled the world and I have seen the pollution created by the smokestacks of business and the exhaust pipes of transport—in Asia, including India, Nepal and China, and in South America, the United States and Europe. However, I do not feel, nor do my constituents, that the scheme placed before us here today is in any way an effort to combat the levels of environmental pollution and will necessarily achieve the desired results. I fear that any money that is derived from a

global ETS will be misappropriated and, together with my constituents, I do not believe that there is any of the necessary framework in place to prove otherwise.

Furthermore, I wish to convey the concerns of my constituents in regard to the potential impact on employment in certain workplace sectors that may come about as a result of a rushed and poorly planned CPRS and ETS.

We believe that, if the government were serious about cutting pollution levels, they would support lowering the taxes that are already in place on industries that agree and comply with lowering their emission levels, rather than introduce new taxes and allow industries to trade them. It does not make sense to me to say that we are trying to reduce carbon emission levels and then say it is all right for industry to do this so long as they pay for the privilege and buy credits. And who gets the money? The government gets the money. What do they do with the money? Lord only knows.

Australians are motivated enough to make a difference to the environment without being hit over the head with a heavy tax stick. The coalition believes in incentives rather than taxes. The Liberal Party believes in a government that nurtures and encourages its citizens through initiatives rather than by putting limits on people through the punishing disincentive of burdensome taxes and stifling structures of Labor, corporate, state and bureaucratic red tape.

To give an example of the many letters I have received about this, I wish to read out a letter from Mr Ian Harley of Elderslie. Mr Harley wished to convey his fears for his financial security and indeed that of many other constituents who currently hold employment in the mining sector—but this too cuts across the board, for the cement industry

and many other industries in my electorate in south-west Sydney. The letter reads:

Dear Pat,

I am a coal miner who lives in your electorate. I wish to ask for your support in voting against the proposed Emissions Trading Scheme.

I believe that if this was passed, the mine that I work & many others will become economically unviable, which will lead to their closure.

This is an industry that has been part of my family for generations with my father, two of my uncles, my brother and myself all long term employees of the coal industry.

I am fifty five years old and would find it very difficult to find alternate employment. I am sure that there would be thousands of people throughout the industry in a similar position.

I also think that what Australia does regarding the ETS will be of little consequence unless the major players like China and the USA make a full scale commitment.

Please represent my views and those of my fellow workers when it comes time to make and decisions regarding the ETS.

Regards,

Ian Harley

I have listened to members opposite sing the praises of a CPRS and the introduction of an ETS. I have heard them say: 'What does it matter if this scheme is introduced? If we've got it wrong, the worst that we've possibly done is encouraged industry to clean up their act a little bit.' I would like to put it to them that, if they have got it wrong, this is not just an insurance policy for cleaning up the air; this is a problem that is going to create massive unemployment here in Australia. It is going to force a lot of industry overseas, and it is my constituents and other people who have to put food on the table for their families and a roof over their heads that I am concerned about.

Like a number of my constituents have quite rightly pointed out, they are very concerned that if Australia goes down this track

and we try and lead the world on this whole business we will force the jobs overseas without any benefits to the world's pollution crisis that we are suffering from at this point in time. As I have noted, I have gone overseas and I have seen the pollution in many other countries and I have seen how bad it is. I am not saying that Australia should not play its part in becoming a green environment. Nobody on this side of the House is disputing the fact that we all need to work towards a cleaner greener environment for ourselves and for our children and our children's children and that we should do everything in our capabilities to encourage industry to do so as well. However, we do not believe that forcing industry offshore is going to be the answer to that problem. It is much better for us to work with industry here in Australia and to encourage them to meet the targets that are required through support rather than with a large tax stick, which is the approach that has been taken by the government of the day.

Mr GEORGIU (Kooyong) (3.53 pm)—

I wish to speak today on the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme Bill 2009 [No. 2] and cognate bills. The purpose of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme is to establish an emissions trading scheme as part of a framework designed to reduce pollution caused by emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. The emissions trading scheme provides economic incentives for achieving a reduction in greenhouse gases. The objectives of the bill are to give effect to Australia's obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto protocol, to support the development of an effective global response to climate change and to take action to enable the reduction of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions.

Climate change is a fundamental issue today for us all. It needs to be recognised that

change in climates around the world is occurring and that the impact of anthropogenic emissions has worsened the problem. In 2007 I was chairman of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Science and Innovation and it brought down a report entitled *Between a rock and a hard place: the science of geosequestration*. The conclusion of this report, which I fully endorsed, was:

There is now compelling evidence that human activity is changing the global climate. The majority of scientists, and the community at large, agree that global action is needed, otherwise we risk reaching a point where it is too late to reverse the damage.

Not for the first time, while being in the majority on the committee, I was actually in a minority amongst the members of the government on that committee, four of whom took the view:

Climate change is a natural phenomenon that has always been with us, and always will be. Whether human activities are disturbing the climate in dangerous ways has yet to be proven. It is for this reason that we strongly disagree with the absolute statements and position taken in this review regarding AGW—

anthropogenic global warming—and the dissent continued:

... most of the public statements that promote the dangerous human warming scare are made from a position of ignorance ...

As I said, I have not changed my mind, and I think my colleagues who expressed those sentiments then have not changed their minds over the years either.

In my view, while Australia remains a relatively minor emitter of greenhouse gases on a national basis, we are a very high emitter on a per capita basis and there is clear and compelling evidence for both Australia and the world to act now to prevent further worsening of the problem and to minimise its adverse effects. Climate change does present a significant threat to Australia, to our envi-

ronment and to our prosperity. I believe that the Australian people want action taken on climate change and that tackling climate change is one of the most significant and difficult tasks currently confronting us.

The scenarios outlined by each of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the Stern report and the Garnaut report underscore the importance of taking effective action. There is no single response to addressing climate change, but the introduction of an emission trading scheme is an important step in combating climate change and reducing the risks associated with it. There is a consensus amongst the international scientific community on the issue. There is a consensus that climate change is occurring and that there is a compelling link between it and an increase in anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions. And there is a consensus that action must be taken to minimise the potential risks.

I recognise and acknowledge, as do many others, the science of climate change and that Australia is particularly vulnerable to its effects. The failure to take effective action on climate change will have adverse effects for our environment, our economy and our country as a whole. The risk is that the negative impacts on our environment will largely be permanent and irreversible, and that is a risk that should not be taken. I would like to quote a statement made by Rupert Murdoch some years ago which I think captures the essence of a sensible approach to climate change. Mr Murdoch said:

I am no scientist but ... I do know how to assess a risk. Climate change poses clear catastrophic threats. We may not agree on the extent, but we certainly can't afford the risk of inaction.

I think that captures a sensible, non-dogmatic approach to the challenge of climate change and why we need to respond to it.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the leading international body investigating the impact of climate change, has progressively hardened its position on the relationship between anthropogenic CO₂ emissions and the heating of the atmosphere. The implementation of a cap-and-trade scheme will enable entities to pay for additional emissions produced over and above the limit imposed by the government. The issuing of a price on carbon emissions provides an economic incentive for liable entities to make a concerted effort to reduce and to limit their emissions. This is significant, as it is estimated the scheme will initially cover entities that produce approximately 75 per cent of Australian greenhouse gas emissions. The response to climate change needs to be a global response, but it is essential that Australia makes its contribution to addressing world emissions by implementing an emissions trading scheme that will impose a price on carbon. We do need to reduce carbon dioxide and greenhouse gas pollution and provide certainty for individuals, households and business. We do need to act on climate change to minimise the future damage to our environment and its diversity.

There are particular impacts of climate change in Australia. The IPCC has identified key concerns in relation to Australia's vulnerability to climate change impacts. The concerns include threats to ecosystem uniqueness, agricultural commodities and our terms of trade; droughts and floods; increased coastal and tropical exposure to climate hazards; and impacts on Indigenous people, our water supply, coral reefs and Australian alpine areas. The bottom line is that climate change represents a threat to some of the most unique elements of our nation and we should mount an emissions trading scheme as part of our response to it.

The coalition recognises the importance of an emissions trading scheme, which was an

official policy of the coalition in the lead-up to the 2007 election. The coalition's policy on an emissions trading scheme was developed in response to increasing public awareness and concern about both the environment generally and climate change specifically. In response to the increasing concerns of the public, the then government commissioned an inquiry in 2006 into the development of an emissions trading scheme in Australia. The report of that inquiry stated that it would be in Australia's interests to develop a cap and trade scheme. In the 2007 election the official coalition policy stated:

To reduce domestic emissions at least economic cost, we will establish a world-class domestic emissions trading scheme in Australia (planned to commence in 2011). We are also committed to capturing the opportunities from being among the first movers on carbon trading in the Asia-Pacific region.

I supported the election policy and I continue to support the establishment of an emissions trading scheme as a means to reducing Australia's carbon dioxide emissions. As we speak, amendments are being discussed, among senators and members of the opposition, to the bill that will go into the Senate. I hope that consensus can be reached when the bill is debated in the Senate. I support the introduction of an emissions trading scheme.

Mr COMBET (Charlton—Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science and Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change) (4.02 pm)—The Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme bills represent an immense environmental and economic reform, and so it is with genuine appreciation that I thank all of the members of the House for their contributions to the second reading debate. Climate change is the most difficult and confronting issue of our generation. Action on climate change demands unprecedented international cooperation and the acceptance that our historical dependence on carbon in-

tensive economic expansion cannot continue unabated. Action on climate change demands in fact a new industrial revolution, one which factors in the cost of carbon pollution and stimulates investment in low emissions energy and technology—a clean industrial revolution.

I thank all the members of the government who have spoken passionately in support of action on climate change and all those on the opposition benches who have done the same, all of whom have supported the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme during this debate. They know that the time has come to get on with the job of reducing Australia's carbon emissions. They know that failure to pass the CPRS bills a second time will ensure that Australia's emissions continue to rise and that we will lose a real opportunity to start the transition to a low-carbon future. Government members also know the significant impact that unabated climate change will have on Australia. They understand that as one of the highest per capita emitters in the world we have an obligation to contribute to a global response on this issue.

Only a few days ago the community was reminded of just how much is at stake with the release of the report *Climate change risks to Australia's coasts*, which revealed the potential costs of coastal inundation from a sea-level rise. Importantly, government members are also concerned about the impact that the transition to a lower carbon pollution economy will have on low-income earners and the elderly. That is why many speakers on the government side in particular have supported strongly the household compensation package contained in these bills.

The government also understands the importance of passing this legislation so that businesses throughout the country will have the confidence to invest. Business leadership in Australia realise that a carbon price is a

necessary economic reform. They understand that an emissions trading scheme is the best way to establish such a price and they want passage of these bills so that the business community will have the certainty that is needed for investment to occur, particularly in such crucial sectors as the energy market. Businesses must be able to model how a carbon price will be established, what it will likely be and its influence on their investment decisions. They all know it is coming; they need the certainty now to allow the investment to occur.

With the needs of the wider economy in mind, the government has also designed the CPRS to achieve Australia's emission reduction targets in the most cost-effective and efficient manner. The CPRS is more cost effective and efficient because it places a price on carbon pollution in the Australian economy and then lets individual businesses identify the best way to reduce emissions. Liable polluters will have to buy a permit for each tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent that they produce. This of course creates an incentive to reduce emissions and it prices the cost of carbon into all goods and services in the economy. Reductions in emissions can free up permits for trading. As permits can be traded within the scheme and internationally, the CPRS ensures that the pollution abatement occurs most efficiently and at least cost. To phase in the impact on emissions intensive parts of the economy, the CPRS includes a range of assistance measures for trade exposed industries—gassy coalmines and the most emissions intensive coal fired electricity generators that face loss of asset value from the introduction of a price on carbon.

The parliamentary debate, though, has again exposed the wide range of views on the veracity of the climate science. Many in the opposition continue to dispute the science and we have seen it evidenced in the

debate in the House. However, I would like to note, importantly, the considered contributions on this point by the Leader of the Opposition and the opposition spokesman on this issue, the member for Groom. Those members have some issues of course with aspects of the CPRS design that are subject of good faith negotiations between the government and the opposition. But there are two important areas of agreement between the government and at least the opposition leadership—firstly, that Australia should reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. As the member for Groom said:

Can I state from the outset that the coalition is absolutely committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by the target of five per cent and—in the event of international agreements—by 15 or even 25 per cent.

Secondly, there is agreement, at least, again, with the Leader of the Opposition in the House of Representatives, that a cap and trade scheme is the best way to achieve emissions reductions. As the member for Wentworth said, most economists and policymakers agree that a well-designed emissions trading scheme is the most economically efficient means of reducing greenhouse gases. That is why in 2007 the Howard government commenced work on an Australian emissions trading scheme.

Interestingly, in the debate these views were shared by some, but not all, opposition members, and of course in recent days we have also seen in the media some commentary from no less a figure than the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate questioning the position of opposition leadership in this place. Indeed, in the debate in the House some members challenged the basic science of climate change and the need to reduce emissions at all. Quite incredibly, the member for Tangney questioned the credibility of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate

Change, suggesting that it should be dissolved.

The facts are that the IPCC reports draw on published and peer-reviewed research. The *Fourth assessment report* of the IPCC was compiled by no fewer than 1,250 scientists from all over 130 different countries in peer-reviewed work. The IPCC's conclusions are based on multiple lines of scientific evidence for climate change including observed increases in global average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice, and the rising global average sea level. The unprecedented level of peer and government review makes the IPCC *Fourth assessment report* one of the most scrutinised scientific documents in the history of science and it is simply not credible to ignore its findings and argue for the dissolution of the IPCC.

On this question also the member for Hughes said that carbon is not a pollutant, but a free fertiliser for the planet indeed, and that it would be madness to limit carbon pollution emissions as this would deny the developing world a free 20 to 50 per cent increase in food production. The member for Hughes' observations are, to say the least, not consistent with the science. The IPCC has found that the modest fertilisation effect from increased carbon dioxide is likely to be offset by even relatively small local temperature increases of one to two degrees centigrade and changes to rainfall patterns, and in fact it has predicted that climate change will lead to increased risk of hunger in the lower latitudes.

Unfortunately though, the member for Hughes is still not alone in her disregard of the scientific evidence. I mentioned before that no less a figure than the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Senator Minchin, recently in fact said that a majority of the opposition party room did not believe that

human beings are causing, or are the main cause of, the planet warming. This extraordinary observation is notwithstanding the fact that the IPCC scientific conclusion in 2007 was that 'warming of the climate system is unequivocal' and 'the increase in global average temperatures since the mid-20th century is very likely due to the observed increase in anthropogenic greenhouse gas concentrations'. This is the peer-reviewed scientific work of 1,250 scientists from 130 countries contributing to the IPCC report. In that context, which I quoted from the IPCC report, the term 'very likely' is defined in the scientific conclusion of that report as being '90 per cent probable'.

Apart from questioning the science, a second line of argument adopted by those opposed to action on climate change is to reject the use of a market based approach—an odd position, I think one might acknowledge, for some members of the Liberal Party to take given their stated philosophical disposition towards the operation of markets. The member for O'Connor, for example, said that a 'pay to pollute' system will not reduce emissions. I think this is demonstrably wrong. I disagree. Where industry has to pay to pollute, it will reduce emissions. That is the experience. It is backed up by practical experience with schemes that place a price on pollution including decades of experience, for example, with successful US cap and trade schemes to tackle emissions causing acid rain. On this issue also, the member for Grey quoted emissions data between 2005 and 2007 from a selection of European countries in an attempt to show that the EU emissions trading scheme had failed to have an impact on emissions, quoting that member states' individual emissions can be misleading since the EU ETS operates as a whole across all member states and when one looks in that sense aggregate data for the European Union indicates that emissions increased by just 1.9

per cent from 2005 to 2007 and that emissions from covered sectors under the European emissions trading arrangements fell three per cent from 2007 to 2008.

Some opposition members appeared to oppose trading of emissions units also and even to suggest that a trading scheme is inconsistent with Labor philosophy. On this front the member for Wide Bay, for example, said the following:

Here is the Labor Government, which has been vocal in its criticism of world financial markets, now advocating the establishment of a giant new trading scheme.

Of course, this thoroughly misrepresents the government's position. The government has never said that we would abandon market mechanisms because of the global financial crisis. Properly regulated markets remain crucial to the operation of the Australian and global economy in the distribution of resources for investment and they are an important tool for addressing climate change. Of course the carbon market must be appropriately regulated. That is why emissions units will be classed as financial products under the Corporations Act 2001 and the Australian Securities and Investments Commission Act 2001. The Australian Securities and Investments Commission will be able to investigate and prosecute market misconduct and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission will have the power to address anticompetitive behaviour. I would also add, for those who expressed concern about the effect of speculative activity on the carbon price, that the CPRS has been designed to limit price volatility and ensure that emissions units are accessible to business. Design features to achieve these policy goals include a fixed price of \$10 per unit in the first year of the scheme, for example. They also include a cap on carbon prices in the subsequent four years and unlimited banking of emissions units so that units created in one

year can be used in a future year—for example, to hedge against price movements. These are features that do not apply to ordinary commodities such as crude oil.

Those in the opposition who oppose a market based approach I think need to consider the effectiveness and the cost of the alternatives. One alternative, for example, suggested by the member for O'Connor is that the government should reduce emissions by supporting particular projects, such as a high-voltage power line to deliver electricity from the Pilbara to Perth. The problem with a project-by-project approach is that it will not achieve emissions reductions on the scale we need and it will also not achieve it at the lowest cost. Such an approach will only work if the government takes on the role of knowing better than industry where emissions can be reduced at least cost and how this can be done most efficiently. In general that is not necessarily the case. It is better to have a market mechanism to guide that decision making. This is precisely why 27 European Union countries, the United States, Japan, Canada, New Zealand and Korea all have or are developing cap and trade systems. It is why the G8 meeting and the G20 meetings in Italy earlier this year endorsed the concept of cap and trade systems as the most efficient way of reducing emissions. It is also why, it is important to note, the previous government's Shergold review and this government's Garnaut review recommended a cap and trade system for Australia.

It is also important to address some issues raised by members relating to the revenue that would be generated by auctions of Australian emissions units. The members for Hume, Canning, Paterson, Farrer and Fisher, for example, suggested that the CPRS is some kind of tax grab. That is not the case. Revenue from the sale of emissions units is returned to households and businesses under this scheme. There is no net revenue returned

to government coffers. The Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook outlined revenue and expenses associated with the CPRS out until 2020 and showed that the net impact is a negative \$2.5 billion. This, of course, is quite recently released financial material from the Treasury. The member for Wide Bay suggested that by returning revenue to households there is no incentive for efficient energy use. Again, this is not correct. There is still a price signal that encourages more efficient energy use, and this is complemented by government programs that assist householders to improve energy efficiency, such as the \$3.2 billion Energy Efficient Homes package.

The member for Dunkley raised concerns that the revenue available to compensate households may be reduced or removed if international emissions units can be purchased cheaply. This is a misunderstanding of how the scheme will interface internationally. The ability to import international units will not mean that Australian emission units could ever remain unsold, leaving government with no revenue to fund household assistance. It simply means that bidders at auction would not be prepared to pay any more than the price of an international unit; that is, the Australian emissions unit price is going to be sensitive to the international marketplace. It is true that the price of Australian emissions units would fall therefore in line with the price of international units and this would reduce the revenue overall available. However, the price impact flowing through the economy would also therefore be reduced. On the other hand, if the price of international units increases, this will tend to increase the price impact flowing through the economy, but it will also mean that more revenue is available to compensate households, for example. In short, revenue to compensate households will be greatest when the price impact is the greatest.

The government will monitor the revenue received from the CPRS and will review the adequacy of the household assistance package in the context of the budget. While the government has been careful to address the price implications of the CPRS, there needs to be a reality check for those members predicting massive price increases. Treasury modelling, for example, demonstrates clearly that the price impact of the CPRS is modest. The CPRS is expected to raise household prices by 0.4 per cent in 2011-12, the first year of the operation of the scheme, and 0.7 per cent in 2012-13, when a market price is operating. As I have noted, the government has provided household compensation to help assist low- and middle-income households in particular with these modest cost rises.

A number of members suggested that the CPRS would destroy jobs. This concern is thoroughly misplaced. The truth is that Australia can join global efforts to avert dangerous climate change while we continue to grow and prosper. Treasury economic modelling, some of the most exhaustive modelling that Treasury has ever undertaken, confirms this fact. It shows national employment continuing to grow to the year 2020 and national income increasing by at least \$4,300 per capita while carbon pollution is reduced by up to 25 per cent below 2000 levels. Furthermore, the proposed transitional assistance for emissions-intensive industries, for example, will help protect jobs and prevent so-called carbon leakage. (*Extension of time granted*)

I would like to respond to the suggestion that we should delay consideration of these bills until after the Copenhagen conference, which is an important issue that has been raised. A large number of opposition members spoke on this very point, but none of them gave any reason of substance as to why the parliament should defer consideration of these bills. Let us be clear about this. The

Copenhagen conference will not affect the design of these bills and the opposition has not raised a single instance where it will. The CPRS represents an emissions trading scheme designed for our own domestic circumstances which, importantly, is capable of delivering emissions reduction targets to which Australia may commit in an international agreement. By passing the CPRS before Copenhagen, Australia would demonstrate its commitment not just to the targets but to having a robust mechanism to achieve them. Importantly, while the 2020 target range endorsed by the opposition is referred to in the objects clause of the CPRS Bill, scheme caps are to be set by regulations. The government will set these caps in light of all relevant factors, including emissions reduction commitments made by other countries. The parliament will of course have an opportunity to scrutinise those legislations and it is only proper that cap setting would be subject to parliamentary oversight. Passing these bills would start Australia on the path to reducing its carbon pollution but it would not lock us in to particular caps on emissions. The ambition of our emissions caps will be calibrated over time, taking into account international developments. In short, there is no reason to wait for Copenhagen, and claims to the contrary are just excuses for further delay.

Australia as a country cannot afford further delay. We are now at the very serious end of this debate. The time for ambit claims and industry scare campaigns such as those run by the coal industry are now over. The science is compelling—climate change is real—and there will be serious consequences for this country if global emissions are not restrained. Without the CPRS our emissions will be no less than 20 per cent above 2000 levels in the year 2020. Australia is highly exposed to the impacts of climate change and the effects on Australia's environment and

economy will be serious. The business community in Australia knows that a carbon constraint is inevitable, and they do not want further delay. They are calling for investment certainty so that they can commit the necessary investment to start to move the Australian economy to a low-carbon future. As the Chairman of Shell Australia, Mr Russell Caplan, said in August this year, a delay in putting the scheme in place will create a climate of continuing uncertainty for industry and potentially delay the massive investments required, and the longer we delay action, the more costly it will be when we finally start to act.

The International Energy Agency predicts that the world will have to spend an extra \$500 billion to cut carbon emissions for each year it delays implementing comprehensive action on climate change. The government is committed to addressing climate change. We have passed a renewable energy target. We have committed billions of dollars to support the increased uptake of energy efficiency measures and to develop and demonstrate carbon capture and storage technology. We are working with all levels of government to assess areas most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and to start to adapt. The Prime Minister and the Minister for Climate Change and Water are working very hard internationally to help craft a global deal in Copenhagen. The government remains steadfastly committed to this important reform. That is why we are working hard in negotiations with the opposition and with the member for Groom—and the member for Groom, who very generously allowed me an extension of time to finish this address, is in the chamber. We are in those negotiations with the opposition with the aim of agreeing on a package that will see the legislation pass the Senate.

As we have always stated, the opposition's proposals will need to be fiscally and

environmentally responsible. As a sign of good faith, the government announced yesterday that we will agree to exclude agricultural emissions from coverage under the CPRS indefinitely. In light of this, the government is also considering ways in which the agriculture sector can contribute to the transition to a low-pollution economy. In negotiating with the opposition, the government will consider a range of ways in which the sector can reduce its emissions over the medium to long term, including by being able to generate offsetting credits.

Negotiation with the opposition is necessary because the reality is that the government requires support in the Senate to pass the legislation. Therefore, it is with concern that we note some of the recent commentary by some of the colleagues of the member for Groom, including the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, which bring into question the ability of the opposition to deliver on a set of amendments. However, the reform is too important to fail due to any disunity on the other side of the chamber. I call upon all coalition members to take responsibility in this respect and act in the national interest to support reductions in our emissions through passage of the CPRS. I urge all of our colleagues, with just over 20 days until Copenhagen, to support passage of the CPRS because it would mean Australia will be able to go to the negotiating table not just with credible targets but with a robust mechanism to deliver them. I think it would give the international community a much needed boost to the process in the crucial weeks leading to the international negotiations.

Finally, I would like to thank those who have worked extremely hard to develop this very difficult but crucial policy. In particular, I would like to put on the record my thanks to the Minister for Climate Change and Water, Penny Wong, who has worked tirelessly for nearly two years to get the design of the

CPRS right. She has done it with the support of an extremely dedicated group of staff and also a very dedicated and talented Department of Climate Change. It is largely due to their work that we have this comprehensive and balanced legislation before us which, if passed by the Senate, will constitute one of the most significant environmental and economic reforms in Australia's history. In fact, it is a privilege accorded to few to move legislation of such environmental and economic importance to the nation. So it is with respect for the occasion that I commend the bills to the House.

Question put:

That the words proposed to be omitted (**Mr Turnbull's amendment**) stand part of the question.

The House divided. [4.34 pm]

(The Deputy Speaker—Mr Secker)

Ayes.....	80
Noes.....	55
Majority.....	25

AYES

Adams, D.G.H.	Albanese, A.N.
Bidgood, J.	Bird, S.
Bowen, C.	Bradbury, D.J.
Burke, A.E.	Butler, M.C.
Byrne, A.M.	Campbell, J.
Champion, N.	Cheeseman, D.L.
Clare, J.D.	Collins, J.M.
Combet, G.	Crean, S.F.
D'Ath, Y.M.	Danby, M.
Debus, B.	Dreyfus, M.A.
Elliot, J.	Ellis, K.
Emerson, C.A.	Ferguson, L.D.T.
Ferguson, M.J.	Fitzgibbon, J.A.
Garrett, P.	Georganas, S.
George, J.	Gibbons, S.W.
Gillard, J.E.	Gray, G.
Grierson, S.J.	Griffin, A.P.
Hale, D.F.	Hall, J.G. *
Hayes, C.P. *	Irwin, J.
Jackson, S.M.	Kelly, M.J.
Kerr, D.J.C.	King, C.F.
Livermore, K.F.	Macklin, J.L.

Marles, R.D.
McKew, M.
Melham, D.
Neal, B.J.
O'Connor, B.P.
Owens, J.
Perrett, G.D.
Price, L.R.S.
Rea, K.M.
Rishworth, A.L.
Saffin, J.A.
Sidebottom, S.
Snowdon, W.E.
Swan, W.M.
Tanner, L.
Thomson, K.J.
Turnour, J.P.
Windsor, A.H.C.

McClelland, R.B.
McMullan, R.F.
Murphy, J.
Neumann, S.K.
Oakeshott, R.J.M.
Parke, M.
Plibersek, T.
Raguse, B.B.
Ripoll, B.F.
Roxon, N.L.
Shorten, W.R.
Smith, S.F.
Sullivan, J.
Symon, M.
Thomson, C.
Trevor, C.
Vamvakinou, M.
Zappia, A.

NOES

Abbott, A.J.	Baldwin, R.C.
Billson, B.F.	Bishop, B.K.
Bishop, J.I.	Briggs, J.E.
Broadbent, R.	Chester, D.
Ciobo, S.M.	Cobb, J.K.
Coulton, M.	Dutton, P.C.
Farmer, P.F.	Forrest, J.A.
Gash, J.	Georgiou, P.
Haase, B.W.	Hartsuyker, L.
Hawke, A.	Hawker, D.P.M.
Hockey, J.B.	Hull, K.E. *
Hunt, G.A.	Irons, S.J.
Jensen, D.	Keenan, M.
Laming, A.	Ley, S.P.
Lindsay, P.J.	Macfarlane, I.E.
Marino, N.B. *	Markus, L.E.
May, M.A.	Mirabella, S.
Morrison, S.J.	Moylan, J.E.
Pearce, C.J.	Pyne, C.
Ramsey, R.	Randall, D.J.
Robb, A.	Robert, S.R.
Ruddock, P.M.	Schultz, A.
Scott, B.C.	Simpkins, L.
Smith, A.D.H.	Southcott, A.J.
Stone, S.N.	Truss, W.E.
Tuckey, C.W.	Turnbull, M.
Vale, D.S.	Washer, M.J.
Wood, J.	

PAIRS

Ellis, A.L.	Neville, P.C.
Burke, A.S.	Somlyay, A.M.

Bevis, A.R.

* denotes teller

Question agreed to.

Original question put:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The House divided. [4.40 pm]

(The Deputy Speaker—Mr PD Secker)

Ayes..... 79

Noes..... 56

Majority..... 23

AYES

Adams, D.G.H.

Bidgood, J.

Bowen, C.

Burke, A.E.

Byrne, A.M.

Champion, N.

Clare, J.D.

Combet, G.

D'Ath, Y.M.

Debus, B.

Elliot, J.

Emerson, C.A.

Ferguson, M.J.

Garrett, P.

George, J.

Gillard, J.E.

Grierson, S.J.

Hale, D.F.

Hayes, C.P. *

Jackson, S.M.

Kerr, D.J.C.

Livermore, K.F.

Marles, R.D.

McKew, M.

Melham, D.

Neal, B.J.

O'Connor, B.P.

Owens, J.

Perrett, G.D.

Price, L.R.S.

Rea, K.M.

Rishworth, A.L.

Saffin, J.A.

Sidebottom, S.

Snowdon, W.E.

Swan, W.M.

Albanese, A.N.

Bird, S.

Bradbury, D.J.

Butler, M.C.

Campbell, J.

Cheeseman, D.L.

Collins, J.M.

Crean, S.F.

Danby, M.

Dreyfus, M.A.

Ellis, K.

Ferguson, L.D.T.

Fitzgibbon, J.A.

Georganas, S.

Gibbons, S.W.

Gray, G.

Griffin, A.P.

Hall, J.G. *

Irwin, J.

Kelly, M.J.

King, C.F.

Macklin, J.L.

McClelland, R.B.

McMullan, R.F.

Murphy, J.

Neumann, S.K.

Oakeshott, R.J.M.

Parke, M.

Plibersek, T.

Raguse, B.B.

Ripoll, B.F.

Roxon, N.L.

Shorten, W.R.

Smith, S.F.

Sullivan, J.

Symon, M.

Bailey, F.E.

Tanner, L.

Thomson, K.J.

Turnour, J.P.

Zappia, A.

Thomson, C.

Trevor, C.

Vamvakinou, M.

NOES

Abbott, A.J.

Billson, B.F.

Bishop, J.I.

Broadbent, R.

Ciobo, S.M.

Coulton, M.

Farmer, P.F.

Gash, J.

Haase, B.W.

Hawke, A.

Hockey, J.B.

Hunt, G.A.

Jensen, D.

Laming, A.

Lindsay, P.J.

Marino, N.B. *

May, M.A.

Morrison, S.J.

Pearce, C.J.

Ramsey, R.

Robb, A.

Ruddock, P.M.

Scott, B.C.

Smith, A.D.H.

Stone, S.N.

Tuckey, C.W.

Vale, D.S.

Windsor, A.H.C.

Baldwin, R.C.

Bishop, B.K.

Briggs, J.E.

Chester, D.

Cobb, J.K.

Dutton, P.C.

Forrest, J.A.

Georgiou, P.

Hartsuyker, L.

Hawker, D.P.M.

Hull, K.E. *

Irons, S.J.

Keenan, M.

Ley, S.P.

Macfarlane, I.E.

Markus, L.E.

Mirabella, S.

Moylan, J.E.

Pyne, C.

Randall, D.J.

Robert, S.R.

Schultz, A.

Simpkins, L.

Southcott, A.J.

Truss, W.E.

Turnbull, M.

Washer, M.J.

Wood, J.

PAIRS

Ellis, A.L.

Burke, A.S.

Bevis, A.R.

Neville, P.C.

Somlyay, A.M.

Bailey, F.E.

* denotes teller

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Message from the Governor-General recommending appropriation announced.

CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME BILL 2009 [NO. 2]

Consideration in Detail

Bill—by leave—taken as a whole.

Mr OAKESHOTT (Lyne) (4.43 pm)—by leave—I move:

- (1) Clause 2, page 2 (table item 2), omit “Australian”, substitute “Independent”.
- (2) Clause 5, page 7, line 9, omit “Australian”, substitute “Independent”.
- (3) Page 35 (before line 2), before subclause 14(5), insert:
 - (4A) In making a recommendation to the Governor-General about regulations to be made for the purposes of this section, the Minister must first request draft regulations from the Authority.
 - (4B) The Minister must give the Authority reasonable time in which to prepare the draft regulations.
 - (4C) If the Minister receives draft regulations from the Authority within reasonable time, the Minister must recommend them to the Governor-General.
- (4) Clause 14, page 35 (lines 2 to 4), omit “In making a recommendation to the Governor-General about regulations to be made for the purposes of this section, the Minister:”, substitute “If the Minister does not receive draft regulations from the Authority within reasonable time, then, in making a recommendation to the Governor-General about regulations to be made for the purposes of this section, the Minister:”
- (5) Page 37 (before line 2), before subclause 15(4), insert:
 - (3A) In making a recommendation to the Governor-General about regulations to be made for the purposes of this section, the Minister must first request draft regulations from the Authority.
 - (3B) The Minister must give the Authority reasonable time in which to prepare the draft regulations.
 - (3C) If the Minister receives draft regulations from the Authority within reasonable time, the Minister must recommend them to the Governor-General.
- (6) Clause 15, page 37 (lines 2 to 4), omit “In making a recommendation to the Governor-

General about regulations to be made for the purposes of this section, the Minister:” and insert “If the Minister does not receive draft regulations from the Authority within reasonable time, then, in making a recommendation to the Governor-General about regulations to be made for the purposes of this section, the Minister:”

- (7) Clause 165, page 205 (line 1) to clause 173C, page 214 (line 4), omit Part 8.
- (8) Clause 174, page 215 (line 1) to clause 189B, page 242 (line 32), omit Part 9.
- (9) Clause 282, page 372 (lines 5 to 6), omit “the Minister must, by written notice given to the Authority, direct the Authority to” substitute “the Authority must”.
- (10) Clause 282, page 372 (lines 10 to 11), delete paragraph 282(3)(d) .
- (11) Clause 360, page 445 (after line 20), after subsection 360(5), insert:
 - (5A) A person is not eligible for appointment as an expert advisory committee member unless the Minister has obtained written approval for that person from all members of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts, or whichever House of Representatives Standing Committee most closely resembles this function.

These are the same amendments that I put up in round 1 of the CPRS, the same amendments that the member for Goldstein at the time said had merit and the same amendments that the Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change, who is at the table, also acknowledged and then everyone voted against. I will try again to improve this legislation, which is important and is acknowledged by the minister as being somewhat historic. Certainly, as someone who wants to see the science flow, I also see opportunities for improvement in this legislation.

I think the political process to date has seen a significant dumbing down of the science and the legislation; therefore, I once

again take the opportunity to try and improve it on the framework questions around the future CPRS scheme. There are long-term concerns about the amount of ministerial discretion written into the 440-odd pages of this legislation. Yes, the short term of this week will all be about whether CPRS flies or not, but I would hope everyone in this place stays vigilant on the question of the ministerial discretion written into this legislation. An example of the implications of that can be in an area such as fuel tax credits. What minister in their right mind is going to be the one in the chair and want to end fuel tax credits in the future? That is not in the government's best interest, not in the executive's best interest and, if this is a dose of tough medicine for the economy and the national interest, we do genuinely need it to be as objective and apolitical as possible and to be as independent of the political process as possible. These amendments serve the purpose of trying to remove the ministerial discretion that is currently written into the legislation and to give the regulatory authority the independence that it deserves.

This is a philosophical difference that we had in round 1 in relation to this legislation. The minister in the chair argued that this legislation is too important and deserves to have the parliamentary processes oversee it. I would take a different view that this legislation is too important to have it left to the parliamentary processes. We have examples of this in play in our Australian democracy; the Reserve Bank is the obvious one where monetary policy is independent of political processes so that good news and bad news can be delivered in the economic interest and the national interest without being caught up in political processes. There are several others including the National Competition Council for the delivery of reform and competition within the Australian institutions of government. It is independent from govern-

ment so that good medicine and bad medicine can be delivered independent of the political processes of this place and the other.

That is largely the point of these amendments. If we are serious about the science, if we are serious about the IPCC, Shergold and Garnaut, if we believe there is a human influence on climate and if we are serious about a response, we want to be as objective as possible about the science to allow the national interest, the environment and the economy to have the best chance possible into the future. I think we have seen the problems of the political process to date. This legislation has been dumbed down. If you are true to the science and if you are true to the Garnaut white paper, you would be disappointed that we have dumbed down legislation before this House today. Even though I hope it gets through, I do think we can do better in achieving better security of the economy and better environmental outcomes by referring back to documents like the Garnaut white paper and also delivering greater independence into the system. (*Time expired*)

Mr COMBET (Charlton—Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science and Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change) (4.49 pm)—I thank the member for Lyne for his efforts at providing constructive amendments. He has remained very actively and positively engaged in this debate all the way and supports, I know, immediate action on climate change. Whilst the government does not support the member for Lyne's amendments, they have been well considered and comprehensive, and they deserve being addressed in some detail and I will endeavour to do so in the time available.

I will address the member's proposed amendments to the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme Bill 2009 [No. 2] firstly in relation to advice on scheme caps, which are

amendments Nos (3) to (6). These amendments would give the Australian Climate Change Regulatory Authority the role of developing draft regulations which prescribe national caps and gateways. The government appreciates that the intent of the amendments is to have independent expert input into the cap-setting process but the government does not support the amendments.

In the government's view an independent expert advisory committee appointed under part 25 of the bill, we believe, would be much better equipped and qualified to provide advice on scheme caps and gateways than the authority. Unlike the authority, which has a regulatory and administrative focus, an independent and expert advisory committee will have to have a broader outlook and include expertise in climate science which will be important in consideration of scheme caps and gateways.

As to the removal of emissions-intensive trade-exposed assistance touched upon, I think, in amendment No. 7, this amendment would remove part 8 of the bill which provides for assistance to the so-called EITE activities. In the view of the government there is a genuine need for assistance to industry for emissions-intensive trade-exposed activities in the period before effective international action on climate change and in order to minimise the risk of carbon leakage. The provision of assistance for these activities is fundamental in the government's view to the design of the CPRS and we certainly do not support this amendment. I spoke on that issue at some length in the second reading debate.

Amendment (8) moved by the member for Lyne is in relation to the removal of coal-fired electricity generation assistance. The government does not support this amendment which would remove part 9 of the bill relating to the assistance for coal-fired elec-

tricity generators. The government considers it appropriate to partially recognise significant losses of asset value experienced by investors in coal-fired generators where that investment was committed prior to the emergence of bipartisan support for emissions trading when the then government announced on 3 June 2007 that it would support an emissions trading scheme, and so we do not support that amendment either.

Amendments (9) and (10) from the member for Lyne are in relation to the voluntary cancellation of Australian emissions units. These amendments relate to clause 282 of the bill, which addresses voluntary cancellation of units. These amendments, in the government's view, are unnecessary as the legislation already imposes a binding obligation on the minister to cancel a Kyoto unit for every Australian emissions unit that a person voluntarily cancels. This allows individuals and organisations to contribute to stronger climate change mitigation by reducing the supply of eligible emissions units. There are of course mechanisms provided for that to occur. The government is accountable for the Kyoto units allocated to this country, and it is only appropriate that the government is not hampered in its ability to manage these units.

Amendment (11) is in relation to the appointment of an expert advisory committee member. This amendment would make a person ineligible for appointment to an expert advisory committee which undertakes five-yearly reviews of the CPRS unless approved by all members of the relevant committee of the House of Representatives. The government does not support this amendment, which would give an effective veto on appointments to every member of a parliamentary committee. That would impose needless delays and obstacles on the establishment of the committee and the conduct of reviews and could result in the lowest common denominator being adopted. For exam-

ple, there is a risk that just one climate change sceptic in the parliamentary committee could prevent the appointment of an eminent climate change scientist to the independent advisory committee. For all of those reasons, the government opposes the amendments put forward by the member for Lyne.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr PD Secker)—The question is that the member for Lyne's amendments be agreed to.

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

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—As there are fewer than five members on the side for the ayes, I declare the question resolved in the negative in accordance with standing order 127. The names of those members who are in the minority will be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

Question negatived, Mr Oakeshott and Mr Windsor voting aye.

Bill agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr COMBET (Charlton—Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science and Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change) (5.01 pm)—by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME (CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS) BILL 2009 [No. 2]

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 22 October, on motion by **Mr Combet**:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr COMBET (Charlton—Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science and Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change) (5.02 pm)—in reply—I thank all the

speakers who contributed to the second reading debate and who adopted the submissions that I put at the conclusion of the previous bill in relation to the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2009 [No. 2]. I commend the bill to the House.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Bill—by leave—taken as a whole.

Mr WINDSOR (New England) (5.04 pm)—by leave—I move the amendment circulating in my name:

Schedule 1, item 159, page 36, after subsection (2A) (after line 27) add:

- (2B) The regulations must not declare that emissions of greenhouse gas emitted in connection with the production of food are covered by the carbon pollution reduction scheme.

The amendment I am moving today relates to whether or not food commodities from agricultural products should be included in the emissions trading scheme. The reason for bringing this amendment forward is that I am very concerned that if food is included in a global emissions trading scheme—and I know this is the Australian version of a global emissions trading scheme—in fact we will have enormous competitive forces coming into play in terms of land use.

There is an assumption being made around the world that the farm sector will always grow food irrespective of other markets. What the current emissions trading scheme is proposing is that a new market mechanism, that of carbon trading, be brought into play in Australia and around the world. That will add another market mechanism that will compete for land that in many cases is being used for food. We also have another market which embraces renewable energy. If we get into a competitive arrange-

ment that promotes the carbon market in front of the renewable energy and food markets, and in fact we see the food market coming third, we will potentially see an enormous transition of land use from food into more profitable uses. I have used the example of the cotton growers in my electorate and further west. They do not necessarily grow cotton or fibre because they dislike food; they grow it because they are making more money from that form of land-use. The Malaysian palm oil renewable fuel producer does not necessarily not like food, but it is more profitable to grow a renewable energy on his land than to grow food.

If we create a market mechanism, an emissions trading scheme, that starts to penalise food globally, we will potentially see, as I have said, a massive shift in land use. When you see the negatives that start to accrue to food production in the use of land—nitrous oxide for protein in grain, for instance, or carbon in terms of the starch in grain that is being transported around the world—it is not hard to envisage an arrangement where the farm sector actually makes choices away from food towards other land uses. In fact, the current bills before the parliament encourage the planting of trees for carbon purposes, which is an encouragement to shift from food production to another form of land use for carbon purposes. The current arrangements—and if they are carried forward into the Copenhagen arrangements—would in fact create an incentive for those around the globe to use their land for purposes other than food. We saw an example of that with the US biofuel arrangements that were put in place by the previous President, George W. Bush. As a farmer, I do not disagree with that. But if we believe we have refugee issues now, if we start to transfer the use of land away from food, or price food production above the capacity of people to pay in some of the less developed countries,

then we will create a circumstance that we could be very severely penalised for at a future date.

The minister in the chair, Minister Combet, whom I spoke to by phone this morning, and the minister in the Senate have in the last couple of days mentioned that they are prepared to exempt agriculture from a future scheme. There is no mention of agriculture in this current scheme. The government says currently that it will reconsider agriculture in 2015. A lot of land use decisions will be made in the intervening time. I was pleased to hear both ministers saying that they are prepared to exempt the agricultural emissions from an emissions trading scheme. That is not currently in this bill, and that is why I opposed the bill at the second reading stage. The amendment that I have moved allows for the food component, the thing that keeps people alive across the world, to be removed. (*Extension of time granted*) It allows the food component of agriculture to be exempted from the bill or, in other words, not to be included in the bill at a future stage. That produces a lot of certainty for the agricultural sector in this country.

If we apply that same logic to a global emissions trading scheme and exempt agriculture, or the production of food from agriculture, from an emissions trading scheme we preserve those lands which are currently being used for food production for a hungry world. We have parallel debates going on. We have a debate that is concerned about greenhouse gases and we have a debate that is concerned about the long-term food security of the globe. There is a collision point between the three market mechanisms, in my view. The mechanisms are: the traditional food economy, which is a poverty economy for developed farmers anyway; the use of land for emerging biofuels or alternative or renewable energy; and now, potentially, a carbon economy, which could become a

competitor for the use of land for carbon sequestration through trees or vegetation.

I made the point to the minister this morning that I am opposing this legislation. I opposed it previously when it came before the House. I think what the minister in this House and the minister in the Senate, Minister Wong, are doing by offering the olive branch in relation to agriculture being exempted from future schemes is an enormous opportunity that should not be bypassed by the farm sector. I have issues with this bill, such as the five per cent target, but, as I said to you this morning, Minister Combet, I am prepared to support this legislation if agriculture—or food production, more particularly—is excluded from the remit of the scheme. If my amendment is supported in this chamber, I will be supporting the bill. If it is not, I will not be supporting the bill. But on its return from the Senate, where, hopefully, agricultural food will be excluded, I will support the bill.

I urge those who have been out there in the farm sector suggesting that there are going to be enormous taxation arrangements imposed on that sector to look very closely at this. What we have in that offer from the government is both the Liberal Party and the Labor Party, the two majority parties in the building, agreeing that agriculture should be excluded. That is something that I believe overcomes a lot of the inherent flaws that are in the current legislation. As I said, I will support the legislation if agriculture or food derived from agricultural commodities is exempted from it when we vote now, or in some sort of an arrangement when it comes back from the Senate. Thank you.

Mr TUCKEY (O'Connor) (5.14 pm)—I wish to disagree with the logic of the member for New England. The reality is that you cannot exempt farmers and the agricultural sector from costs, whether they are included

in the emissions trading scheme or not, because nobody is speaking here about removing the fuel refiners or the electricity generators or all the other people whose costs will inevitably flow down to the rural sector, where there is nowhere to go.

I would refer the member for New England to the *Farm Weekly*, the Rural Press publication in Western Australia, which reported on my speech to a couple of hundred farmers the other day. It included my reference to a cream cake, and they have actually published a picture of a cake in the article, asking: how many times will the emissions trading scheme taxes impact on a cream cake? The member for New England is well experienced in how many times the product of farming goes back on the road. For example, nobody milks a cow these days without using some energy; the old hand-milking went out a long time ago.

It does not matter where you look; this is a system whereby the government sells the right to pollute. And anybody who pays for that right will wherever possible pass it on to the consumers below them. As I have said time and again, if you are one of those who feel passionately about saving the planet and you say, 'Yes, I will pay more for my electricity to save the planet,' under this scheme you will actually be paying more for your electricity so that your electricity supplier can pay the price for polluting. There is no reduction in pollution—unless the electricity supplier sees the cost of these certificates get up to about 50 or 60 bucks a tonne of CO₂ emissions, at which point in time there is a benefit. But where does the cost go, as it climbs to that figure? It is going to end up with the farm, irrespective of whether agriculture is in or out of this scheme.

I recognise that the member for New England is deeply concerned, and he is right to be concerned, about the production of food.

He is right, because when there is more profit, at \$40 a tonne, in planting trees over our great agricultural areas, as happened with the managed investment schemes, the price will go up and of course farmers will say, 'I've been struggling with drought and everything else; I'm going to take the money.' I once said, when we were having the GM debate, that it was about time we were all inoculated with the koala gene so we can live on gum leaves, because that is all that will be left. That is the reality. But we have got to look at the fact that there is only one question in this issue: is an emissions trading scheme a solution to the problem? I say it is not. It is just a means of increasing costs in the hope of solving the problem.

As I have informed this House time and again, the Europeans are contemplating a major investment in solar generation in the Sahara desert, 3,000 kilometres away from where they want to consume the energy. They have done their homework. The technology exists through high-voltage DC transmission to get 90 per cent of the energy generated over that journey. If they used the established AC technology, 55 per cent would get to the other end of the pipe. Why isn't our government investing in those sorts of interconnections between our great gas fields and our tidal fields—and our deserts? Deserts are the best place for solar energy. If they invested in the transmission system and they doubled the amount of electricity that gets to the end of the pipe, that is as good as 100 per cent renewable power. Of course, I have a private member's bill in this place to enable DC to qualify for renewable energy certificates.

I say to the member for New England: I am sorry; I understand and I agree with his concerns, but it is a fact of life that farmers cannot escape these costs, nor can any other consumer within Australia.

Mr TRUSS (Wide Bay—Leader of the Nationals) (5.19 pm)—I certainly agree that agriculture should be exempt from the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. Agriculture should be exempt in its entirety, not just crops that are grown for food. Indeed, let me pose a very practical problem: when my brother plants his crops, he generally does not know whether the end crop is going to be used for food, for animal feed or for some other purpose. So the division that the member for New England seeks to create in this regard would, I think, be very difficult to deliver in practice. But his proposal and his objective to exempt agriculture from the CPRS are meritorious.

The government announced just yesterday that they were proposing to exempt agriculture, although few details have been provided. However, it is important to make the point that the honourable member for O'Connor has just made—that that does not mean that farmers will not pay significant costs associated with the ETS. They will still have to pay higher costs for their electricity, their fertiliser, their chemicals, their machinery. Virtually all of their inputs will be more expensive. There is no emissions trading scheme planned anywhere in the world that includes agriculture. No-one is proposing to include agriculture. Therefore, if these taxes were imposed on agriculture, it would further disadvantage Australian farmers.

We have a lot of cheap food flooding into Australia at present. None of the farmers who are supplying that food to Australia are paying any emissions trading taxes, nor will they. There is no likelihood of such costs being imposed in China, India and South-East Asian and other countries that are increasingly exporting food to Australia. So the flood of foreign food into Australia is going to grow under Labor's CPRS. In addition, there will be jobs lost in the Australian food processing sector, because the government is

not proposing to exempt the food processing sector, apparently, under its latest concessions. So there will be more jobs lost in food processing, there will be more foreign food coming into Australia and Australian farmers will find it increasingly difficult to compete with farmers around the world who do not have to pay these higher taxes.

In addition to that, the government has made no firm commitment to allow farmers to claim credits for the carbon sequestration and carbon abatement activities that they undertake. Again, Australian farmers are the only ones in the world who effectively cannot get credits for the carbon sequestration activities that they undertake. The US bill proposes to give farmers credits for the abatement work that they do and, of course, the countries in Asia can claim credits under the Kyoto rules. Because Australia signed the Kyoto accord, Australian farmers cannot get credits for the carbon abatement activities that they undertake. If a Chinese farmer does the same thing he gets a credit, and an Australian industry can buy that credit, but an Australian farmer cannot get a credit for doing it. This is the nonsense of Labor's CPRS and the serious way it is going to affect agriculture. So agriculture needs to be exempted from the impact of the CPRS costs, but farmers also need to be able to be rewarded and encouraged to play the role that they can meaningfully adopt in reducing Australia's CO₂ emissions. Farmers can do a great deal to reduce emissions.

You may be interested to know, Mr Deputy Speaker, that farm emissions have already fallen by 40 per cent over the Kyoto reporting period. A lot of that is because of the reductions in the size of our herds and flocks, but also farmers have borne almost the entire burden associated with tree-clearing laws for which they have received no compensation and no credits. The reality is that the farm sector is already undertaking

a very significant role in this regard, and that needs to be recognised.

The final point I would like to make is slightly critical of the member for New England because he has some form on this issue. He is the man who brought a private member's bill into this House that proposed reductions of 80 per cent, and there was nothing in that bill about leaving out agriculture. He had an opportunity at that time, when he was putting in his own bill, to do some constructive things as far as that is concerned and he did not. In fact, agriculture makes up 16 per cent or thereabouts of emissions, we are told, so if he takes reductions of 80 per cent, and farmers are allowed to keep their 16, in practice there will be nothing left for anybody else at all. I think he is adopting two standards. (*Extension of time granted*) The member for New England is proposing an amendment which improves the bill, but I do not think it goes as far as it ought to in relation to agriculture. He has also been somewhat inconsistent because his own private member's bill would simply devastate agriculture, and not just agriculture but every other industry in his and other electorates—unless, of course, he is volunteering to put a nuclear power plant in his electorate. I do not think he is, because the press release he put out at the time said he was not keen on nuclear power stations. But unless he is going to find some way to generate electricity in significant quantities and if he is going to have an 80 per cent reduction in CO₂ emissions, he has some sums there that simply do not add up. The member for New England is right to seek to exempt agriculture. In fact, I think it should be all of agriculture; not just food, but the food-processing sector as well. But all of that will not fit within the constraints of his private member's bill, which presumably may have lapsed now but, nonetheless, was sponsored with enthusiasm by him about a year or so ago.

There has been some progress on the issue and a recognition by the government at long last that Australia's CPRS should not be the only emissions trading scheme in the world which proposed to include agriculture. Why the government took so long to get to this position remains to be seen. They know that their legislation is defective in a whole score of areas. They know it has got drafting errors and yet they have not fixed them. They are asking the House of Representatives to vote for bills that they know are technically defective. They also know that they are proposing a scheme that no-one else in the world will ever follow. In fact, the Prime Minister has just come back from a meeting in Singapore with world leaders who all agreed to ditch the Copenhagen treaty. They are not going to have any treaty anymore; they are just going to have a political statement coming out of Copenhagen. So it is absolutely clear that no country in the world is going to go to Copenhagen with a legislated CPRS, and no country in the world is expected to. They are just expected to have targets. And we agreed on those targets ages ago.

So the PM has everything he needs, when he goes off to Copenhagen on this trip, in relation to targets to meet the obligations that the United Nations is seeking from countries. What he ought to be doing is withdrawing this bill altogether, fixing the problems and starting to draft something that looks like what is going to happen in the rest of the world, so that Australian industry and farmers will not be disadvantaged but can participate in a genuine global response to climate change issues, so that Australians can take advantage of trading in carbon credits that might be available through various mechanisms and so that Australian farmers are not the only ones in the world who effectively will be unable to claim credits for the carbon sequestration and carbon abatement activities that they undertake.

What an extraordinary agreement Kyoto was. It actually prevents Australia from undertaking activities that are good for the environment. It prevents us from getting credits for carbon abatement activities, yet the Americans, who have not signed Kyoto, can do that and they are doing it now. They have a voluntary carbon trading scheme in the United States so US farmers can get the benefits of the good things they are doing. An Australian farmer can do exactly the same thing and get no credits whatsoever—only the taxes, only all the bad news out of Labor's CPRS and none of the good news. With those comments, let me say that I think the member for New England's amendments are defective and a bit confused but they are an improvement and, for that reason, are worthy of some degree of support.

Message from the Governor-General recommending appropriation announced.

Mr WINDSOR (New England) (5.29 pm)—I would just like to reflect on a few of the comments made by the Leader of the National Party, and I thank him for his support. I presume that the private member's bill he was referring to was in fact the private member's bill relating to climate protection. It was quite different to the sort of legislation we are talking about today. Just for the record, what it included were a number of initiatives that could protect the climate if, in fact, the emissions trading arrangements did not take place.

That private member's bill included a range of activities that could have a positive effect on the eventual aim of emissions reduction. Some of the renewable energies that the member for O'Connor spoke about were included: solar, wind et cetera. Another activity was soil sequestration, which the leader of the National Party made a glancing reference to as an activity that farmers could undertake to protect their local climates, in a

very parochial sense, by drought-proofing their land through improved grazing and farming technologies. The leader of the National Party is quite wrong to suggest that the bill was a piece of emissions trading legislation. It was about climate protection. It was about recognising that if the climate scientists are right the Murray-Darling system will be adversely affected. In fact, the bill looked at the way in which you could protect that catchment.

I am not a climate change sceptic. I believe we should be doing something. I believe there are flaws in the CPRS legislation. I believe that if we include agriculture, and particularly the food that people eat globally, the scheme will bomb politically—and it is a nonsense to say that hay and grass in an animal are not food. I agree with the leader of the National Party on that point—it will bomb out politically. No-one will accept a higher price for food resulting from the competition for land use that the carbon economy and the renewable energy economy would cause.

I listened intently to what the member for O'Connor had to say. I think that in relation to the good things that he believes can happen he has been ignored. I agree with him on some of those things. The particular arrangement that I believe Senator Wong and the Liberal Party are talking about is a coming together where agriculture emissions are excluded from the scheme and offsets are recognised. The member for O'Connor may not be involved with this; maybe he should be. In that sense there are an enormous number of opportunities for agriculture to be a positive player rather than a negative player, as it keeps being painted. If soil carbon becomes part of the offsets, if some of the holistic pasture technologies become part of the offsets, and if some of the vegetation management proposals and stewardship arrangements become part of the offsets, they

will more than offset any marginal increase in terms of the cost of production that a five per cent emissions target produces. That is one of the reasons I have been opposed to this legislation. To impose a market mechanism with a five per cent target is almost a nonsense.

As I have said, I am prepared to support the bill when it comes back from the Senate, if this amendment is supported by the government and the opposition. I think that the exemption of agriculture would be a big step forward because at some stage there will be an emissions trading arrangement put in place. The suggestion of the member for O'Connor and the leader of the National Party that you are better to have all the negatives and none of the positives is, I think, selling the farm sector and country Australia short.

Mr COMBET (Charlton—Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science and Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change) (5.33 pm)—I thank the member for New England for the amendment and will make some commentary about that in a moment. I also acknowledge the contributions by the member for O'Connor and the member for Wide Bay. The member for Wide Bay made one observation, that no other scheme internationally includes agriculture. It is worth correcting the record: New Zealand has legislated an emissions trading scheme that does include agriculture, which is of course a very important sector of the New Zealand economy.

I note the important comments of the member for New England on the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme legislation in the event that agriculture is excluded and there is an offsetting credits arrangement put in place. I acknowledge the importance of those observations because they also acknowledge the significance of the an-

nouncement the government has made in the last day or two. The proposed amendment from the member for New England would have the effect, as we comprehend, of preventing regulations under the CPRS from declaring that greenhouse gas emitted in connection with the production of agricultural food commodities are covered by the CPRS. In effect, this would remove CPRS liability from all activities leading to the production of food. Removing any emissions associated with food production from the CPRS would mean that emissions reductions would need to be made in other sectors of the economy, self-evidently, and would increase costs across the economy. That is something that the government has been very cautious in approaching. In relation to the issue generally, as has been adverted to by a number of contributions, the government has already addressed the impact of the CPRS on food production through a range of measures. I recognise that they are not universally accepted; however it is worth identifying them.

Firstly, in the legislation before the House agriculture is excluded from the CPRS and it is in the context of a policy position that it was noted by the member for New England that the government was intending, or had the intention, that by the year 2013 a decision would be made following consultation with peak organisations and members of the agriculture community in this country to consider its inclusion in the scheme from 2015. But it is not contained in the sense of agricultural emissions within the bills that are before the House at the moment. Furthermore, in the context of negotiations with the opposition over the legislation the government has now indicated—and I think this is probably one of the earliest occasions that the government has had the opportunity to put this on the record in either place in the parliament—that we will agree to exclude agricultural emissions from coverage under

the CPRS indefinitely in the context of a package negotiated with the opposition that secures passage of the legislation.

Furthermore on this issue generally, food processing firms may be able to apply for funding for abatement activities under the Climate Change Action Fund. That is also a policy position that the government has on the record. And also, in relation to this issue, the CPRS fuel tax offsets will help protect the agriculture and fishing industries and the general community from the impact of fuel prices for the first three years of the scheme. The Treasury modelling demonstrates that the price impact of the CPRS is small, that the impact on farm production costs will be modest with expected increases of between 0.5 and 1.3 per cent for most farms between 2011 and 2015, and it is expected to raise household prices generally by only 0.4 per cent in 2011-12 and 0.7 per cent in 2012-13. So we are providing household compensation to help assist with these modest cost rises. For all of these reasons, plus the fact that we believe the amendment put forward by the member for New England would be extremely difficult to implement and administer, the amendment is not supported by the government. On that note, Mr Deputy Speaker Sidebottom, I think the question is that the amendment be agreed to and I move:

That the question be now put.

Question agreed to.

Question put:

That the amendment (**Mr Windsor's**) be agreed to.

The House divided. [5.43 pm]

(The Deputy Speaker—Mr S Sidebottom)

Ayes.....	49
Noes.....	<u>76</u>
Majority.....	<u>27</u>

AYES

Abbott, A.J.	Baldwin, R.C.
Billson, B.F.	Bishop, B.K.
Briggs, J.E.	Broadbent, R.
Chester, D.	Ciobo, S.M.
Coulton, M.	Dutton, P.C.
Farmer, P.F.	Forrest, J.A.
Gash, J.	Georgiou, P.
Haase, B.W.	Hartsuyker, L.
Hawke, A.	Hawker, D.P.M.
Hull, K.E. *	Hunt, G.A.
Irons, S.J.	Jensen, D.
Keenan, M.	Laming, A.
Ley, S.P.	Lindsay, P.J.
Marino, N.B. *	Markus, L.E.
May, M.A.	Mirabella, S.
Moylan, J.E.	Oakeshott, R.J.M.
Pyne, C.	Ramsey, R.
Randall, D.J.	Robb, A.
Robert, S.R.	Ruddock, P.M.
Schultz, A.	Scott, B.C.
Secker, P.D.	Simpkins, L.
Southcott, A.J.	Stone, S.N.
Truss, W.E.	Vale, D.S.
Washer, M.J.	Windsor, A.H.C.
Wood, J.	

NOES

Adams, D.G.H.	Albanese, A.N.
Bidgood, J.	Bird, S.
Bowen, C.	Bradbury, D.J.
Burke, A.E.	Butler, M.C.
Byrne, A.M.	Campbell, J.
Champion, N.	Cheeseman, D.L.
Clare, J.D.	Collins, J.M.
Combet, G.	Crean, S.F.
D'Ath, Y.M.	Danby, M.
Debus, B.	Dreyfus, M.A.
Elliot, J.	Ellis, K.
Emerson, C.A.	Ferguson, L.D.T.
Ferguson, M.J.	Fitzgibbon, J.A.
Garrett, P.	Georganas, S.
George, J.	Gibbons, S.W.
Gray, G.	Grierson, S.J.
Griffin, A.P.	Hale, D.F.
Hall, J.G. *	Hayes, C.P. *
Irwin, J.	Jackson, S.M.
Kelly, M.J.	Kerr, D.J.C.
King, C.F.	Livermore, K.F.
Macklin, J.L.	Marles, R.D.
McClelland, R.B.	McKew, M.
McMullan, R.F.	Melham, D.

Murphy, J.	Neal, B.J.
Neumann, S.K.	O'Connor, B.P.
Owens, J.	Parke, M.
Perrett, G.D.	Plibersek, T.
Price, L.R.S.	Raguse, B.B.
Rea, K.M.	Ripoll, B.F.
Rishworth, A.L.	Roxon, N.L.
Saffin, J.A.	Shorten, W.R.
Smith, S.F.	Snowdon, W.E.
Sullivan, J.	Swan, W.M.
Symon, M.	Tanner, L.
Thomson, C.	Thomson, K.J.
Trevor, C.	Turnour, J.P.
Vamvakinou, M.	Zappia, A.

PAIRS

Neville, P.C.	Ellis, A.L.
Somlyay, A.M.	Burke, A.S.
Bailey, F.E.	Bevis, A.R.

* denotes teller

Question negated.

Question put:

That the bill be agreed to.

The House divided. [5.49 pm]

(The Deputy Speaker—Mr S Sidebottom)

Ayes.....	77
Noes.....	49
Majority.....	28

AYES

Adams, D.G.H.	Albanese, A.N.
Bidgood, J.	Bird, S.
Bowen, C.	Bradbury, D.J.
Burke, A.E.	Butler, M.C.
Byrne, A.M.	Campbell, J.
Champion, N.	Cheeseman, D.L.
Clare, J.D.	Collins, J.M.
Combet, G.	Crean, S.F.
D'Ath, Y.M.	Danby, M.
Debus, B.	Dreyfus, M.A.
Elliot, J.	Ellis, K.
Emerson, C.A.	Ferguson, L.D.T.
Ferguson, M.J.	Fitzgibbon, J.A.
Garrett, P.	Georganas, S.
George, J.	Gibbons, S.W.
Gray, G.	Grierson, S.J.
Griffin, A.P.	Hale, D.F.
Hall, J.G. *	Hayes, C.P. *
Irwin, J.	Jackson, S.M.

Kelly, M.J.
King, C.F.
Macklin, J.L.
McClelland, R.B.
McMullan, R.F.
Murphy, J.
Neumann, S.K.
Oakeshott, R.J.M.
Parke, M.
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Raguse, B.B.
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Snowdon, W.E.
Swan, W.M.
Tanner, L.
Thomson, K.J.
Turnour, J.P.
Zappia, A.

Kerr, D.J.C.
Livermore, K.F.
Marles, R.D.
McKew, M.
Melham, D.
Neal, B.J.
O'Connor, B.P.
Owens, J.
Perrett, G.D.
Price, L.R.S.
Rea, K.M.
Rishworth, A.L.
Saffin, J.A.
Smith, S.F.
Sullivan, J.
Symon, M.
Thomson, C.
Trevor, C.
Vamvakinou, M.

NOES

Abbott, A.J.
Billson, B.F.
Briggs, J.E.
Chester, D.
Coulton, M.
Farmer, P.F.
Gash, J.
Haase, B.W.
Hawke, A.
Hull, K.E. *
Irons, S.J.
Keenan, M.
Ley, S.P.
Marino, N.B. *
May, M.A.
Morrison, S.J.
Pyne, C.
Randall, D.J.
Robert, S.R.
Schultz, A.
Secker, P.D.
Southcott, A.J.
Truss, W.E.
Washer, M.J.
Wood, J.

Baldwin, R.C.
Bishop, B.K.
Broadbent, R.
Ciobo, S.M.
Dutton, P.C.
Forrest, J.A.
Georgiou, P.
Hartsuyker, L.
Hawker, D.P.M.
Hunt, G.A.
Jensen, D.
Laming, A.
Lindsay, P.J.
Markus, L.E.
Mirabella, S.
Moylan, J.E.
Ramsey, R.
Robb, A.
Ruddock, P.M.
Scott, B.C.
Simpkins, L.
Stone, S.N.
Vale, D.S.
Windsor, A.H.C.

PAIRS

Ellis, A.L.
Burke, A.S.
Bevis, A.R.

Neville, P.C.
Somlyay, A.M.
Bailey, F.E.

* denotes teller

Bill agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr COMBET (Charlton—Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science and Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change) (5.51 pm)—by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

**AUSTRALIAN CLIMATE CHANGE
REGULATORY AUTHORITY BILL 2009
[No. 2]**

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 22 October, on motion by **Mr Combet**:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr COMBET (Charlton—Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science and Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change) (5.53 pm)—In relation to this bill, I again thank all of the speakers who spoke during the cognate debate. I adopt the concluding remarks that I made in relation to the main Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme bill, the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme Bill 2009 [No. 2], and commend this bill to the House.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Bill—by leave—taken as a whole.

Mr OAKESHOTT (Lyne) (5.54 am)—by leave—I move amendments (1) to (11) as circulated in my name:

Clause 1, page 1 (line 8), omit 'Australian', substitute 'Independent'.

Clause 3, page 2 (line 15), omit 'Australian', substitute 'Independent'.

Clause 4, page 3 (line 6), omit 'Australian', substitute 'Independent'.

Part 2, page 8 (line 1), (heading), omit:

‘AUSTRALIAN’

substitute:

‘INDEPENDENT’.

Clause 10, page 8 (line 5), omit:

‘Australian’

substitute:

‘Independent’.

(6) Clause 10, page 8 (line 6), omit ‘Australian’, substitute ‘Independent’.

(7) Clause 10, page 8 (line 8), omit:

‘Australian’

substitute:

‘Independent’.

(8) Page 8, after clause 11, insert:

11A Authority not subject to direction

The Authority is not subject to direction by the Minister in relation to the:

performance of the functions conferred on the Authority by the Parliament; and

(b) publication of information under Part 12 of the *Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme Act 2009*.

(9) Clause 19, page 11 (lines 11 to 13), omit the clause, substitute:

19 Period of appointment for members of the Authority

The Minister must appoint a Member of the Authority for a period of 5 years.

A person who has been appointed as a member of the Authority may be appointed for second period of 5 years.

(2) A person who has been appointed as a member of the Authority for two five years periods is not eligible for appointment for a further period.

(10) Clause 41, page 22 (lines 2 to 9), omit the clause, substitute:

41 Minister may advise Authority

(1) The Minister may, by legislative instrument, advise the Authority of the Minister’s views as to the priorities that

should be given by the Authority to the performance of its functions.

(2) Advice given under subsection (1) must have regard to the provisions of section 11A.

(3) The Authority must give the Minister, in writing, a response to any advice it receives from the Minister under subsection (1).

(11) Title, page 1 (line 1), omit:

‘Australian’

substitute:

‘Independent’.

I will not ask for a division on these amendments because they are very similar to the amendments I put forward on previous legislation that has gone through the House this afternoon. I really just want to reinforce the point about the value of independence—no pun intended. I think there is a longstanding issue with regard to the CPRS legislation that is passing through this place, and that is the issue of ministerial discretion. In the 440 pages that are sitting on the table, it is mentioned at least 20 times that the minister has the authority to decide on key framework questions. I think that is a danger if we are genuinely building a market based response to the natural resource question of our time. We need to let the market rip in this case. Despite what prime ministers have previously said about the dangers of markets, in this case we do need to let the market rip. We need to allow the market to operate as free from the political process as possible. Under that principle, ministerial discretion is a danger, and it needs to be built out of the scheme in the future. So I would ask Minister Combet—and future ministers—to look at the issue of ministerial discretion and the authority of the executive in shaping the market with regard to this climate change response. It is for that reason that these amendments try to build an independent process a la the

Reserve Bank and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission.

The minister used the word 'historic'. If this scheme is historic then it needs the science to fly. The way for that to happen is to have an independent regulatory authority and not have the executive and minister being responsible for many of those key framework questions. Whilst not seeking a division, I raise this issue once again. I certainly hope that, if not this government, future governments will consider building independence into the CPRS for the national interest.

Mr COMBET (Charlton—Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science and Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change) (5.57 pm)—Once again, I thank the member for Lyne for his amendments. As I indicated in relation to the previous bills and the amendments moved to them by the member for Lyne, the government does not have quite the same take as the member for Lyne on the role of the executive in relation to this policy area. We do not support the member's amendments but we recognise the motivation behind them. The proposed amendments, as the member for Lyne indicated, are identical to those previously moved. I appreciate that his intention is to ensure that the authority is able to carry out its functions with an appropriate level of independence. The government also wants to see the authority operating objectively and transparently, in accordance with the framework of rules set out in the legislation. That is why, under clause 41 of the bill, the authority is subject to ministerial direction on general matters only and the minister is not empowered to direct the authority on individual cases. I am astonished that such a grave matter draws such mirth from one of my colleagues.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr S Sidebottom)—Indeed. They're nervous!

Mr COMBET—Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for bringing the House to order! The minister, of course, is not empowered to direct the authority on individual cases such as the allocation of emissions units to a particular person or company. This is a common approach in Commonwealth legislation dealing with independent regulatory bodies and it ensures that the authority's operational independence is preserved while providing scope to ensure that the authority will act consistently with Commonwealth policy. Under the legislation, the minister must table any direction. That means he or she will be accountable to the parliament for any directions given. For those reasons, the government is obviously satisfied with the current provision in this bill. Amendment (9) moved by the member for Lyne proposes that the minister must appoint authority members for a period of five years. While the government anticipates that full members will be appointed for this period, we believe some flexibility is desirable in the case of acting members. There may also be cases in which an excellent candidate is only prepared to take on a shorter role, and we believe some flexibility is required to cater for such circumstances. For all of these reasons, the government strongly prefers to retain the current discretion to appoint members to the authority for periods of up to five years, and we do not support the amendment.

Question negatived.

Bill agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr COMBET (Charlton—Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science and Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change) (6.00 pm)—by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

**CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION
SCHEME (CHARGES—CUSTOMS)
BILL 2009 [No. 2]**

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 22 October, on motion by **Mr Combet**:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr COMBET (Charlton—Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science and Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change) (6.01 pm)—in reply—As with the previous bills, I adopt the closing remarks that I made in relation to the main Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme bill for the purpose of this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Mr COMBET (Charlton—Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science and Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change) (6.01 pm)—by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

**CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION
SCHEME (CHARGES—EXCISE) BILL
2009 [No. 2]**

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 22 October, on motion by **Mr Combet**:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr COMBET (Charlton—Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science and Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change) (6.02 pm)—in reply—Again, in relation to this bill I also adopt the submissions I made for the previous bills. I commend this bill to the House.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Mr COMBET (Charlton—Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science and Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change) (6.03 pm)—by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

**CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION
SCHEME (CHARGES—GENERAL)
BILL 2009 [No. 2]**

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 22 October, on motion by **Mr Combet**:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr COMBET (Charlton—Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science and Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change) (6.04 pm)—in reply—Once again, I thank all of the speakers during the cognate debate and I commend this bill to the House.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Mr COMBET (Charlton—Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science and Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change) (6.05 pm)—by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

**CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION
SCHEME (CPRS FUEL CREDITS) BILL
2009 [No. 2]**

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 22 October, on motion by **Mr Combet**:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr COMBET (Charlton—Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science and Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change) (6.06 pm)—in reply—I once again thank the speakers in the second reading cognate debate in relation to the CPRS bills and commend this bill to the House.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Message from the Governor-General recommending appropriation announced.

Third Reading

Mr COMBET (Charlton—Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science and Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change) (6.07 pm)—by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME (CPRS FUEL CREDITS) (CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS) BILL 2009 [No. 2]

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 22 October, on motion by **Mr Combet**:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr COMBET (Charlton—Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science and Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change) (6.07 pm)—in reply—Once again I thank all of the speakers who spoke in the cognate debate in relation to the CPRS bills. I commend the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS Fuel Credits) (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2009 [No. 2] to the House.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Message from the Governor-General recommending appropriation announced.

Third Reading

Mr COMBET (Charlton—Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science and Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change) (6.08 pm)—by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

EXCISE TARIFF AMENDMENT (CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME) BILL 2009 [No. 2]

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 22 October, on motion by **Mr Combet**:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr COMBET (Charlton—Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science and Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change) (6.09 pm)—in reply—I again thank all of the speakers in the cognate debate in relation to the CPRS bills and adopt the concluding remarks that I made in relation to the second reading debate on the main bill. I commend the Excise Tariff Amendment (Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme) Bill 2009 [No. 2] to the House.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Mr COMBET (Charlton—Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science and Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change) (6.10 pm)—by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

**CUSTOMS TARIFF AMENDMENT
(CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION
SCHEME) BILL 2009 [No. 2]**

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 22 October, on motion by **Mr Combet**:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr COMBET (Charlton—Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science and Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change) (6.10 pm)—in reply—Once again I thank all of the speakers in the cognate debate and adopt my remarks made during the concluding debate on the main CPRS bill. I commend the Customs Tariff Amendment (Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme) Bill 2009 [No. 2] to the House.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Mr COMBET (Charlton—Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science and Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change) (6.11 pm)—by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

**CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION
SCHEME AMENDMENT
(HOUSEHOLD ASSISTANCE) BILL
2009 [No. 2]**

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 22 October, on motion by **Mr Combet**:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr COMBET (Charlton—Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science and Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change) (6.12 pm)—in reply—The Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme Amendment (Household Assistance) Bill 2009 [No. 2] is

an extremely important bill amongst the package that the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme comprises. It is one that deals with the household assistance to compensate low- and middle-income households in particular. A number of speakers spoke as to the importance of these measures and I thank them for their contribution during the cognate debate. I commend this bill to the House.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Message from the Governor-General recommending appropriation announced.

Third Reading

Mr COMBET (Charlton—Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science and Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change) (6.13 pm)—by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

**CRIMES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT
(SERIOUS AND ORGANISED CRIME)
BILL 2009**

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 27 October, on motion by **Mr McClelland**:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (6.13 pm)—Could I begin by commending the Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change on the passage of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme through the House. But we move on from that slow, deadly, creeping crime perpetrated on the environment by humanity to another type of crime.

I am pleased to speak in support of the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Serious and Organised Crime) Bill (No. 2) 2009. When we talk about organised crime we are not talking about small-time, petty criminals out to make a quick buck but serious, systematic

career criminals intent on making large amounts of money from crime. If you know your literature, Mr Deputy Speaker Sidebottom—and I know you do—we are talking about the Fagins rather than the Oliver Twists.

The main focus of organised crime remains illicit drugs, but these groups also dabble in fraud and financial crime, firearms trafficking and intellectual property crime. In fact, the Australian Crime Commission estimates organised crime costs Australia more than \$10 billion a year as well as significant social harms that are perpetrated on individuals and communities. In their report *Organised crime in Australia*, the commission says organised crime groups: (1) are transnational; (2) operate in two or more regions; (3) are in multiple crime markets; (4) are engaged in illicit drugs, fraud or money laundering; (5) intermingle legitimate and criminal enterprises; (6) withstand disruption; and (7) use new technologies. Their innovation would be commendable except that the consequences are so horrific.

We have also seen organised crime operating through rogue bkie gangs. I hasten to add that it is not all bikies; just an errant few, unfortunately. For example, in March this year one man died when rival bkie gangs slugged it out at Sydney airport. A number of shootings and retaliations then followed, with more crimes perpetrated. As I understand it, a complex history of positioning and power plays in the bkie gangs led up to these violent acts. Apart from the violence which erupts between rival rogue gangs, there are also known links between bkie gangs, the illicit drug trade and other organised crimes. The Australian Crime Commission in March this year said bkie gangs:

... represent a real and present danger to the Australian community. There are approximately 39 active outlaw motorcycle gangs in Australia with more than 3300 'patched' members.

Bkie gangs:

... remain a visible criminal threat and ... have developed a strong presence in many illicit markets throughout Australia, maintain strong and complex criminal networks and remain highly functional despite ongoing targeting.

In response to this danger the bill before the House will beef up laws to help our authorities better prevent, investigate and prosecute organised crime in Australia. It introduces new criminal organisation and association offences. These amendments are based on resolutions agreed by the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General, SCAG, in April and August this year. Associating with persons involved in organised criminal activity or with those who direct, support or commit crimes for a criminal organisation will become an offence. Law enforcement agencies will also gain greater access to telecommunications interception powers to help investigate these new offences. Criminal laws generally punish crimes perpetrated by individuals but this area of participation in a criminal organisation is more of a grey area. South Australia—at the forefront in this law like they have been in so many other forms of legislation—and New South Wales already have laws that criminalise participation in criminal groups. There is also obviously strong agreement between all attorneys-general that we have to do more to police these criminal organisations. And I believe we must respond to the serious crimes we saw between those gangs in Sydney at the airport and afterwards, and later at the Gold Coast, for the sake of safety in our community.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I draw your attention to a former Howard government minister and former Liberal member for Moreton who apparently does not share this view. I heard him tell some of his 4BC listeners a few weeks back that he thought Anna Bligh, the Premier of Queensland, was unfairly target-

ing bikie gangs by bringing in similar legislation to that in South Australia and New South Wales. He continued his rabid, myopic, anti-Labor ranting, even though it is two years since he was shown to be out of touch with his electorate on election night 2007. It was rather strange for me to hear him air such views on 4BC and, hopefully, his listeners do not agree with him.

This bill before the House will boost powers to investigate and prosecute money laundering, bribery and drug importation offences. The amendments extend the scope and geographical limits of the Commonwealth's authority in relation to money-laundering offences. Penalties will be increased for bribing a Commonwealth or foreign public official. And the definition of 'import' will be extended to include dealing with a substance in connection with its importation.

The bill also contains some practical amendments to improve cooperation between jurisdictions. Materials seized under search and document production powers in the Crimes Act 1914 will be able to be shared between the Commonwealth, states and territories as well as with foreign law enforcement agencies. As I said previously, organised crime groups operate across jurisdictions, so these amendments are necessary to ensure our law enforcement agencies can work together to combat crime in a global environment. They will ensure agencies can access and search data from electronic equipment.

The bill also contains improvements to the National Witness Protection Program. Unfortunately this is a necessity. As we know, the witness protection program gives protection to people who are believed to be in danger because of their evidence in criminal proceedings or because of their relationship to such a person. These amendments provide

increased protection and security for witnesses, allow protection and assistance available under the program to extend to former participants and other related persons where appropriate, and ensure that state and territory participants are afforded the same protection as Commonwealth participants.

Finally, this bill reforms the criminal asset confiscation laws—we attack their wallets and their wheels, not just their skulduggery. The bill amends the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 to make tests for exclusion and recovery of property fairer and more consistent and to improve the operation of examination provisions. As I said from the outset, serious and organised crime costs our law-abiding community more than \$10 billion a year. Our law enforcement agencies cannot investigate and prosecute these groups with their hands tied behind their backs. Instead they need effective Commonwealth laws and consistent laws throughout Australia to enable them to combat organised crime, as all of the fair-minded members of the community would expect.

This bill sends a strong message to rogue bikie gangs and those involved in criminal groups that the Rudd Labor government is serious about combating organised crime. I thank the hardworking Attorney-General and other ministers for introducing this bill and I commend it to the House.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR (Gorton—Minister for Home Affairs) (6.21 pm)—Firstly, I would like to thank members for their contributions to the debate on the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Serious and Organised Crime) Bill 2009. I support the comments made by the most recent speaker, the member for Moreton, and also those made by the members for Werriwa, Cowan, Dobell and Newcastle on the significant threat posed by organised crimes.

The member for Farrer raised some concerns about whether the safeguards for the unexplained wealth provisions were sufficient. Checks and balances have been included to ensure that the unexplained wealth measures operate fairly. Law enforcement agencies must satisfy a gatekeeping requirement to trigger the application of the provisions. A preliminary unexplained wealth order cannot be made unless law enforcement agencies satisfy the court that there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a person's total wealth exceeds the value of lawful earnings. Strict affidavit requirements apply so that an officer must set out all the property of the person and the property that is known or is suspected to have been lawfully acquired. We will also require the affidavit to set out the grounds on which unexplained wealth is suspected.

Once a court has made a preliminary order against a person, the person will have the opportunity to apply to the court to have the preliminary order revoked. If a person is unable to demonstrate that the preliminary order should be revoked, they will be required to demonstrate that their wealth was derived from lawful sources. At this point in the process, if a person cannot satisfy the court that their assets were not obtained from criminal offences, the government considers that it is reasonable to require them to account for their wealth. The person is only required to satisfy the court on the balance of probabilities, which is a civil standard of proof rather than the criminal standard of beyond reasonable doubt. The government also proposes to amend the bill to enable a court to refuse to make an order where it is satisfied that it is not in the public interest.

The member for Flinders indicated that the opposition would seek further amendments to the proceeds of crime information-sharing provisions. Several safeguards have been included to ensure the information-

sharing arrangements operate in a way that strikes an appropriate balance between the public interest in sharing information and an individual's right to privacy. Information obtained under the Proceeds of Crime Act may only be disclosed when the person disclosing the information believes, on reasonable grounds, that the disclosure would facilitate performance of functions under the Proceeds of Crimes Act; assist in the prevention, investigation or prosecution of criminal activity; or protect public revenue. There are limits on how the information can be used by other agencies. Generally, the information cannot be used against the person who disclosed it in criminal or civil proceedings. The government will also accept the Senate committee recommendation and limit the disclosure of information for the prevention, investigation or prosecution of offences to indictable offences punishable by imprisonment for three years or more.

The government takes very seriously its responsibility for ensuring a safer, more secure Australia, and this bill is a significant achievement towards that goal. As members know and as many members recognised in their contributions to the debate, organised crime inflicts substantial harm on the community, on business and on government. Organised crime networks are extensive, entrepreneurial and adaptive. They are involved in a range of criminal activities, from illicit drug trafficking and money laundering to identity theft and cybercrime. The increasingly aggressive nature of organised crime requires a more aggressive response. It is important that there are strong laws in place to combat this national security threat.

Passage of this bill will represent a significant advance in the tools available to fight serious and organised crime. This bill implements resolutions agreed by the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General in April this year for a comprehensive national re-

sponse to organised crime. Members will recall that, at the meeting, Commonwealth, state and territory governments committed to decisive action to address the threat of organised crime and to ensure that there are no safe havens in Australia for organised criminal groups.

This bill also delivers on the assurance given by the Prime Minister in his inaugural National Security Statement, delivered last year, that the government would act to address the threat posed by organised criminal activity. This bill will combat organised crime by strengthening criminal asset confiscation and targeting unexplained wealth; enhancing police powers to investigate organised crime by implementing model laws for control operations, assumed identities and witness identity protection; addressing the joint commission of criminal offences; and facilitating greater access to telecommunications interception for criminal organisation offences.

While the bill contains strong measures to combat organised crime, it also contains ample safeguards to ensure accountability and natural justice. I have already outlined the safeguards that will apply to the unexplained wealth provisions and the proceeds of crime information-sharing provisions in response to issues raised by the members for Farrer and Flinders. The freezing order provisions contain strict time limits and provide the opportunity for the person affected by the freezing order to apply to a magistrate to have the order varied to meet their living expenses, business expenses or lawful debts. For controlled operations, key safeguards include requiring external authorisation for variations that would extend an operation beyond three months, imposing a maximum total duration for controlled operations and introducing a stronger oversight regime.

I will be moving government amendments that I will outline more comprehensively during the consideration in detail stage of the bill. These amendments will implement recommendations made by the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee and address issues raised by the Senate Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Bills. It will also incorporate further advice from agencies directly involved in preventing, investigating and prosecuting organised criminal activity, including the Attorney-General's Department and the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions.

I thank the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee for its consideration of the bill. The government carefully considered the Senate committee's report and has amended the bill to implement most of its recommendations. The government amendments implement eight of the 12 substantive recommendations of the Senate committee. These include changes to the criminal asset confiscation, controlled operations, witness identity protection and telecommunications interception provisions of the bill. The amendments are intended to provide, among other things, clarity and further procedural fairness. The amendments also address issues identified by the Senate committee, the Senate Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Bills, the Attorney-General's Department and other agencies involved in combating organised criminal activity. These changes include removing intelligence agencies from the witness identity protection provisions in the bill. This is necessary because it has become clear that the scheme does not entirely meet their needs. Consideration will be given to developing a separate scheme to meet the specific needs of the intelligence agencies. They also include minor amendments to the proceeds of crime, cross-border investigative powers and telecommunications interception provi-

sions of the bill. These amendments are designed to ensure that they operate as intended, improving the clarity of provisions to aid interpretation and in some instances increase procedural fairness. All of the measures contained in the current bill and the bill as amended are an important part of the government's commitment to keeping Australia safe and secure. I commend the bill to the House.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Message from the Governor-General recommending appropriation announced.

Consideration in Detail

Bill—by leave—taken as a whole.

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR (Gorton—Minister for Home Affairs) (6.32 pm)—by leave—I move government amendments (1) to (64):

- (1) Schedule 1, item 13, page 9 (line 11), omit "paragraph (c)", substitute "paragraphs (b) and (c)".
- (2) Schedule 1, item 13, page 9 (after line 11), at the end of section 179B, add:
 - (3) The court must make the order under subsection (1) without notice having been given to any person if the *DPP requests the court to do so.
- (3) Schedule 1, item 13, page 9 (lines 23 and 24), omit subsection 179C(3).
- (4) Schedule 1, item 13, page 9 (lines 27 to 32), omit subsections 179C(5) and (6), substitute:
 - (5) The court may revoke the *preliminary unexplained wealth order on application under subsection (1) if satisfied that:
 - (a) there are no grounds on which to make the order at the time of considering the application to revoke the order; or
 - (b) it is in the public interest to do so.
- (5) Schedule 1, item 13, page 9 (after line 32), after section 179C, insert:

179CA Notice and procedure on application to revoke preliminary unexplained wealth order

 - (1) This section applies if a person applies under section 179C for revocation of a *preliminary unexplained wealth order.
 - (2) The applicant may appear and adduce material at the hearing of the application.
 - (3) The applicant must give the *DPP:
 - (a) written notice of the application; and
 - (b) a copy of any affidavit supporting the application.
 - (4) The *DPP may appear and adduce additional material at the hearing of the application.
 - (5) The *DPP must give the applicant a copy of any affidavit it proposes to rely on to contest the application.
 - (6) The notice and copies of affidavits must be given under subsections (3) and (5) within a reasonable time before the hearing of the application.
- (6) Schedule 1, item 13, page 10 (line 12), omit "*total wealth of the person", substitute "whole or any part of the person's *wealth".
- (7) Schedule 1, item 13, page 10 (line 26), omit subparagraph (2)(b)(iii), substitute:
 - (iii) a *State offence that has a federal aspect;

reduced by any amount deducted under section 179J (reducing unexplained wealth amounts to take account of forfeiture, pecuniary penalties etc.).
- (8) Schedule 1, item 13, page 10 (lines 32 and 33), omit "including information that could not reasonably have been ascertained before the application was made".
- (9) Schedule 1, item 13, page 10 (after line 34), at the end of section 179E, add:

- (6) Despite subsection (1), the court may refuse to make an order under that subsection if the court is satisfied that it is not in the public interest to make the order.
- (10) Schedule 1, item 13, page 13 (lines 27 and 28), omit “specifying an *unexplained wealth amount”, substitute “in relation to a person”.
- (11) Schedule 1, item 13, page 13 (line 29), after “Commonwealth”, insert “; once the unexplained wealth order is satisfied,”.
- (12) Schedule 1, item 13, page 14 (line 4), after “exceed the”, insert “person’s”.
- (13) Schedule 1, item 13, page 14 (lines 20 and 21), omit “any affidavit supporting the application”, substitute “the affidavit referred to in subsection 179B(2)”.
- (14) Schedule 1, item 13, page 14 (line 22) to page 15 (line 1), omit subsections 179N(3), (4) and (5), substitute:
- (3) The *DPP must also give a copy of any other affidavit supporting the application to the person who would be subject to the *unexplained wealth order if it were made.
- (4) The copies must be given under subsection (3) within a reasonable time before the hearing in relation to whether the order is to be made.
- (15) Schedule 1, item 13, page 15 (lines 14 to 21), omit section 179Q, substitute:
- 179Q Procedure on application and other notice requirements**
- (1) The person who would be subject to an *unexplained wealth order if it were made may appear and adduce evidence at the hearing in relation to whether the order is to be made.
- (2) The person must give the *DPP written notice of any grounds on which he or she proposes to contest the making of the order.
- (3) The *DPP may appear and adduce evidence at the hearing in relation to whether an *unexplained wealth order is to be made.
- (16) Schedule 1, item 32, page 20 (line 30), omit “any”, substitute “the”.
- (17) Schedule 2, item 67, page 44 (line 5), omit “or Division 2 of Part 4-1”.
- (18) Schedule 2, item 67, page 44 (table item 2), omit the table item, substitute:
- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 2 | Authority of the Commonwealth, or of a State or Territory, that has a function of investigating or prosecuting offences against a law of the Commonwealth, State or Territory | Assisting in the prevention, investigation or prosecution of an offence against that law that is punishable on conviction by imprisonment for at least 3 years or for life |
| 2A | Authority of a foreign country that has a function of investigating or prosecuting offences against a law of the country | Assisting in the prevention, investigation or prosecution of an offence against that law constituted by conduct that, if it occurred in Australia, would constitute an offence against a law of the Commonwealth, or of a State or Territory, punishable on conviction by imprisonment for at least 3 years or for life |
- (19) Schedule 2, item 67, page 44 (line 14) to page 45 (line 21), omit subsections 266A(3) to (5), substitute:
- Limits on use of information disclosed**
- (3) In civil or *criminal proceedings against a person who gave an answer or produced a document in an *examination, none of the following that is disclosed under this section is admissible in evidence against the person:
- (a) the answer or document;

- (b) information contained in the answer or document.
- (4) Subsection (3) does not apply in:
- (a) *criminal proceedings for giving false or misleading information; or
 - (b) proceedings on an application under this Act; or
 - (c) proceedings ancillary to an application under this Act; or
 - (d) proceedings for enforcement of a *confiscation order; or
 - (e) civil proceedings for or in respect of a right or liability the document confers or imposes.
- Note: Subsections (3) and (4) reflect section 198.
- (5) In a *criminal proceeding against a person who produced or made available a document under a *production order, none of the following that is disclosed under this section is admissible in evidence against the person:
- (a) the document;
 - (b) information contained in the document.
- (6) Subsection (5) does not apply in a proceeding under, or arising out of, section 137.1 or 137.2 of the *Criminal Code* (false or misleading information or documents) in relation to producing the document or making it available.
- Note: Subsections (5) and (6) reflect subsection 206(2).
- (7) To avoid doubt, this section does not affect the admissibility in evidence of any information, document or thing obtained as an indirect consequence of a disclosure under this section.
- (20) Schedule 2, item 67, page 45 (after line 21), at the end of section 266A, add:
- Relationship with subsection 228(2)*
- (8) To avoid doubt:
- (a) this section does not limit subsection 228(2) (about a *search warrant authorising the *executing officer to make things seized under the warrant available to officers of other *enforcement agencies); and
 - (b) subsection 228(2) does not limit this section.
- (21) Schedule 3, item 10, page 68 (lines 1 and 2), omit “No single variation may extend the period of effect of a formal authority”, substitute “A formal authority must not be varied”.
- (22) Schedule 3, item 10, page 69 (line 28), omit “**Determination of application to vary authority**”, substitute “**Requirements for variation of authority**”.
- (23) Schedule 3, item 10, page 69 (lines 30 and 31), omit “the authorising officer concerned”, substitute “an appropriate authorising officer”.
- (24) Schedule 3, item 10, page 69 (line 35), omit “The authorising officer must not grant the variation”, substitute “An appropriate authorising officer must not vary an authority, whether on application or on the authorising officer’s own initiative.”.
- (25) Schedule 3, item 10, page 70 (line 36), omit “otherwise”, substitute “on the authorising officer’s own initiative”.
- (26) Schedule 3, item 10, page 72 (lines 19 to 25), omit subsection 15GT(3), substitute:
- (3) For the purposes of subsection (2), the period of the extension must not exceed the lesser of:
 - (a) 3 months; and
 - (b) a period that would result in the period of effect of the authority exceeding 24 months (including any previous extensions under this Subdivision or Subdivision B).
- (27) Schedule 3, item 10, page 88 (line 7), after “cessation”, insert “and the outcomes of the controlled operation”.
- (28) Schedule 3, item 10, page 89 (after line 10), after subsection 15HM(2), insert:

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- (2A) If the controlled operation involved illicit goods that are narcotic goods, the report is to:
- (a) identify each law enforcement agency an officer of which had possession of the narcotic goods in the course of the controlled operation; and
 - (b) identify to the extent known any other person who had possession of the narcotic goods in the course of the controlled operation; and
 - (c) state whether the narcotic goods have been destroyed; and
 - (d) if the narcotic goods have not been destroyed—contain the information specified in subsection (2B) relating to the possession of the narcotic goods, or state that it is not known who has possession of them.
- (2B) If the controlled operation involved narcotic goods that have not been destroyed, and the identity of the person who has possession of the narcotic goods is known, the report is to:
- (a) if the person is a law enforcement officer—identify the law enforcement agency of which the person is an officer; or
 - (b) otherwise—identify the person.
- (2C) If the chief officer of the authorising agency is of the view that disclosing the identity of a person may:
- (a) endanger the safety of the person; or
 - (b) prejudice an investigation or prosecution;
- then the person is sufficiently identified for the purposes of paragraphs (2A)(b) and (2B)(b) if the person is identified:
- (c) by an assumed name under which the person is operating; or
 - (d) by a code name or code number; as long as the chief officer can match the assumed name, code name or code number to the person's identity.
- (29) Schedule 3, item 10, page 89 (line 25), omit “subsection 15HM(2)”, substitute “subsections 15HM(2), (2A), (2B) and (2C)”.
- (30) Schedule 3, item 10, page 93 (after line 14), after subparagraph 15HQ(2)(b)(viii), insert:
- (viiia) the nature of the controlled conduct that was engaged in by law enforcement participants and civilian participants (if any); and
- (31) Schedule 3, item 10, page 93 (lines 17 and 18), omit “and the date of completion of the operation”, substitute “, the date on which the operation ceased, and the outcomes of the operation”.
- (32) Schedule 3, item 10, page 93 (after line 36), after subsection 15HQ(2), insert:
- (2A) If the controlled operation involved illicit goods that are narcotic goods, the general register is to:
- (a) identify each law enforcement agency an officer of which had possession of the narcotic goods in the course of the controlled operation; and
 - (b) identify to the extent known any other person who had possession of the narcotic goods in the course of the controlled operation; and
 - (c) state whether the narcotic goods have been destroyed; and
 - (d) if the narcotic goods have not been destroyed—contain the information specified in subsection (2B) relating to the possession of the narcotic goods, or state that it is not known who has possession of them.
- (2B) If the controlled operation involved narcotic goods that have not been destroyed, and the identity of the person who has possession of the narcotic goods is known, the general register is to:
- (a) if the person is a law enforcement officer—identify the law enforcement agency of which the person is an officer; or
 - (b) otherwise—identify the person.
-

- (2C) If the chief officer of the authorising agency is of the view that disclosing the identity of a person may:
- (a) endanger the safety of the person; or
 - (b) prejudice an investigation or prosecution;
- then the person is sufficiently identified for the purposes of paragraphs (2A)(b) and (2B)(b) if the person is identified:
- (c) by an assumed name under which the person is operating; or
 - (d) by a code name or code number; as long as the chief officer can match the assumed name, code name or code number to the person's identity.
- (33) Schedule 3, item 10, page 98 (lines 20 to 26), omit subsection 15HX(1), substitute:
- (1) The Ombudsman may, by written instrument, delegate to an APS employee responsible to the Ombudsman all or any of the Ombudsman's powers under this Division, other than a power to report to the Minister.
- (34) Schedule 3, item 10, page 129 (line 6), omit "ASIS.", substitute "ASIS; and".
- (35) Schedule 3, item 10, page 129 (after line 6), at the end of the definition of *senior officer* in subsection 15LH(3), add:
- (h) in relation to a Commonwealth agency specified in the regulations for the purposes of the definition of *law enforcement agency*—an officer specified in the regulations to be a senior officer of the agency.
- (36) Schedule 3, item 10, page 129 (lines 14 to 31), omit the definition of *chief officer* in section 15M, substitute:
- chief officer* of a law enforcement agency means the following:
- (a) in relation to the Australian Federal Police—the Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police;
 - (b) in relation to Customs—the Chief Executive Officer of Customs;
 - (c) in relation to the ACC—the Chief Executive Officer of the ACC;
 - (d) in relation to the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity—the Integrity Commissioner;
 - (e) in relation to the Australian Taxation Office—the Commissioner of Taxation;
 - (f) in relation to a Commonwealth agency specified in the regulations for the purposes of the definition of *law enforcement agency*—the officer specified in the regulations as the chief officer of that agency.
- (37) Schedule 3, item 10, page 130 (lines 17 to 19), omit the definition of *intelligence agency* in subsection 15M(1).
- (38) Schedule 3, item 10, page 131 (lines 1 and 2), omit the definition of *National Witness Protection Program* in subsection 15M(1).
- (39) Schedule 3, item 10, page 131 (lines 6 and 7), omit paragraph (b) of the definition of *operative* in subsection 15M(1), substitute:
- (b) authorised to acquire and use an assumed identity under Part IAC by the chief officer of a law enforcement agency; but does not include a person who is or was an intelligence officer (within the meaning of Part IAC).
- (40) Schedule 3, item 10, page 133 (after line 31), at the end of section 15MD, add:
- (3) To avoid doubt, this Part does not, other than as expressly provided, limit the power of a court to control proceedings in relation to a matter before it.
- (41) Schedule 3, item 10, page 133 (line 33) to page 134 (line 14), omit subsection 15ME(1), substitute:
- (1) The chief officer of a law enforcement agency may give a witness identity protection certificate for an operative in relation to a proceeding if:
 - (a) the operative is, or may be required, to give evidence in the proceeding; and

- (b) the chief officer is satisfied on reasonable grounds that the disclosure in the proceeding of the operative's identity or where the operative lives is likely to:
- (i) endanger the safety of the operative or another person; or
 - (ii) prejudice any current or future investigation; or
 - (iii) prejudice any current or future activity relating to security.
- (42) Schedule 3, item 10, page 135 (lines 11 and 12), omit "or an intelligence officer".
- (43) Schedule 3, item 10, page 135 (line 35), omit "or an intelligence officer".
- (44) Schedule 3, item 10, page 136 (lines 1 and 2), omit "or an intelligence officer".
- (45) Schedule 3, item 10, page 136 (lines 22 and 23), omit "either a law enforcement officer or an intelligence officer", substitute "a law enforcement officer".
- (46) Schedule 3, item 10, page 137 (line 21), omit "one or more of the requirements of section 15MH", substitute "the requirement under subsection 15MH(2) in relation to the time within which a copy of the certificate is to be given".
- (47) Schedule 3, item 10, page 137 (lines 24 and 25), omit "requirement or requirements of section 15MH in respect of which leave is sought", substitute "requirement referred to in subsection (1)".
- (48) Schedule 3, item 10, page 137 (lines 26 to 32), omit subsection 15MI(3) (including the note).
- (49) Schedule 3, item 10, page 139 (lines 1 to 7), omit subsections 15MK(2) and (3).
- (50) Schedule 3, item 10, page 139 (after line 14), at the end of section 15MK, add:
- (6) A person commits an offence if:
 - (a) an order has been made under subsection (1), (4) or (5); and
 - (b) the person engages in conduct; and
 - (c) the conduct contravenes the order.
- Penalty: Imprisonment for 2 years.
- (7) Subsection (6) does not limit the court's powers, including, but not limited to, the court's power to punish for contempt.
- (51) Schedule 3, item 10, page 142 (line 27) to page 143 (line 5), omit section 15MP, substitute:
- 15MP Appeals and adjournments***
- (1) This section applies if, in proceedings before a court (the ***original court***):
- (a) the original court gives, or refuses, leave under section 15MI or 15MM in relation to a witness identity protection certificate for an operative; or
 - (b) the original court makes, or refuses to make, an order under section 15MK or 15MM in relation to a witness identity protection certificate for an operative.
- (2) A court (the ***appeal court***) that has jurisdiction to hear and determine appeals from a judgment, order or direction in the proceedings has jurisdiction to hear and determine an appeal against the decision to give or refuse leave, or to make or refuse to make the order.
- (3) The following persons may appeal against the decision to give or refuse leave, or to make or refuse to make the order:
- (a) a party to the proceedings;
 - (b) if the appeal court is satisfied that the operative to whom the certificate relates or the chief officer who gave the certificate has a sufficient interest in the decision—the operative or the chief officer.
- (4) If a party to the proceedings appeals against the decision to give or refuse leave, or to make or refuse to make the order, the appeal court may allow the operative to whom the certificate relates, or the chief officer who gave the certificate, to join the appeal as a re-

- spondent, if the appeal court is satisfied that the operative or chief officer has a sufficient interest in the decision.
- (5) A party to the proceedings, the operative to whom the certificate relates or the chief officer who gave the certificate may apply to the original court for an adjournment:
- (a) to appeal against the decision of the original court to give or refuse leave, or to make or refuse to make the order; or
 - (b) to decide whether to appeal or seek leave to appeal against the decision.
- (6) If an application is made under subsection (5), the original court must grant the adjournment.
- (52) Schedule 3, item 10, page 143 (lines 7 to 11), omit subsection 15MQ(1), substitute:
- (1) This section applies if the chief officer of a law enforcement agency gives a witness identity protection certificate for an operative in relation to a proceeding.
- (53) Schedule 3, item 10, page 143 (lines 24 to 28), omit subsection 15MR(1), substitute:
- (1) This section applies if the chief officer of a law enforcement agency gives a witness identity protection certificate for an operative in relation to a proceeding.
- (54) Schedule 3, item 10, page 145 (lines 18 to 20), omit paragraph 15MS(3)(f), substitute:
- (f) the person is reckless as to whether his or her conduct will:
 - (i) prejudice any current or future investigation; or
 - (ii) prejudice any current or future activity relating to security.
- (55) Schedule 3, item 10, page 145 (lines 23 and 24), omit “or an intelligence agency”.
- (56) Schedule 3, item 10, page 146 (lines 6 and 7), omit “—**law enforcement agencies**”.
- (57) Schedule 3, item 10, page 146 (line 15), omit “15ME(1)(d)”, substitute “15ME(1)(b)”.
- (58) Schedule 3, item 10, page 147 (line 11) to page 148 (line 9), omit section 15MV.
- (59) Schedule 3, item 10, page 149 (lines 8 and 9), omit “or the intelligence agency (as the case may be)”.
- (60) Schedule 3, item 10, page 149 (lines 28 to 35), omit paragraphs (e) and (f) of the definition of *senior officer* in subsection 15MX(3), substitute:
- (e) in relation to a Commonwealth agency specified in the regulations for the purposes of the definition of *law enforcement agency*—an officer of the agency specified in the regulations to be a senior officer of the agency.
- (61) Schedule 4, page 161 (after line 2), insert:
- Division 1—Offences involving criminal organisations**
- (62) Schedule 4, page 162 (after line 5), after item 16, insert:
- 16A After subsection 5D(3)**
- Insert:
- Offences relating to criminal groups*
- (3AA) An offence is also a *serious offence* if it is an offence against section 93T of the *Crimes Act 1900* of New South Wales.
- (63) Schedule 4, item 18, page 162 (line 36) to page 163 (line 3), omit the item, substitute:
- 18 Application**
- Subsections 5D(3AA) and (9) of the *Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act 1979* apply whether the conduct constituting the offences concerned was engaged in before or after the commencement of this item.
- (64) Schedule 4, Part 2, page 163 (after line 3), at the end of the Part, add:
- Division 2—Use of information for purposes of organised crime control laws**
- Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act 1979**
- 18A Subsection 5(1)**

Insert:

organised crime control law means a law of a State, a purpose of which is to combat organised crime or restrict the activities of criminal organisations, that provides for:

- (a) the declaration of an organisation as a declared organisation; or
- (b) the making of orders described as control orders or interim control orders in relation to members of criminal organisations.

18B Subsection 5(1) (at the end of subparagraphs (c)(i), (ii), (iia) and (iib) of the definition of *permitted purpose*)

Add “or”.

18C Subsection 5(1) (at the end of paragraph (c) of the definition of *permitted purpose*)

Add:

- (v) the performance of a function or duty, or the exercise of a power, by a person, court or other body under, or in relation to a matter arising under, an organised crime control law of that State; or

18D After paragraph 5B(1)(c)

Insert:

- (ca) a proceeding under, or a proceeding relating to a matter arising under, an organised crime control law; or

18E At the end of paragraphs 6L(1)(a), (b) and (c)

Add “or”.

18F After paragraph 6L(1)(c)

Insert:

- (ca) a proceeding under, or in relation to a matter arising under, an organised crime control law of that State; or

18G At the end of paragraph 6L(1)(d)

Add “or”.

18H After subparagraph 68(d)(i)

Insert:

- (ia) the subject matter of a proceeding under, or in relation to a matter arising under, an organised crime control law of a State; or

18J Application

The *Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act 1979*, as amended by this Division, applies in relation to the communication, use and making of a record of information, and the giving of information in evidence in proceedings, on or after the commencement of this item, whether the information was obtained before or after that commencement.

The amendments will implement eight of the 12 substantive recommendations, as I indicated in the summing up, of the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs in its report on the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Serious and Organised Crime) Bill 2009. They also address issues identified by the Senate committee, the Senate Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Bills, the Attorney-General’s Department and portfolio agencies. Amendments (1) to (20) amend the proceeds of crime measures in schedules 1 and 2 of the bill. They will give effect to recommendations 1 to 5 of the Senate committee and make minor and technical changes to improve the operations of the provisions.

Amendment (1) will give effect to recommendation 3 of the Senate committee. It will require an officer to state in the affidavit supporting an application for a preliminary unexplained wealth order the grounds on which he or she holds a reasonable suspicion that a person’s total wealth exceeds the person’s lawfully acquired wealth. Amendment (2) and amendments (5) to (16) are minor and technical amendments that improve the operation of procedural and notice requirements that support the unexplained wealth measures. Amendments (3), (4) and (9) will give effect to recommendations 1 and 2 of

the Senate committee by providing courts with discretion to revoke a preliminary unexplained wealth order and refuse to issue an unexplained wealth order if the order is not in the public interest. Providing a court with this discretion is consistent with the other provisions in the Proceeds of Crime Act. These amendments were developed in consultation with law enforcement agencies.

Amendments (17) to (20) will include several additional safeguards in the proceeds of crime information sharing provisions. Amendments (17), (19) and (20) will clarify that, where information disclosed under the Proceeds of Crime Act is protected by a direct use immunity, that immunity is preserved when the information is later shared with another law enforcement agency. Amendment (18) will give effect to recommendations 4 and 5 of the Senate committee's report. It will provide that information acquired under the Proceeds of Crime Act may only be shared with other law enforcement agencies in the circumstances specified. They are, for the purposes of investigation, prosecution or prevention of indictable offences punishable by imprisonment for three years or more. It will also specify that information obtained under the act may only be provided to foreign law enforcement agencies if the offence under investigation would be an indictable offence punishable by imprisonment for three or more years if it occurred in Australia.

Amendments (21) to (33) will make several minor amendments to the controlled operations provision in schedule 3 of the bill. Amendments (21) to (26) will clarify the limitations that apply to variations of controlled operations authorities by law enforcement officers and nominated Administrative Appeals Tribunal members. Such variations may include extensions. This will address ambiguity that could arise from the provisions about the length of extensions

permitted and the factors to be considered before an authority may be varied as currently drafted. In particular, the amendments will ensure that all extensions are limited to no more than three months duration. Amendments (27), (30) and (31) will improve information recording and reporting requirements by requiring law enforcement agencies to include information about the controlled conduct engaged in and the outcomes of each operation in both chief officers' reports and the general register.

Amendments (28), (29) and (32) will implement recommendation 7 of the Senate committee. They will require additional information to be recorded in the general register and chief officers' reports to the minister and the Commonwealth Ombudsman for operations that involve narcotic goods. Law enforcement agencies will be required to record information about people who had possession of narcotic goods during the operation and whether the goods have been destroyed. If the narcotic goods have not been destroyed, the general register must contain information about the agency or person who retains the goods.

Amendment (33) will respond to concerns raised by the Senate Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Bills by restricting the available delegation of the Ombudsman's powers under proposed new part IAB of the Crimes Act to Australian Public Service employees responsible to the Ombudsman. (*Extension of time granted*) Amendments (34) and (35) will amend the definition of 'senior officer' in the proposed delegation section in the assumed identity provisions so that it captures relevant officers of law enforcement agencies specified in the regulations.

Amendments (36), (37), (39), (41) to (45), (52), (53) and (55) to (60) will remove intelligence agencies from the witness identity protection provisions in schedule 3 of the

bill. The model laws on which the proposed witness identity protection regime is based were developed to meet the needs of law enforcement agencies. It was anticipated that small adjustments to the witness identity protection scheme might be needed to meet the different needs of intelligence agencies. In further discussion with those agencies after the bill was introduced it became clear that more comprehensive amendments were likely to be needed to accommodate their requirements. To address that situation the intelligence agencies will be removed from the witness identity protection scheme in the bill and their requirements reviewed separately. This will enable consideration to be given to developing a regime that is specifically targeted to the intelligence agencies' needs. In the meantime they will continue to rely on the court's inherent power to permit the use of an assumed identity in court proceedings.

Amendments (36) and (60) will amend the definitions of 'chief officer' and 'senior officer' in the witness identity protection provisions so that they capture relevant officers of law enforcement agencies specified in the regulations. Amendment (38) will omit the definition of National Witness Protection Program from the witness identity protection provisions, as the term is not used in proposed new part IACA of the Crimes Act.

Amendment (40) will explicitly provide that the witness identity protection provisions do not interfere with the court's inherent powers, thus ensuring current arrangements can continue for intelligence agencies. Amendments (46) to (48) will provide that a witness identity protection certificate only takes effect if it has been provided to the court and other parties to the proceeding. The intention was that the requirement to file a copy of a certificate in the court and to provide a copy to any other party would have to be complied with, but that a court could al-

low non-compliance with the timing requirements for these steps. The amendments will ensure this intention is correctly reflected in the provisions.

Amendments (49) and (50) will replace the proposed offence for contravening an order made to protect an operative with an offence that also covers contravention of non-publication orders made for the same purpose. The provisions as currently drafted include an offence for noncompliance with a court order made to protect an operative's identity, but not for a non-publication order made in relation to anything said in the course of such an order being made. These amendments will ensure consistent penalties apply for noncompliance with both types of orders.

Amendment (51) will provide a court with discretion to allow an operative or a chief officer to seek an adjournment to decide whether to appeal certain decisions or orders in relation to witness identity protection certificates, appeal against a decision or order, or be joined as a respondent to an appeal against a decision or order. A court may only allow this if it is satisfied that the operative or chief officer has sufficient interest in the decision. This is consistent with the original policy intention of ensuring that an operative or the operative's chief officer is able to provide the court, where necessary, with relevant information about why the operative's identity should not be disclosed.

Amendment (54) will amend a proposed non-disclosure offence to better align the offence with the purposes for which a witness identity protection certificate can be issued. A factor in determining whether to issue a certificate is whether the disclosure of the operative's identity is likely to prejudice a current or future investigation or activity relating to security. This amendment will amend the proposed offence so that reckless-

ness as to whether the disclosure will prejudice a current or future investigation or activity relating to security is an element of the offence. (*Extension of time granted*) Amendments (61) and (64) will implement recommendation 11 of the Senate committee by enabling the use of existing intercepted information for applications to declare criminal organisations and individual control orders for members of such organisations. This is a logical extension of the current provisions in the bill and will assist agencies with their endeavours in combating organised crime. Amendments (62) and (63) will amend the telecommunications interception provisions to make telecommunications interception available for the investigation of offences under section 93T of the New South Wales Crimes Act. This will ensure a consistent national approach to the availability of telecommunications interception for investigation of criminal organisation offences. I commend these amendments to the House and I table a supplementary explanatory memorandum.

Question agreed to.

Bill, as amended, agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR (Gorton—Minister for Home Affairs) (6.41 pm)—by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

CORPORATIONS AMENDMENT (IMPROVING ACCOUNTABILITY ON TERMINATION PAYMENTS) BILL 2009

Consideration of Senate Message

Message received from the Senate acquainting the House that the Senate does not insist on its amendment disagreed to by the House.

TAX LAWS AMENDMENT (2009 BUDGET MEASURES No. 2) BILL 2009

Cognate bill:

INCOME TAX (TFN WITHHOLDING TAX (ESS)) BILL 2009

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 21 October, on motion by **Mr McClelland**:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr ANTHONY SMITH (Casey) (6.45 pm)—The Tax Laws Amendment (2009 Budget Measures No. 2) Bill 2009 deals with three issues. The first issue that it deals with is the issue of employee share schemes. Members of the House will recall the complete shemozzle and chaos six months ago of the government's budget announcement on employee share schemes. Now six months down the track, after numerous U-turns, reviews and eventually seeing the catastrophe for what it was, the government is introducing this legislation, which is markedly different from its proposal on budget night.

On budget night the government announced the immediate removal of tax deferral on employee share schemes, effective from budget night. It meant that every person in every employee share scheme was required to pay the tax upfront, irrespective of whether they were able to sell the shares. So you had scenarios devised by the government where someone working in a business who had been provided with some shares as part of an employee share scheme, given those shares and in a position of not being able to sell them for a couple of years, which is a typical case, was required under the government's legislation to pay that tax upfront. You can just imagine the scenario of someone working hard for a business being told that they were being awarded some shares that they could sell in two or three years time, but under the government's new rules

would be required to pay the tax on them upfront. The budget measure also limited the \$1,000 concession to those earning less than \$60,000.

It was a big controversy at the time. The government told us there was a problem with nondisclosure that needed to be fixed, that some taxpayers were not fully disclosing the receipt on shares and options. But their solution was to make every single employee who was receiving shares from their employers pay tax upfront. Because of the lack of detail, it was unclear whether those that paid upfront tax but never actually ended up receiving anything in the future would even be able to claim back the tax they had paid.

I have said before, and I say again, the coalition has a strong and demonstrated record of maintaining the integrity of the tax system. We believe that everyone must pay their fair share of tax. We also recognise integrity measures must be exactly that: measures to improve the integrity of the tax system, not to shut down an entire sector of it as the original announcement had the effect of doing. That is precisely what happened: the effect of the government's budget night announcement was to instantaneously snap-freeze employee share schemes right across Australia, to snap-freeze them for employees on every income level. When those schemes were frozen, employee share schemes in Australia came to a halt.

As I said at the outset, it has been six months and the government's handling of this issue has provided a very good window into their failure to produce sensible policy and their failure to correct errors when they are blindingly obvious for everyone to see. If you go back to the period after the budget announcement, within two days it was quite obvious that the government's announcement had had the effect of freezing employee share schemes right across Australia. It was

quite obvious. No-one thought that was the government's intent. No-one thought that those in the Treasury and the tax office and those in the minister's office had a deliberate policy to end employee share ownership schemes in Australia. It was clear that they had made a monumental error; it was clear that there was absolute incompetence on a grand scale. The *Financial Review* carried the chaos most prominently, as you would expect. It carried it, from memory, on its front page within two days of the budget, and it certainly carried it on its front page for at least six of the next seven days.

And what was the government's response to this? Its first response was to deny there was a problem. Being confronted with an absolute catastrophe of its own making, the government's initial instinctive response was to simply pretend it did not exist—that is, having been confronted with this problem, instead of accepting that they had made a monumental error, the government's first instinct was to pretend it did not exist and to let the chaos reign. Absolutely irresponsible on a grand scale. Faced with the fact that employee share schemes had been shut down across Australia, having the knowledge that their budget night announcement had caused the chaos, the response from senior ministers from the Prime Minister down was to pretend it did not matter. Having seen those schemes shut down, their response was, 'Let's just ignore the problem.'

We saw it in the days after the budget. We saw it for two weeks, when all the government did was duck, weave and try and spin its way out of the chaos. The Prime Minister, knowing that the announcement had been a catastrophe, still insisted days after the budget that it was 'the right decision'. He said:

Though many of these decisions will be unpopular, I accept that.

The week after the budget, the Minister for Finance and Deregulation said that the changes were needed to stop a tax rort by those 'at the very big end of town'. But the snap-freezing of employee share schemes of course affected more people than the finance minister suggested: it affected every single employee who participated in an employee share scheme. When the finance minister made those remarks, he would have known that—and, if he did not know, that just doubles his incompetence. At the time, the Treasurer said:

... we don't expect average punters to pay for a lot of tax breaks going to people who earn significant income

In fact, as I have explained, it was the average punter who was paying for the incompetence of the government, because every person at every income level with an employee share scheme entitlement or offer was affected by the government's chaotic decision.

This stonewalling and refusal to accept what was obvious to everyone continued even when the union movement began to express outrage. You can just imagine them holding their tongues and their noses, thinking, 'This is so chaotic we won't need to attack our political brothers in the parliamentary party; they will come to their senses.' But, only when it became obvious that that was not about to happen, within two weeks of the budget the union movement began belling the cat on the Labor Party. Look at some of the quotes at the time from those in the business community, pleading with the government to realise the error of its ways and to act to fix it. Gary Scarrabelotti of the Employee Ownership Group said:

Rudd Labor has ensured that Australian workers will never become co-owners of the businesses in which they work ...

Geoff Price from Computershare said:

They—

meaning the Labor government—

just don't seem to get it.

He went on to say:

The proposed changes simply render the vast majority of plans uneconomic.

The finance director at Woolworths said:

My concern is that the government hasn't thought through the changes to employee share ownership. It has effectively frozen employee share schemes.

The company secretary at Fairfax Holdings summed it up in fewer words:

It looks as though they haven't a clue what they've done.

This is what we saw in the aftermath of the budget.

Finally, after two chaotic weeks, while the government's instinct was to ignore the problem, deny the problem and attack anyone who criticised what they had done, the Treasurer of the country admitted that 'mistakes have been made' and the government began consulting. Then, after 50 days, some changes were announced by the Assistant Treasurer. As we on this side of the House said at the time, we and everyone who had an entitlement to an employee share plan and anyone working for a firm offering shares began to witness the long, slow, humiliating U-turn—a U-turn in slow motion. After all of that denial, spin and, finally, quiet acceptance of the chaos that had been caused, here we are today with legislation that is vastly different to that which was presented to the House on budget night.

Labor did everything it could to avoid bringing this legislation to the parliament. Its instinct after introducing the budget measure was to stick with it. When this legislation is said and done—and, as I have made clear in other forums, we will not be opposing the legislation—the employees of Australia will have come to know what the Australian La-

bor Party really thought of employee share ownership, and I do not believe they will forget it.

I will run through some of the detail of the bill. The amendments mean that the \$1,000 upfront tax concession will be available to those on incomes of up to \$180,000, which is a significant change from the original budget announcement, and that tax can be deferred when the employee share scheme meets the real risk of forfeiture test which has been introduced. For schemes that meet the real risk of forfeiture test, the tax will be deferred for seven years unless either the employee can sell the shares or exercise the options or the employee ceases their employment. Schedule 1 will also allow employees to defer the tax on up to \$5,000 worth of shares under certain salary sacrifice schemes. Schemes operating under salary sacrifice arrangements do not have to meet the real risk of forfeiture test. It will also introduce new annual reporting requirements for employers along with additional withholding tax for employees that do not provide their tax file number. It contains amendments that will allow employees who pay upfront tax and whose shares or options are forfeited to get a refund for the tax that they have paid under certain conditions.

We have all along made it clear that we wanted the government to fix this problem. We wanted to see the schemes restart. We have been listening to businesses and employee groups across Australia and the message we get back is that, whilst this legislation is much better than the catastrophe that was handed down on budget night, it is by no means perfect. It is a vast improvement and the message we have been getting is that those businesses want to restart their schemes. They want to unfreeze them and get on with it.

We note that the Board of Taxation is due to provide its report on employee share schemes to the government by the end of February next year and, of course, the Productivity Commission is due to provide a report soon on executive remuneration. Overlying all of that is the wider and comprehensive review of tax being undertaken by Dr Ken Henry, which is due to the government very soon. Whilst the arrangements are not perfect, in light of all of this the coalition will not be opposing this schedule or, indeed, any other schedule within this bill.

The second schedule contains another measure announced on budget night and that is the change or amendment to the rules relating to non-commercial losses. Of course, the rules containing the four tests relating to the deductibility of non-commercial losses began operating under the former government back in July 2000. They were introduced by the former government because we on this side of the House recognised that there were integrity issues regarding certain unprofitable activities being carried on by some taxpayers. Under those changes, losses were deductible against other assessable income only if the businesses satisfied one of the four tests that were introduced then and which remain in operation today. The first is that the business has an assessable income of at least \$20,000; the second that the value of property owned and used by the business is at least \$500,000; the third that the value of the business assets owned and used to carry on the business is at least \$100,000; and, finally, the business has a profit assessable income greater than deductions in three of the last five years, including the current year. Businesses after July 2000 had to satisfy just one of those tests. Under these changes—and these are the amendments in schedule 2—whilst those four tests will not remain generally for those on incomes of \$250,000 or more, the intention is that effectively people

on those incomes will be able to deduct a business loss only if they apply to and are granted discretionary exemption from the Commissioner of Taxation. So, whilst the four tests will remain in operation for taxpayers below the \$250,000 threshold, those earning more than \$250,000 will need to apply to the tax commissioner.

I note that the Senate Standing Committee on Economics is due to table its report today, if it has not already done so. It had an inquiry and public hearing earlier this month, on 9 November, and it was important to hear some of the evidence that came forward from the witnesses. The hearing revealed that the government expects to raise revenue from this measure from around 11,000 taxpayers—that is, 11,000 taxpayers earning more than \$250,000 who are currently claiming losses and who will now apply for the commissioner's discretion. We also note that applications for the commissioner's discretion are apparently to be processed within 28 days. The inquiry heard a number of concerns with respect to the administration as well as to the design features. Some witnesses expressed concern about the accuracy of the revenue projections, the \$250,000 threshold going forward, the commissioner's discretion and the impact of the proposed changes on rural communities.

Given the government's track record so far, we will of course closely monitor the implementation of this part of the schedule. We will not be opposing this schedule. As I have said, we will not be opposing this bill, but given the government's track record—and I have outlined in major detail the track record with respect to employee shares, and that is a story that still in our view has a way to go—by next budget it will still be very much a policy area being cleaned up. We will have a sceptical eye on the government's plans and the tax commissioner's administration of this. Obviously, the government is

assuming that those 11,000 taxpayers will not be applying in large measure for decisions from the tax commissioner. The government is assuming that the Taxation Office is nimble, prepared and able to process these in a timely fashion. The government is on notice—we are not opposing the measure—that it is responsible for the administration of this measure. This government has to realise that just announcing measures and putting out a press release and having a news conference is not policy implementation. Across the board, when it comes to policy implementation, that is where this government is falling down.

Whether it is school halls under the Minister for Education, who has become the master of disaster on policy implementation, no matter which policy area you look at, when it comes to implementation the political leaders of the government lose interest as soon as they have issued the press release. What the government is saying here to the people of Australia is that it has learned from its errors and this will be administered seamlessly, without delay and with a tax office that is fully resourced to look at all of these on a case-by-case basis and, what is more, to do so in an efficient and timely manner. Down the track, if that does not happen, it is on this government's head for not having the policy administration in mind on such an issue. We are sceptical, but if the government manages to implement this in an efficient, professional way that does not create chaos we will give it credit, but it will be the first time we are giving it credit because it will be the first time it has occurred.

In conclusion, the third schedule of this bill—and this will not take long at all—amends the tax law to require superannuation funds to transfer the money in accounts that are unclaimed or belong to lost members to the Australian tax office if the balance of those accounts is less than \$200. It requires

that accounts must have been inactive for at least five years and that the superannuation fund must be satisfied they will not be able to find the owners of the accounts. Of course, this is a housekeeping measure. It is a measure that you would expect to see in a tax law amendment bill of this type. It has been some time in the making and, of course, it has our support. As I said at the outset, the coalition will not be opposing the measures in this bill.

Mr NEUMANN (Blair) (7.08 pm)—I speak in support of the Tax Laws Amendment (2009 Budget Measures No. 2) Bill 2009 and related legislation before the House. As the shadow minister said, there are three schedules in relation to this legislation. Schedule 1 deals with fairness and integrity with respect to the tax laws relating to employee share schemes. I must say that I am comfortable with the legislation as it is currently before the House. I am a supporter of employee share schemes. Under existing arrangements, employees who take part in an employee share scheme are required to pay tax on any discount on the market value of a share or right they receive from their employer.

Employee share schemes are good because they allow working people the opportunity to be involved in decision making with respect to ownership of companies, and that is a good thing to engender enthusiasm, commitment and motivation to a workforce. So anything we do to support employee share schemes through tax concessions should be lauded and supported. We cannot, however, upset the balance and allow people to evade tax. The government, after much consultation with unions, stakeholders, employees and employers, have finally got the balance right. I say this because I think that when we do things, say things and announce things in politics, we need to think carefully about it. The government's intention in the

budget was good, noble and right, and I think the legislation before the House today is a better piece of legislation in relation to this particular matter than that which was announced earlier. People who earn \$60,000 do not consider themselves rich. We need to give incentives to ensure that employees take ownership of the companies that they work for and that they can participate and get the benefits that employers do.

The legislation ensures that there is means-testing with respect to the \$1,000 upfront tax exemption. It provides that the tax exemption will be available to taxpayers with an adjusted taxable income of less than \$180,000. Deferral arrangements that apply to a capped salary sacrifice scheme will be limited to \$5,000 worth of shares. Eligibility for deferral treatment will flow from the structure of the scheme rather than any choice that an employee makes. The minister and the government have said that removing the employee's election to defer will decrease the ability to avoid taxation. There is a limitation with respect to the maximum time for deferral of tax from 10 years to seven years. I commend the government for the better reporting measures with respect to shares and rights acquired under employee share schemes at issue and the employee taxing point. That is better. Of course, there is an onus on employees to do that, but that needs to be done by employers if we want to maintain these types of schemes that are beneficial to employees and if we want to maintain the integrity of the tax system. We want to make sure that it is fair and that it supports jobs and investment in nation building and infrastructure. That is the reason that we need to raise taxes. This measure will raise money for the government which will assist people in my local community as well as across the country.

The measures will have effect from 1 July this year. Employees who have already en-

tered into a share scheme under existing law will be covered by transitional arrangements in the legislation. The shadow minister was quite critical of us in relation to this measure, but we have listened and learnt. The consultation process was important. A comprehensive process was undertaken to develop these reforms. We have worked with many people to develop the most effective method by which tax can be paid and not evaded, as was allowed by the previous government.

Schedule 2 deals with non-commercial losses. The proposal is to ensure that non-commercial losses are tightened for high-income earners. One of the experiences I had when I was practising as a lawyer was that many people would come to see me in relation to tax or litigation matters. I would get statements of assets and liabilities. For example, if I were acting in a personal injuries claim or, indeed, a family law dispute or a property settlement, you would find on numerous occasions that they were quite high-income earners, but they had, by virtue of their lifestyle, hobby farms, avocado farms or banana plantations, or they decided that they would run commercial aircraft, because, for example, they had an interest in aircraft and had previously been a pilot so they could do that. But many of these very high-income earners for whom I acted when I was involved in cases were quite open about the fact that they intended to solely make losses with these enterprises. It was solely to offset against the high income they earned from their other businesses or other salaries and entitlements that they got from employers. It was a means by which they could reduce their taxable income.

The truth is they should have been paying tax; they should not have been allowed to do this. We want to make sure by this legislation that only those businesses which are commercial in nature and likely to make a profit are allowed to operate in a way so that peo-

ple can offset tax losses in those businesses against income earned elsewhere. We do not want the manipulation which can easily happen by high-income earners. They can, by the miracles of modern accountancy and by the fact they have resources available, adjust their affairs in such a way so they can avoid tax that all of us PAYE taxpayers pay.

The integrity of the tax system is at stake. We are not about trying to change genuine business activities. We are not about trying to prevent people who want to pursue avocado farms or banana plantations or run commercial aircraft in a way to make a profit. It is not about that; it is about simply ensuring the integrity of the tax system. It is about treating all Australians equally I think in the circumstances and it is about fairness and justice for all of us.

The four tests do remain. I am not going to repeat those four tests. The shadow minister went through that at length. The existing rules do remain for all taxpayers with an adjusted taxable income below \$250,000, and the existing exemptions for primary production and professional artists remain as well. That is important, particularly in an electorate like mine—Blair in South-East Queensland, which is a rural and regional seat that is becoming more regional and rural with the redistribution, although it is taking in more of the city of Ipswich. Having the current arrangements apply to those earning less than \$250,000 is important. It means that low-income, middle-income and, indeed, high-income earners can pursue genuine commercial activities, but excessive income earners—if I can put it like that; those earning way above \$250,000—will be prevented from manipulating the system.

There is a discretion that the Commissioner of Taxation has. If the business is objectively assessed as being commercial in nature—not just a hobby farm and not just a

lifestyle choice but something that is there to make a profit—the offsets can take place. They are entitled to make that application and I think they are entitled to expect the Commissioner of Taxation to deal with that application in a timely way.

This measure will, on the evidence that is before the House, raise hundreds of millions of dollars. Those hundreds of millions of dollars are necessary to do a lot of things, including our community infrastructure package. In my electorate, for example, there is \$34.7 million for constructing and repairing social housing, the \$124,900 that was recently announced for the Lake Dyer bike-way circuit, the \$3.4 million that was recently announced for the lagoon project in Ipswich and even the \$2.5 billion for the upgrade of the Ipswich Motorway. We cannot afford these types of things unless we have integrity, fairness and justice in our tax system.

The final thing I want to talk about relates to the third schedule, which is very uncontroversial in the circumstances. It really is about lost members' superannuation. There is a growing problem as people move from job to job and pick up superannuation in little bits and pieces. They have very small amounts of superannuation, which are lost or often eaten up by fees, charges and administration costs. It is estimated that the reforms in this schedule will mean that government revenues will benefit by \$238 million over the forward estimates.

People who have lost superannuation can get it back, but superannuation providers will be required to transfer that lost member's account from the Commissioner of Taxation to the government. If the superannuation account is lower than \$200, as is specified in the schedule, it is going to be chewed up easily by administration fees and just wither away, so transferring it to consolidated reve-

nue is a sensible way to go about it. It does not mean that former holders cannot claim. It does not mean that they cannot get their money back. It does mean that there are some long-term benefits to the Australian taxpayer.

This legislation before the House is not particularly controversial. It does bring about some justice and fairness in the tax system and improves integrity. It means that higher income earners cannot adjust their affairs in a way that low-income earners cannot. It means also, with respect to employee share schemes, we have a better balance when giving incentives to employees to participate and have ownership in businesses, which is a great thing in the free market system that we have. It also means that people cannot manipulate their employee share schemes in a way that evades tax.

Most of the legislation that we put forward in this House in relation to tax is non-controversial but it does improve the tax system, and that is good for all of us. Any way that we can reduce the Income Tax Assessment Act and improve the tax legislation in this country is of benefit to us and those who come after us. I commend the legislation before the House.

Dr EMERSON (Rankin—Minister for Small Business, Independent Contractors and the Service Economy, Minister Assisting the Finance Minister on Deregulation and Minister for Competition Policy and Consumer Affairs) (7.21 pm)—I would like to thank those members who contributed to this debate on the Tax Laws Amendment (2009 Budget Measures No. 2) Bill 2009 and the Income Tax (TFN Withholding Tax (ESS)) Bill 2009. Schedule 1 of the Tax Laws Amendment (2009 Budget Measures No. 2) Bill 2009 amends the tax laws to improve the fairness and integrity of the taxation rules that apply to shares or rights granted under

an employee share scheme. The government has consulted extensively on these reforms and worked with stakeholders to develop the most effective and workable reforms while maintaining the current support for employee share ownership schemes, particularly for low- and middle-income workers. Tax on the discount for shares and rights acquired under an employee share scheme will be paid upfront, except where there is a real risk of forfeiture or where it comes from a capped salary sacrifice base scheme and the scheme satisfies the existing conditions for a qualifying employee share scheme.

These reforms will better target the employee share scheme tax concessions to low- and middle-income earners and decrease taxpayers' ability to evade or avoid tax. The new rules will also protect Commonwealth revenues, which are vital to supporting jobs and investing in nation building. The changes will boost integrity through reporting. Employers will be required to report shares and rights acquired under an employee share scheme both at issue and at an employee's taxing point. The new measures better target support to low- and middle-income earners by introducing an income test to the upfront concession. The \$1,000 upfront tax exemption will be means tested and will only be available to taxpayers with an adjusted taxable income of less than \$180,000 a year, in line with the top marginal tax bracket.

Corporate governance will be improved by requiring schemes to feature a real risk of forfeiture to gain access to the deferral tax concessions. Eligibility for the deferral treatment will flow from the structure of the scheme rather than from a choice made by an employee. Removing the employee's election to defer will decrease the employee's ability to avoid tax.

Schedule 2 protects the integrity of the taxation system by preventing abuse of the non-commercial losses rules. This measure was announced by the Treasurer in the 2009-10 budget. Taxpayers with an adjustable taxable income over \$250,000 will no longer be able to automatically apply losses from non-commercial business activities against their other income. They will now have to apply to the Commissioner of Taxation and demonstrate that their business is commercial in nature. The bill and the explanatory memorandum provide certainty to taxpayers about what information they can use when applying for discretion and what factors the commissioner will look at to determine whether a business is commercial in nature. The Income Tax (Transitional Provisions) Act 1997 is also amended to clarify the status of discretions granted before the commencement of this schedule and to recognise the government's small business and general business tax breaks.

Schedule 3 requires superannuation providers to transfer the balance of a lost member's account to the Commissioner of Taxation where the account balance is less than \$200 or where the account has been inactive for a period of five years and the provider is satisfied that it will never be possible to pay an amount to the member. This measure excludes accounts that support or relate to a defined benefit interest. The first transfer will occur early in the 2010-11 income year. At present, lost account balances are only paid to the commissioner in very limited circumstances. This measure will help to address the growing problem of lost superannuation accounts, potentially reducing the number of such accounts by 40 per cent. This measure also assists providers, as they will no longer need to administer or apply member protection to small accounts that are transferred. This will improve equity for other fund members. Individuals who have

their accounts transferred to unclaimed moneys will be able to reclaim these amounts from the commissioner. The mechanism proposed to achieve the payment of lost superannuation accounts to unclaimed money is similar to that currently used for the payment of unclaimed money from superannuation providers to the Commissioner of Taxation. This measure will result in a gain to government revenues estimated at \$238 million over the forward estimates by bringing forward the payment to unclaimed moneys of accounts which are unlikely to be claimed. I commend this bill to the House.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Message from the Governor-General recommending appropriation announced.

Third Reading

Dr EMERSON (Rankin—Minister for Small Business, Independent Contractors and the Service Economy, Minister Assisting the Finance Minister on Deregulation and Minister for Competition Policy and Consumer Affairs) (7.26 pm)—by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

INCOME TAX (TFN WITHHOLDING TAX (ESS)) BILL 2009

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 21 October, on motion by **Mr McClelland**:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Dr EMERSON (Rankin—Minister for Small Business, Independent Contractors and the Service Economy, Minister Assisting the Finance Minister on Deregulation and Minister for Competition Policy and Consumer Affairs) (7.27 pm)—by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

HEALTH INSURANCE AMENDMENT (COMPLIANCE) BILL 2009

Third Reading

Mr BOWEN (Prospect—Minister for Financial Services, Superannuation and Corporate Law and Minister for Human Services) (7.28 pm)—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

SOCIAL SECURITY AMENDMENT (NATIONAL GREEN JOBS CORPS SUPPLEMENT) BILL 2009

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 17 September, on motion by **Mr Clare**:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Dr SOUTHCOTT (Boothby) (7.28 pm)—The Social Security Amendment (National Green Jobs Corps Supplement) Bill 2009 seeks to introduce a training supplement of \$41.60 a fortnight to eligible participants in the Green Jobs Corps. Before speaking on the second reading motion, it is important to go back to the announcement of the Green Jobs Corps. This was the big set piece announcement at the Labor Party's national conference in 2009. The Prime Minister stood up there and he announced to the applause of the delegates that his government would be funding 50,000 new green jobs and training places. You can just see

how this announcement came about from the hollowmen in the Prime Minister's office saying, 'Look, you've got a problem with youth unemployment and you've got a problem with sections of the labour movement on the emissions trading scheme.' So what he came up with was 50,000 new green jobs and training places.

The important thing with this government is to always read the fine print because actually there were not 50,000 new green jobs. There were not 16,000 new green jobs, as the Minister for Employment Participation seemed to believe. There were not 10,000 new green jobs, as the Minister for Finance and Deregulation seemed to believe. Only 6,000 of the 50,000 places were jobs. These were funded from the local jobs stream of the Jobs Fund, a fund which had been negotiated through the Senate with the Greens and Senator Fielding and which had been announced by the Prime Minister on 5 April, four months before this set-piece announcement. Recapping, there were four elements of the 50,000 jobs: 10,000 were National Green Jobs Corps, or work experience places—it was very straightforward, these were not jobs but work experience places in a work experience program; 30,000 places were for the greening of training courses of existing apprentices; 4,000 places were pre-vocational training; and only 6,000 were jobs and they were not new.

As I said, 10,000 of those 50,000 places were for young jobseekers to go into the Green Jobs Corps. Green Jobs Corps will commence on 1 January 2010 and places will be available until December 2011. Green Jobs Corps is a six-month work experience program for 18- to 24-year-olds who have been unemployed more than 12 months. They will continue to receive Newstart, youth allowance or a parenting payment. Work experience, whilst not a job, is a move in the right direction. Work experience pro-

grams such as Work for the Dole, one of the signature programs of the Howard government, Green Corps and Green Jobs Corps are all designed to increase the employability of the unemployed. They are a pathway to a job. They help jobseekers to become job ready but they are not a job.

Some people may be a bit confused because there have been all sorts of names for different programs. Just to recap, there was a program called Green Corps for the life of the Howard government. It was a youth development program. This is a very important point. It was available for people who were unemployed but, more importantly, it was also available for people who were taking a gap year before university or before their TAFE studies and wanted to do something different or something where they would earn a bit of money. You would often find people in the Green Corps who were volunteers. That finished on 30 June.

On 1 July, with Job Services Australia and the new employment services system, there was something called Green Corps. Green Corps was no longer a youth development program. It was no longer particularly targeted towards youth. It was essentially a work experience program which was available to jobseekers of all ages. There was no difference, really, between Green Corps and Work for the Dole with an environment focus. Green Corps, as it was a youth volunteer, youth development and environmental training program, gave young people the opportunity to preserve the environment and Australia's cultural heritage. More than 18,000 young Australians participated in the program from 1997 to 2009. They planted more than 14 million trees, erected more than 8,000 kilometres of fencing and undertook in excess of 5,000 surveys of native flora and fauna.

Green Jobs Corps, the third one, appears very similar to Green Corps. At the time that Labor announced their new employment services system, the opposition did highlight one of the problems. We thought it was a mistake to move away from Green Corps, which had a specific youth focus, to a new Green Corps. That has really been borne out by some questions on the *Notice Paper*. In answer to a question, the Minister for Education and Employment, Workplace Relations and Social Inclusion did say that Green Corps, under Job Services Australia, has been improved and expanded, which will limit its comparison to the previous program under Job Services Australia, and it goes on. But what it says is that to 12 August 2009 there were 36 jobseekers in Green Corps activities under Job Services Australia. Green Corps, the new program which has been running since 1 July, has been a massive failure. The reason for this is that the amount of money that is available for employment service providers is very small compared to what they got under the previous system. So Green Jobs Corps is very similar to the old pre-30 June Green Corps. The only difference is in the age of participants, which has been extended to 24 years, and participants are in receipt of income support payments now instead of the Green Corps allowance. Labor have added the word 'jobs' to the name yet have failed to define a pathway between this training and an actual paid job.

The third area I would like to touch on in the second reading speech is what I call the silent tragedy of youth unemployment. Youth unemployment is not receiving anywhere near the amount of attention it deserves. All the figures we have seen over the last 12-18 months show how devastating the impact of job losses and rising unemployment has been, particularly on young Australians. Green Jobs Corps is Labor's response to that.

It is their effort to reduce youth unemployment. But there is no real employment measure here; nor is there a pathway to a job from this program.

The opposition will be moving a second reading amendment to this bill which highlights our concerns about youth unemployment. Over the last 12 months, more than 100,000 full-time jobs have been lost amongst young Australians. Since the election of the Rudd government, 71½ thousand Australians have lost their jobs. Commencements among traditional trade apprentices have fallen by 21.2 per cent in the 12 months to March 2009. The proportion of teenage Australians not in full-time education or full-time employment has risen under this government. The rate of unemployment for teenagers who are not in full-time education has risen to 18½ per cent in 2009, up from 12.2 per cent in 2008. There are about 176,000 people aged 18 to 24 who are not in the labour force and not in full-time education. There are about 120,000 people aged 18 to 24 who are unemployed and not in full-time education. So there are around 295,000 young Australians who are not in full-time education, are not in the labour force or are unemployed. This is around 14 per cent of the 18- to 24-year-old population of Australia.

What we do know is that those people who do not make a good transition from school, who spend periods outside the labour force, not in full-time education and unemployed, will have a very intermittent work history throughout life. So youth unemployment is an area that needs a lot more attention from the Rudd government. All of those young Australians who voted for Kevin07 two years ago would never have dreamed how much their opportunities would dry up under this government. We see that the Rudd Labor government has no strategy to create actual jobs for young Australians.

When we look at the amount that is available in Green Jobs Corps compared to Work for the Dole or Green Corps, we see that under this program there is \$8,250 available per placement for Green Jobs Corps, compared to \$500 that is available for a participant in Work for the Dole or Green Corps. What that means is that the government have seriously underfunded their work experience programs. We also all know that the Rudd government, the Labor Party, hated Work for the Dole. They hated it, and this is their way of strangling Work for the Dole, of ensuring that Work for the Dole withers on the vine.

Lastly, it is my belief that work experience is a very important part of enhancing employability. It is with that in mind that we support work experience programs. We think they are a very good pathway to learning a lot of those intangible skills like being part of a team, being part of a workplace, learning a lot of those skills that enhance a person's employability. One criticism I will make of the Rudd government—amongst many—is that they have focused so much on the training side and not enough on the work experience side. A lot of their training is training for training's sake. Job seekers are on a training treadmill. We see that the employment outcomes for a number of the government's training programs are very poor. The opposition will certainly be looking at what the employment outcomes are for the Green Jobs Corps. As I said earlier, we had a very similar program, the Green Corps, which had a youth focus as well. This is part of a late recognition by the government that in their huge revamp of employment services they threw the baby out with the bathwater. They did not have anything specifically focused on young Australians. This is the group that is feeling the rising unemployment and the lack of job opportunities the hardest. I move:

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

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

- (1) is concerned that 71,500 young Australians have lost their jobs since the election of the Rudd Government;
- (2) expresses its concern that 108,300 full-time jobs have been lost amongst young Australians over the last twelve months;
- (3) notes that commencements among traditional trade apprentices have fallen by 21.2% in the 12 months to March 2009;
- (4) notes that the proportion of young Australians not in full-time education or full-time employment has risen under this Government;
- (5) condemns the Government for abolishing Green Corps as a youth development programme;
- (6) is concerned that the Minister for Employment Participation believes that six month work experience placements are a substitute for a job;
- (7) calls on the Government to outline how many new green jobs were in the Prime Minister's announcement to the ALP National Conference on 30 July;
- (8) calls on the Government to outline how many green jobs will be created in this term of Parliament; and
- (9) calls on the Government to outline its strategy to create jobs for young Australians".

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. JE Moylan)—Is the amendment seconded?

Ms Ley—I second the amendment.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—The original question was that this bill be now read a second time. To this the honourable member for Boothby has moved as an amendment that all words after 'That' be omitted with a view to substituting other words. The question now is that the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question.

Mr BIDGOOD (Dawson) (7.43 pm)—I rise to speak in favour of the Social Security Amendment (National Green Jobs Corps Supplement) Bill 2009. We will be moving in favour of the original motion. I have travelled the length and breadth of my very rural seat of Dawson, from Mackay all the way through to Townsville, and you are looking at 450 kilometres of some of the best agricultural land and some of the best coastline in the world. It includes the Great Barrier Reef and the rainforest. One thing that our students have consistently said is how much they enjoy the Green Corps and the things that we have done there to keep that going.

I have had the pleasure of being at many awards ceremonies for Green Corps, and it is so fantastic to see young people involved who perhaps would have been at a loss for something to do without Green Corps. It has enabled these young people to have a purpose in the community and to bind together with other young people in a common cause—clearing up creeks, riverbanks and land, and helping to grow crops in areas in which it is perhaps not normally easy to grow them. They have done those things with assistance from professionals at different levels of government—federal as well as state and local. I have been to a number of different award ceremonies in Mackay, and every single time I talk to the young people they say: ‘This is the best thing that’s happened. This is such a good thing.’

What we are proposing here is a bill for an act to amend the law relating to social security and for related purposes. That is what this bill entails. It is the right thing for this government to do because it invests in young people being active, helping the community and helping to rebuild natural pastures, river ways and shorelines.

My fellow MP Kirsten Livermore and I have been with the Minister for Agriculture,

Forestry and Fisheries, Tony Burke, to visit an area near Sarina, just on the border of Dawson and Capricornia, to see what had been done to help stop beach erosion through various plantings. In Mackay itself, some fantastic work has been done in and around the botanic gardens. I was also privileged to visit a project further north, up in Townsville. There were quite a number of young people there, in the region of 15 to 20, who had done a major project. We drove in a four-wheel-drive to get there, because the land was pretty rough. It is by a sort of river or creek system. Floods had washed away a lot of the area, and the young people in the Green Corps has set about rebuilding the banks of this river by planting native species.

So Green Corps is a learning process and it is hands-on. As members would be aware, there are many styles of learning. Some people learn by hearing and some learn by seeing. But a lot of people, particularly young people, learn by activity—a kinaesthetic learning approach of doing and being involved, with tactile and hands-on experiences. They learn by being in the environment, with their hands in the earth and in the water. And they are helping to look after our natural resources. So it really is with great pleasure that I rise to speak in favour of this bill, without amendment.

I do not have too much more to say other than that I have seen the social benefits of the Green Corps scheme, the benefits to the community and to young people. I have seen the way that it created a work ethic in people who otherwise would have been unemployed and underutilised. It is a tragedy to see young, enthusiastic people with nothing to do. But this program, the Green Corps program, has enabled them to do great work.

Looking at the specifics of the bill, the explanatory memorandum states:

This bill will amend the social security law to provide for a temporary National Green Jobs Corps supplement for recipients of youth allowance (other), newstart allowance and parenting payment who participate in the National Green Jobs Corps.

The National Green Jobs Corps is a 26 week environmental work experience and training program which is targeted at low skilled 17-24 year olds.

I have seen first-hand how those young people can be mobilised and motivated, and engaged with the community and with each other, working as a team. It continues:

Additional financial assistance will be provided to these participants in the form of a supplement of \$41.60 per fortnight while they are participating in the National Green Jobs Corps. This payment will be on top of their existing youth allowance (other), newstart allowance or parenting payment.

The supplement will be payable to those who commence in the National Green Jobs Corps between 1 January 2010 and 31 December 2011.

That really is a substantial amount, and the financial impact works out in the following way: in the financial year 2009-10, we are looking at 0.9 per cent; in 2010-11, 1.7 per cent; and, in 2011-12, 0.9 per cent—a total 3.4 per cent increase. Obviously, the payments will be arranged through Centrelink.

I look forward to seeing the National Green Jobs Corps program implemented in full and giving lots of young people, not just in the seat of Dawson but across the nation, hope, purpose and motivation, making them feel useful and mobilising them to help their communities.

It is good to witness so many different projects where young people have often said to me, 'We wish it had never ended; we wish we just could have kept on,' because they enjoyed the work, the sense of fulfilment in seeing something happen as a team and being involved. Often the people who are involved in these programs are very lonely and

sometimes socially isolated for various reasons. They come together as a team with a common cause, and I can truly say, having seen that on many occasions, that this is a good thing to back—this is a good thing to do. I would just like to say once again that I fully support the original proposal and would like to see that come into action as soon as possible. I look forward to that participation carrying through to 2012. Without further ado, I wholeheartedly commend and support the original motion.

Mrs HULL (Riverina) (7.53 pm)—I rise in the House this evening to speak on the Social Security Amendment (National Green Jobs Corps Supplement) Bill 2009. In 1997 the previous government put in place the Green Corps and I would like to talk about that program. It was a national voluntary youth development and environmental training program for young people aged between 17 and 20 years. The involvement of the young people was to look after the environment through management and conservation and education. It was very important to the previous government to ensure that there was an improvement in biodiversity in the environment in those years and future years. The program was a positive step forward in ensuring a healthy environment was maintained and, in particular, it was very good in the Riverina region. I always felt it was so important for us to be looking after our environment in the local area so that it could be preserved for future generations.

In the coalition's Green Corps program the volunteers would be doing things like removing weeds, replanting with local native species, providing extra nesting sites with the use of nesting boxes and developing demonstration sites. This was done on one particular site in the city of Wagga Wagga itself. I believe the whole community benefited from the project under the Green Corps which aimed to provide an attractive setting for

activities like orienteering, mountain bike riding, walking and bird watching out at Borambola, just out of Wagga Wagga. It provided an improved amenity for recreation and improved understanding of Aboriginal culture, incorporating the team members into the community, conserving local flora and fauna and improving accessibility of the features of the Murrumbidgee River, which through the heart of the city and is a lifeblood of the Riverina region.

The projects also gave the teams that were involved in the Green Corps a broad range of experience in different areas of conservation. The participants were all involved in vegetation analysis, collection of seeds, researching and sourcing useful plants for medicinal purposes and bush tucker on our Wiradjuri land, and surveying and bush regeneration skills. It was a fantastic program for the team members to gain additional skills in teamwork, leadership, skills development and training processes, to establish connections with community and environmental groups and to improve their career and employment prospects. They gained real hands-on experience and really did explore the important environmental issues of our area.

The group that was involved at Borambola also did exercises during that program such as trust exercises, with high ropes courses, canoeing, archery and rock climbing, as well as management activities. At Lake Albert the team were involved in trail construction, site preparation, planning of vegetation, including trees, and minor construction work for the proposed walkway. They installed signage and some environmental fencing. I think that program went for six months and in that time they were able to complete the planting of 1,600 trees and shrubs, they put in place 20 nesting boxes, they constructed and installed 2,500 plants that were propagated, they developed five interpretive signs and two practice sites, they put in 1,500 metres

of fencing and they constructed a granite board walkway and rock edging. They worked with a diverse range of groups, including the local Wiradjuri people, Landcare groups, Wagga Wagga City Council and clients from New South Wales Sport and Recreation.

Does this sound vaguely familiar? Am I speaking about what is currently in place? No, I am not. I am speaking about what was put in place in 1997. But if you listened to speakers generally here you could decide that what is being delivered to the House is a brand-new, innovative concept that has never been thought of before and that is entirely of the making of this current government. That just staggers me when I look at the issues that were covered and that I witnessed when launching projects under the previous coalition government program and then at the graduation of many of those fabulous young people involved. That program was designed in particular for people between 17 and 20. It was a very innovative program for its time and it was enormously successful. The project teams did things like removing woody weeds and exotic species like privet and willow, and they planted, guarded and watered native seedlings. They propagated hundreds of native seeds and, as I said, built enormous amounts of fencing, garden beds and paths. They put in irrigation areas and constructed picket fencing as well as doing many other tasks. All this was to ensure that there could be a healthy environment.

It was a training program for young people—a voluntary youth development and environmental training program. There were young people in that age range who had difficulty communicating with each other. Afterwards, after their graduation, you would be absolutely astounded at the amazing growth of these young people. They also received a senior first aid certificate and an OH&S green card. The first part of the

course under the coalition's Green Corps program was that every single member had to obtain a senior first aid certificate and an OH&S green card.

Another group in the six-month program built fencing enclosures, installed metres and metres of drip irrigation for water efficiency and planted thousands of trees and photographed their monitoring points. They established very valuable life and social skills. At every graduation there was almost a full contingent, and if there were one or two away it was because they had secured employment as a result of their involvement with the coalition's Green Corps program.

I raise these issues to show exactly what our program was put in place to do, how very successful it was and how far from being innovative is the National Green Jobs Corps. The Rudd Labor government merged our Green Corps program, our youth development program, into mainstream employment services in July 2009. This meant that Green Corps ceased to be a youth development program and became more like Work for the Dole with an environmental focus. Obviously, the government has seen the error of its ways and has determined that there is a need for this youth program. I suspect that this is for a number of reasons: over 108,000 full-time jobs have been lost among young Australians over the last 12 months; over 71,000 young Australians have lost their job since the election of the Rudd government; commencements among traditional trade apprentices fell by 21.2 per cent in the 12 months to March 2009; the proportion of teenage Australians not in full-time education or full-time employment has risen under this government; the rate of unemployment for teenagers who are not in full-time education rose to 18.5 per cent in 2009, up from just 12.2 per cent in early 2008; about 176,000 people aged 18 to 24, around eight per cent of the civilian population, are not in

the labour force or full-time education; and about 120,000 people aged 18 to 24 are unemployed and not in full-time education. There are about 295,000 people aged 18 to 24 who are not in full-time education, and who are not in the labour force or unemployed—this equates to around 14 per cent of the 18- to 24-year-old civilian population. I suspect that there is a need for a strategy to be created to try to look at how young people aged 17 to 24 will become engaged under this program. The only thing that is much different in this is that the age has been extended to 24 rather than 20 as it was in the last program.

It is very important to note that having our young people gainfully employed in environmental programs is not an innovative, newly designed or descriptive response by this government. The difference is that instead of having Green Corps money young people will now have income support payments on top of their normal Green Corps allowance. It is good that the government has seen that the coalition's program was a valuable program. They obviously did not think it a good idea when they rolled it over and lost the focus of it. The reintroduction of this program, only changing the upper age to 24 and providing a supplement on top of an income allowance rather than the general Green Corps allowance, is something that I am sure will be welcomed.

Let us not be deluded and think that this is a you-beaut, innovative new program. This is the program that was put in place by the former coalition government, a program that was working and a program that led to some very good outcomes for young people, particularly in my electorate. Rather than be critical of the program, I am critical of the fact that it was lost in the first place by short-sighted thinking in July 2009, when this program was rolled into a general mainstream program, and that the recognition of the

value of this program was not considered strong enough at the time. It was a very short-sighted decision and I am pleased to see that has been rectified and that the valuable lead that the former coalition government played in this role is now recognised. It is the right and proper thing for opportunities to be made available in the environment but there needs to be a sure-fire plan as to how these will actually turn into jobs and solve the significant issues of unemployment among 17- to 24-year-olds.

Rather than disagree with this program, I make the point that the program that was in place was a well thought out, very beneficial and very successful program and it should not have been subsumed into a mainstream program. It is good to see that the Labor Party recognises the value and worth of some coalition programs and is putting them back in place.

Mr HALE (Solomon) (8.07 pm)—I rise today to offer my strong support for the Social Security Amendment (National Green Jobs Corps Supplement) Bill 2009. I note the contribution from the member for the Riverina and I draw a lot of comparisons between the electorate I represent in remote Australia and the electorate that she represents in the Riverina in regional and remote New South Wales. It is very important that these types of programs are put in place to aid our young people in being able to get some skills and disciplines with regard to turning up to work. Very often the people that we target here are young people that have not decided what they want to do yet. I have a 19-year-old son who has got a lot of talent in a lot of different areas. You talk to him about where he wants to see his career going and he has a lot of options, yet really he does not know what he wants to do yet. Too often we are in a situation where we thrust careers onto young people and say: ‘You need to do this. You need to go to uni-

versity,’ or ‘You need to get an apprenticeship,’ and often young kids might have three or four different careers throughout their working lives. I think that these types of programs often fill that void when a young person leaves school—or when they may even leave school before the end of year 12. These types of programs enable them to gain some skills that will lead them on to jobs in the future and to get some discipline with regard to turning up to work and working in a team environment.

This bill will amend the Social Security Act 1991 to provide the National Green Job Corps supplement of \$41.60 per fortnight for eligible recipients who participate in the National Green Job Corps. This supplement will be payable to those people who participate in the National Green Job Corps between 1 January next year and the end of 2011. The National Green Job Corps supplement has been introduced to encourage and support those low-skilled job seekers who are on the income support and aged between 17 and 24.

This government is serious about tackling climate change. Tackling climate change will transform and save many existing jobs. Tackling climate change will create new jobs and increase the average income for people in our community. As the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon. Julia Gillard, said in her address to the Green Skills Forum in Melbourne last month:

We’ve talked about these issues for some time. Now it’s time to bring the work that has been done to a point so we can get on with the reforms needed by industry and by the training sector.

She went on to say:

We’re gearing up for a major change in our economy. If we do this in the right way we will create new economic opportunities for Australia.

This amendment is part of a range of measures that ensure that as a society we are ready for the changes in our economy. This

amendment ensures that the most needy are provided with the opportunity, and are empowered to gain the necessary skills, to be active participants in the transition and not be left behind. The National Green Jobs Corps is a two-year environmental work experience and training program which will give young unemployed Australians the opportunity to contribute to the community and build skills. Ten thousand places will be provided through the life of the program and these will be targeted at 17- to 24-year-olds, without year 12 qualifications, who struggle to engage with the education and training system. The program will provide structured work experience and accredited training. The majority of participants, when they complete the program, will leave with a certificate II level qualification, which is of course consistent with the compact with young Australians where job seekers aged under 20 without year 12 are encouraged to attain a year 12 equivalent qualification.

The National Green Jobs Corps is a 26-week environmental training program that over two years will enable 10,000 18- to 24-year-olds gain job-ready skills. It will provide 10,000 out-of-work young Australians with the opportunity to gain work experience in green skills for future jobs. There are currently 10,000 young Australians between school leaving age and 24 who have been out of work for more than 12 months. These young Australians will be able to join the National Green Jobs Corps to meet their participation obligations for youth allowance and Newstart.

The National Green Jobs Corps projects are located mainly in regional and remote areas of Australia and focus on areas where environmental and heritage restoration, protection and conservation are a high priority. We have seen recently the impact of people movements on our coastal areas, and the effect of climate change and the warming of

the planet is impacting on our coastal areas by way of erosion. Certainly we have seen the movement of people around our coast. As Australians, we are attracted to the water and attracted to the beaches. I had the pleasure of being with the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, Peter Garrett, in Darwin recently, where we had a restoration of the Mindil Beach foreshore and Mindil Beach dunes. This was a project that was taken on by the Larrakia people, working in the Green Corps environment where they restored the dunes of Mindil Beach. It is probably the most used beach in Darwin and is famous for the Mindil Beach Markets on Thursday and Sunday nights. There is a lot of movement of people across those dunes, and a restoration program was put in place where native grasses were used.

These are very important programs and they are happening all around Australia. All around Australia people are being drawn to the coast and there is a massive challenge for us. I did a PM's country taskforce down in the Torquay-Apollo Bay area where the population generally is about 25,000 to 30,000 people who live there for the entire year. But the population can expand to up to 200,000 people during the summer months when people are drawn out of the cities, Melbourne and Geelong. People from New South Wales will migrate to the beaches on the coast and it makes a massive impact. So these types of programs enable us to restore and revegetate and make sure we look after these pristine areas of our fabulous Australian coastline. And we know that the programs along the Great Barrier Reef area, along the beaches of Queensland, are just as important.

These projects, as I said, are mainly located in regional and remote areas of Australia and focus on areas where environmental and heritage restoration, protection and conservation are of the highest priority. Often

these programs also work hand in glove with our Indigenous community, usually with the traditional owners. It gives our traditional owners an opportunity for their young people, who are often not able to immediately come into the workforce, not only to do a valuable job for their areas in regard to restoration and looking after our habitat but also to become job ready. It builds capacity within that person to go into mainstream employment after they have completed their Green Corps certificate.

The objects of this program are to give young people experience in projects that focus on areas where environmental conservation work and heritage restoration are required, and to promote environmental conservation and natural heritage outcomes that will benefit the community and the environment. Participants benefit from personal development, including teamwork and leadership skills; from building capacity, skills development and training through activities that are structured and actually have learning outcomes that can be measured, outcomes that can be put into different environments as they move forward; from connections with community and environment by strengthening relationships, participation and contribution to the community and environment; and, career and employment prospects through accredited training and on-the-job training. The National Green Jobs Corps supplement is designed to support young low-skilled participants undertaking National Green Jobs Corps work in recognition of the costs that they may have incurred participating in the program, for example travelling to activities and so on.

I note tonight that the former Minister for Employment Participation is in the House and now doing a fantastic job as Minister for Home Affairs. During his time in Employment Participation I went and represented him on many occasions with the Green

Corps, and I want to hark back to the Rapid Creek team involved in a stage of refurbishing Rapid Creek. Rapid Creek runs through suburban Darwin, through the northern suburbs. I grew up in that area, Rothdale Road. The creek starts up near the airport at a place called Yankee Pool. You can float down Rapid Creek, and I floated down there many a time during the heavy rains. You come down through the clay pots, underneath Kimmorley Bridge, over the top of the V-shape and then down to where the mouth of Rapid Creek runs into the harbour. We have a program there where we were restoring along the edges of Rapid Creek. Because of the rain that we have, often there is a lot of erosion and there needs to be restoration made around Rapid Creek. It is an iconic spot for young people in my community. We all grew up having a swim in Rapid Creek. I will read from the media release that was put out by the then Minister for Employment Participation. This was an important project.

The Minister, Brendan O'Connor, has sent his congratulations to the Darwin-based Green Corps team who today graduated from the Rapid Creek Reforestation and Protection project.

These are hands-on projects. These are projects that are making an impact within the community. They are not faraway pie-in-the-sky stuff.

Over the last 26 weeks the team of young people and their project supervisors have been busily undertaking revegetation of degraded areas of the waterway.

Their tasks included planting trees, assessing and recording the environmental data of the area, dealing with the invasive weeds, and collecting and propagating seeds of particular plant species for future use.

The Rapid Creek Reforestation and Protection project was coordinated by the Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) in conjunction with other local organisations, including the Darwin City Council and the Rapid Creek Catchment Advisory Council.

"Their hard work has provided the community with a protected natural waterway and rainforest corridor," said Minister O'Connor.

Green Corps is a federally funded employment and training program.

Teams of young people aged between 17 and 20 gain work experience and accredited training in environment-related fields while working on projects to restore and conserve Australia's environment and heritage sites.

That is just one example, and I went to many others where we were doing work out there with young people and giving them skills. I commend the minister in his former portfolio and acknowledge that his current portfolio is probably a little bit tougher than what he was doing in his past portfolio. I also commend him on the effort he is making in that area as well.

It was a fantastic commitment from the Australian government towards helping young people gain skills. With the potential of our whole economy changing direction dramatically in the next 10 years with regard to the way we go about things, and certainly in the way that we look after our environment, these skills that people are getting now through these programs are going to hold them in very good stead in the future. I can see that these will go from being maybe bridging type programs for skill development or capacity building into career type programs where we will have people coming through this area being very interested in conservation and there being further opportunities down the track to not only take a positive role in what we do in our environment but certainly take a career focus moving forward so that they can make a career out of this type of work.

One of the other things that we have done through this program in the Northern Territory is the Zero Toad Strategy through FrogWatch. Let us face it, there is only one decent sort of cane toad, and they play in the

State of Origin, for Queensland, three times a year! They are the only cane toads we support. They are the only cane toads that bring any sort of productivity. I can see the honourable member for Lindsay shaking his head. He is obviously a distraught supporter of the cockroaches. There are no good cockroaches. There are no cockroaches that bring anything to the table. There are cane toads that bring something to the table, but there is only one type, and that is the Queensland Rugby League cane toad. The others, we want to get rid of. We do not want to see them coming to the Northern Territory, but they are. We do not want to see them in Kakadu, but they are there. We do not want to see them in the Kimberley, but they are getting there.

With this strategy up in our area, it was very important that we provided some money to continue our work not only in controlling cane toads but in implementing further trials on fencing. Using fences around waterholes as we head into the dry season is a very effective way of curtailing the activities of cane toads. An issue very dear to the heart of Territorians is: how do we combat cane toads coming right across into the Northern Territory and WA? They are very hard to fight off. There has been a lot of research done. A lot of the work with cane toads is labour-intensive, on-the-ground activity—night patrols, setting up traps and putting fences around waterholes. The cane toads will sit there trying to get to the water. They are very much in need of water at all times. By rolling out these programs in the Northern Territory we give young people an opportunity to make a valuable contribution to the community while they try to eradicate cane toads, and they get work skills at the same time.

As a former apprentice greenkeeper by trade and a former golf course superintendent, I know the value of training. I give the

same credit to a trade certificate—whether it be a plumber or an electrician—as I give to a degree as a doctor or a lawyer. We need to have that balance as a society. Sure, we are going to put a lot of money into our universities in the future, and we need to do that, but we certainly do not want to downgrade the value of an apprenticeship. If you ever have the opportunity to live in Darwin during a mining boom, you will find that it is very difficult to find a plumber or electrician. We need to continue to upskill our young people. We need to continually let our young people know that if they are not suited to be a doctor or a lawyer, or if they are not going to go into some other form of professional life with a university degree, they can grab an apprenticeship. You can get an apprenticeship or a traineeship, start learning skills and find out where you fit—because we all fit somewhere. These types of programs are paramount in giving kids skills and self-esteem and improving their self-worth so that they know they can make a contribution. There is no shame in being a 17-year-old and not knowing what you really want to do. Through these programs, we are able to incorporate capacity building and building the self-esteem of young people by giving them some financial assistance so they can have a career moving forward.

Finally, there is only one person in the gallery watching me speak tonight—my 10-year-old son, Dominic. Dom, thanks for your support, mate. It was a really good speech, I thought. Thanks a lot for listening—and I see that those opposites are listening. Welcome to dad's workplace. I will enjoy having you here until Friday, as long as you behave yourself and pack up all of your wrestlers at the end of each day.

I commend the bill to the House.

Ms MARINO (Forrest) (8.27 pm)—I rise tonight to speak on the Social Security

Amendment (National Green Jobs Corps Supplement) Bill 2009. The bill will introduce a training supplement of \$41.60 a fortnight for eligible participants in the Green Jobs Corps. The Green Jobs Corps is a six-month work-experience program for people aged between 18 and 24 who have been unemployed for more than 12 months. As we are all aware, the Green Jobs Corps was announced at the 2009 ALP conference, where the Prime Minister promised to deliver 50,000 new green jobs. However, I would like to point out that, in reality, only 6,000 of the 50,000 jobs are actually real jobs. Furthermore, only 10,000 of the 50,000 green jobs are for young jobseekers in the Green Jobs Corps. The Green Jobs Corps will start on 1 January 2010, with places available until December 2011.

Whilst the coalition recognises that the Green Jobs Corps is not actually a job, we believe work experience is a start in the right direction. Work-experience programs such as Work for the Dole, the Green Corps and the Green Jobs Corps are designed to improve the employability of those who are unemployed, providing pathways to a job and helping job seekers to become job ready. As the previous speaker said, it also gives young people the opportunity to find out not only what they do want to do but perhaps what they do not want to do. It assists them in making their career decisions.

The Green Jobs Corps, which was an initiative of the former coalition government, was established as a volunteer youth development and environmental training program, giving young people the opportunity to help preserve the environment and Australia's cultural heritage. It was a very valuable program. More than 18,000 young Australians participated in the Green Jobs Corps program, planting more than 14 million trees, erecting more than 8,000 kilometres of fencing and undertaking in excess of 5,000 sur-

veys into native flora and fauna. In my electorate of Forrest, three Green Corps projects were granted. They were aimed at restoring healthier ecosystems as well as educating young people on revegetation management practices—and they did it very well. Two of the projects were provided through Mission Australia in Bunbury. The purpose of the first project was to help restore a healthier ecosystem, which in turn assisted with more serious problems—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms AE Burke)—Order! The debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 34. The debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting. The member will have leave to continue speaking when the debate is resumed.

PETITIONS

Mrs Irwin—On behalf of the Standing Committee on Petitions, and in accordance with standing order 207, I present the following petitions:

Marriage

To the honourable Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives:

We, the undersigned citizens draw to the attention of the House of Representatives assembled, that the definition of marriage as “a union between one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life” is the foundation upon which our families are built and on which our society stands. To alter the definition of marriage to include same-sex “marriage”, as proposed by the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill, would be to change the very structure of society to the detriment of all, especially children.

We, the undersigned citizens therefore request that the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2009, be opposed.

by **Mrs Irwin** (from 104 citizens)

Indigenous Deaths

To the honourable Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives:

This petition of citizens of Australia draws to the attention of the House:

The death in custody of Mr Ward who died of heatstroke in inhumane and avoidable circumstances in January 2008 in Western Australia, the fact the treatment of Mr Ward violated Australia’s obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention Against Torture and Other Forms of Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and the Convention of the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and that these violations need to be remedied and their recurrence prevented.

We therefore ask the House to:

1. Review the legal framework for giving effect to Australia’s human rights treaty obligations and to international standards within the criminal justice system, with particular attention to the role of imprisonment in punishment, rehabilitation and public security, the conditions of imprisonment and the transport of prisoners, and the comparative capacity of private and state run custodial services to conform with minimum human rights standards and rehabilitate prisoners.
2. Direct and resource the Australian Human Rights Commission to conduct a public inquiry into systemic rights violations that underpin the extreme overrepresentation of Indigenous Australians at all levels of contact with the criminal justice system and to propose remedies for addressing them, including reviewing the outstanding recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.
3. Lead discussions with State and Territory governments to enact reforms that would create obligations on governments to respond promptly and positively to coronial recommendations within prescribed time limits.

by **Mrs Irwin** (from 3,280 citizens)

Youth Homelessness

To the honourable Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives:

This petition of homelessness and young people.

Draws to the attention of the House: Increase funding to meet the specific needs of young people who are at risk of homelessness or are homeless.

We therefore ask the House to: Provide more funding for permanent housing facilities for young people at risk of homelessness. The State and Territory governments are responsible for the care and protection of children and young people if their parent or guardian can't care for them for any reason. Family breakdown and the breakdown of foster care and out-of-home care arrangements means there are some young people under 16 in the homeless service system. However, homeless assistance services are not currently resourced to provide the specific care and support these younger people need. We need more housing programs like Horizon house in Wanneroo.

by **Mrs Irwin** (from 13 citizens)

National Marriage Day

To the honourable Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives:

We, the undersigned citizens of Australia draw to the attention of the House of Representatives, the undeniable correlations between family breakdown and the other pathways to poverty, educational failure, serious personal debt, crime, welfare dependency and addiction.

In recognition of the positive contribution that intact, stable marriages make to the well-being of children and society we call upon the House of Representatives to demonstrate its support for marriage by declaring the 13th August each year as National Marriage Day.

by **Mrs Irwin** (from 825 citizens)

Petitions received.

Responses

Mrs Irwin—Ministerial responses to petitions previously presented to the House have been received as follows:

Forgotten Australians

Dear Mrs Irwin

Thank you for your letter of 19 August 2009 about a petition submitted to the Standing Committee on Petitions about the Forgotten Australians.

The petition calls for the Australian Government to acknowledge the suffering experienced by children in institutional or other out-of-home care and to apologise to Forgotten Australians. The Government has undertaken to deliver such an acknowledgement and apology. This apology will acknowledge the trauma that past care leavers continue to experience and ensure that a crucial and largely invisible part of Australia's social history has now been firmly put on the record.

The Government acknowledges that the suffering experienced by many children in institutional or other out-of-home care during the last century was unacceptable and is committed to making a genuine difference in the lives of those affected and their families. This means acknowledging their tragic experiences, recognising them as survivors and ensuring that this history is never repeated.

This significant step in the healing process for those who suffered abuse and neglect while in out-of-home care will be delivered in 2009. It will reinforce that accounts of what happened are true, that what happened was wrong and that it was very damaging. I also understand that this acknowledgment must be accompanied by other positive measures to ensure it is not merely an empty gesture.

To make sure that care leavers get the practical support and information they need, particularly during this emotional time, the Alliance for Forgotten Australians (ALA) will receive \$300,000 to engage with the Government and community sectors on a national level.

The Government also recognises the important work of the Care Leavers Australia Network (CLAN) and is providing this organisation with \$300,000 to support the people who lived through this experience. Both these organisations are working with the Government to ensure that the apology is appropriate.

Understanding that a healing process also requires lasting recognition of this history, public awareness and education, the Government is working with the National Library of Australia and the National Museum of Australia to document what happened. These history projects will provide a lasting depiction of institutional and out-of-home care over the last century.

Thank you again for providing me with this petition.

from the **Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Ms Macklin**

Warrego Highway

Dear Ms Irwin

Thank you for your letter dated 20 August 2009 about a petition presented in Parliament on 19 August 2009 by the Hon Bruce Scott MP, Member for Maranoa, concerning the Warrego Highway in Queensland.

The Australian Government understands the importance of the Warrego Highway as the major arterial road linking south east Queensland with the western areas of the state, and the strategic significance of the highway to freight and agricultural industries.

The Government has committed over \$8.6 billion towards land transport infrastructure in Queensland for the period 2008-09 to 2013-14. This includes \$55 million for works on the Warrego Highway as part of the Nation Building Program, comprising \$40 million for upgrade works between Roma and Mitchell, \$10 million for overtaking lanes between Oakey and Dalby and \$5 million for extra rest areas and heavy vehicle stopping places. These works will create a safer, more efficient highway with benefits for all road users.

The Government is also investing \$4.6 million for the Mitchell Township Rehabilitation Stage 2 project, which will complement the Roma to Mitchell upgrade works. This follows on from investment of an additional \$15 million towards maintenance of the Warrego Highway as part of the Government's Economic Stimulus Plan, provided as part of the \$52.9 million allocated to

Queensland for Nation Building additional maintenance.

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to respond to the petition and I trust this information will be of assistance.

from the **Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, Mr Albanese**

COMMITTEES

Petitions Committee

Report

Mrs IRWIN (Fowler) (8.31 pm)—On behalf of the Standing Committee on Petitions, I present the committee's report *Electronic Petitioning to the House of Representatives*, together with the minutes of proceedings. I move:

That the report be made a parliamentary paper.

Question agreed to.

Mrs IRWIN—I am pleased to present the report of the Petitions Committee, *Electronic Petitioning to the House of Representatives*. This is the first report of the committee since its inception early in 2008, and it is something of a landmark. It is another of the significant developments on petitions that have occurred in this parliament. Over the course of the inquiry, the committee looked at range of models currently used by parliaments, and specific proposals for electronic petitions in the House of Representatives. Among current implementations, the examples of the Scottish and Queensland parliaments have been particularly important, offering real-world options from parliaments that have comparable—though not identical—practices to those of the House of Representatives.

Looking at the various options available, the report considers the implications of each if they were to be applied in the House. Some things are more likely to be effective, and some less so, in this particular environ-

ment. There are trade-offs to be considered, and things that perhaps should not be put into practice. Among these are things that might be implemented to good effect in the future. The report calls for the House to accept electronic petitions and asks that the House make the necessary changes to Standing Orders to allow this to occur. The committee regards electronic petitions as an addition to and not a replacement for our current system of paper petitions. It also recommends that the House provide, under its own administration, a website for electronic petitions where they can be posted, signed and published.

If put into practice, this will be a major step forward for the relationship between the House and Australians. It is clear from the findings of the committee that electronic petitions offer a powerful tool which can be used by parliaments to encourage people to participate more meaningfully in our system of government. Throughout the inquiry, the committee has maintained a firm focus on this participation and its importance in countering tendencies, identified by some, for the public to increasingly feel disengaged from parliament and government. It may be that changes in the way we communicate and handle information have contributed to this: challenging the way people used to relate to, and be informed about, parliament. However, if parliament itself takes up these same new ways of communicating, the prognosis is likely to improve.

If our recommendations are accepted, electronic petitioning will be a more agile, more easily implemented way for members of the public to engage with parliament. For one thing, for example, it would make it unnecessary—unless they should choose to do so—for petitioners to set up card tables in shopping centres. Much of the physical effort of compiling a petition would be taken away. Second, people would be able to sign peti-

tions regardless of their geographical distribution—an important factor in a country as big as ours—and where concerns raised in petitions frequently go beyond those of local areas alone. Third, the interplay between the petitioner and the House could be so much quicker. If our recommendations were accepted, the committee would receive proposals for petitions, consider them, and—if approved—put them up on the website, where they would be available to receive signatures. Fourth, this process would also ensure that all electronic petitions that are exposed on the web, ready to be signed, would conform to standing orders. This certainty is important if the House is to keep faith and develop an enhanced relationship with the Australian public. Fifth, and by no means the least significant, is that electronic petitions to the House would reflect the way that people communicate now. A number of people indicated to the committee that they wanted to use this way of communicating to put their concerns to the House. By allowing this to occur, the House can be more in touch with the people it serves.

We in the committee think that this is important: we are great believers in the system we have inherited. To us, the key elements of the system—checks and balances, governments being held to account, and the capacity of people outside of government to have their voices heard—are more than just words. They are foundation stones of a way of governing that, for all its faults, has a better chance of being fair, overall, than the alternatives we might consider. The only way we can make sure it continues to operate is by keeping things, to some degree, in motion. It needs to develop, sympathetically and in keeping with both tradition and the present, so that it stays alive and relevant to the needs of the present day.

Committee members from both sides of the political spectrum have shared this sense

of the importance of keeping the House open to the views of its public. I could not have wished for a better, more bipartisan approach. In particular I thank the deputy chair, Russell Broadbent, for his consistent support and the passion he brings to the work of the committee. But I also want to express my appreciation to all my committee colleagues. Their dedication and the depth of knowledge they bring to the issues raised in petitions are testimony to the strengths of our system. These members stay in touch with issues raised at every level and show a masterful ability to comprehend and explore them. This committee is a new one and, I am pleased to say, a united one.

Our thanks also to our great committee secretariat: to secretaries past and present, Joanne Towner, who I note is in the chamber this evening, and Catherine Cornish; to inquiry secretaries past and present, Julia Morris and Dr Brian Lloyd; and to our administrative officer, Naomi Swann, who has been with us from the beginning. Many thanks for your assistance. You are definitely a great team.

This report is both an expression of our political system and a contribution to its continued vitality. I commend it to the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms AE Burke)—Does the member for Fowler wish to move a motion in connection with the report to enable it to be debated on a future occasion?

Mrs IRWIN (Fowler) (8.38 pm)—I move:

That the House take note of the report.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—In accordance with standing order 39, the debate is adjourned. The resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Petitions Committee

Report: Referral to Main Committee

Mrs IRWIN (Fowler) (8.38 pm)—by leave—I move:

That the order of the day be referred to the Main Committee for debate.

Question agreed to.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Committee

Report

Mr DEBUS (Macquarie) (8.39 pm)—On behalf of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, I present the committee's report entitled *Everybody's Business: Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Community Stores*, together with the minutes of proceedings and evidence received by the committee.

Order that the report be made a parliamentary paper.

Mr DEBUS—On behalf of the members of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs I would like to acknowledge the Ngunawal and Ngambri peoples, the traditional custodians of this land, and pay respects to the elders, past and present. I also acknowledge other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who now reside here.

The Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs has completed its inquiry into the operation of stores located in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities, initiated in December 2008. This inquiry was of vital interest to our remote Indigenous peoples and to the many stakeholders who have been working in partnership with their communities over decades to improve the health of Indigenous Australians. I am delighted that this report is a unanimous one.

The committee received 112 submissions during the course of the inquiry, many from

individuals living in remote Indigenous communities and some from government departments, store owners and store managers, freight providers, health experts, universities, non-government organisations and Indigenous representative organisations. The committee held 28 public hearings and visited 17 remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities, from Cape York and the Torres Strait in Queensland, to Broome in the west, into Central Australia and across the top of Australia to Arnhem Land. I would like to express the committee's sincere appreciation and gratitude to the remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities who participated in the inquiry. The committee thanks in particular the traditional owners and elders, who welcomed us, and the clans and families in those communities, who shared their experiences, and also the store managers, who opened their stores to the committee during busy shopping hours, morning and evening. The honest commentary from all participants involved assisted in informing the committee's view and evaluation of the complex challenges to food security in remote regions.

The title of the report was drawn from an observation by Mr Traven Lea, chair of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nutrition Strategy and Action Plan, NATSINSAP, and a descendant of the Wuli-Wuli, Darambal and Djirubal people from South-East Queensland. At hearings in Canberra Mr Lea acknowledged the positive trend in national strategic policy, which has made the wellbeing of Indigenous Australia everybody's business—all of Australia's business. Specifically, developments under the Council of Australian Governments National Indigenous Reform Agreement to close the gap on Indigenous health have focused the national effort on the disproportionate chronic disease burden borne by Indigenous people.

Poor nutrition, particularly low fruit and vegetable intake, is an important determinant of the health gap. In most remote communities the store is the principal source of fresh fruit and vegetables. Therefore, the committee made a number of recommendations aimed to promote the consumption of and improve the supply of and affordability of nutritious fresh foods in remote Indigenous communities, including: collaborating with every remote Indigenous community to develop and manage a healthy store policy; establishing a national remote Indigenous food supply chain coordination office, which would support communities or groupings of communities to develop supply models appropriate to them that deliver healthy perishable foodstuffs regularly—weekly where possible; establishing a remote community store infrastructure fund to assist in the investment of delivery, refrigeration and storage of fresh and healthy produce; and, supporting community garden, traditional foods and farming projects.

The financial capacity of Indigenous people living in remote communities is limited. This, combined with the fact that most goods and services in remote Australia are at least 20 per cent more expensive than in the city, poses an even greater strain on providing access to healthy and affordable food. The committee found that there is no comprehensive data available about the cost of living for Indigenous Australians living in remote communities. Therefore, the committee recommended commissioning a regional cost of living study for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders living in remote communities.

By far the majority of stores are owned by the Indigenous community in which they are located. The committee was impressed by evidence from remote communities that both own and manage their community store. *(Time expired)*

Mr LAMING (Bowman) (8.45 pm)—I rise to speak on this report of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, *Everybody's Business: remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Community Stores*. Indigenous community stores are truly everyone's business. I am glad they have been the business of this parliament for the last year. There has been a fantastic effort by my colleagues working on this committee. I congratulate the chair for his work and I congratulate the entire secretariat, of Anna Dacre, Sharon Bryant, Susan Cardell, Rebecca Gordon, Loes Slattery and Claire Young, for their work. I also want to congratulate members who are here today to listen to us talk about these reports. We have here the member for Kalgoorlie and the member for Leichhardt, both of whom have vested interests in ensuring that community stores deliver the best possible nutrition to communities, and the member for Cunningham—I do not think she has a remote community store in her electorate but I understand that food choices in her electorate are probably about as poor as they were in the 17 Indigenous communities that we visited. It is great to have her in the chamber.

What can I say except that, when it comes to community stores, we need to find ways that private sector provision—something which was done as a community good and a public good just a generation ago—can function effectively. For that to happen we have looked very, very carefully at, firstly, supply chains; secondly, the function of stores, particularly with the overlay of the intervention and remote community stores and the funding that was given to Outback Stores; and, thirdly—setting aside the supply chain—how we can build demand for healthy food. It is a challenge globally, in mainstream Australia and in these communities themselves.

I will just add a little bit of detail to what the chair of the committee has articulately

put by referring to some key recommendations. The national remote Indigenous food supply chain coordination office is unctuously named but it actually does something very important. In the division of ordering and supplying of food—something important to so many tiny communities around this country—the role of a very small office in pulling together the capacity to get food delivered quickly, cheaply and reliably is so important. We know that charitable organisations do a great job in WA. That is covered in recommendation 14. We know also that further investment in delivery, refrigeration and storage—recommendation 15—would be beneficial.

I now turn to the promotion of healthy eating. We have the RIST resources, and they should be available in every community—recommendation 10—but we know that the regional cost of living is very poorly understood. Recommendation 21: let us start understanding what these foodstuffs cost in communities, because we do not know, the communities do not know and the stores themselves do not know. The household expenditure survey done by the ABS still does not include Indigenous communities, so let us look at expanding that—recommendation 22. And of course fees, banking choice and financial literacy underpin food-purchasing choices in remote communities. That is still a major challenge for us. Recommendation 24: how can we work with the Australian Banking Association and other stakeholders to improve the understanding of how credit cards work? How can an Indigenous family determine their bank balance? How can they budget? Can they take food home to a household where they can store food, cook nutritiously and understand how to use new ingredients? These are challenges in health promotion. We need a nutritionist, potentially, on the board of Outback Stores.

Finally we looked at the functionality of the stores themselves. As you can imagine, in these tiny communities stores are all run slightly differently. As a committee we were looking for a model in communities that vary in size, in remoteness, in capacity, in commitment, in love of their store, in where the profits are directed. All of these things can change year by year. How can a store model be resilient enough to provide what we believe is an absolute public good? It is as important as a hospital, it is as important as a court and it is as important as a council. You cannot always just leave it to the private sector unfettered. What this committee looked at was a healthy store policy in every community—recommendation 5. Their should be incentives for managers; it may not be their core business but it should be their business—recommendation 2.

ALPA, the Arnhem Land Progress Association, showed us their food card. It is a fantastic innovation but for the fact that the BasicsCard came along straight after it. Recommendation 9: how can we help small cohorts like pregnant mums and those who buy for the young, the frail and the old buy healthy food? There should be training of staff, not only on site but by allowing them to travel away to larger centres to study and learn in supermarkets and larger food providers—recommendation 11. Get local produce freshly and cheaply and allow food harvested and grown to actually be on those shelves—recommendation 19. I will finish with nutritional education. These are the elements that should not gather dust. They are simple, they are affordable and they can make a significant difference to our community, the food choices and the availability across Australia.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms AE Burke)—Does the member for Macquarie wish to move a motion in connection with

the report to enable it to be debated on a future occasion?

Mr DEBUS (Macquarie) (8.50 pm)—I move:

That the House take note of the report.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—In accordance with standing order 39, the debate is adjourned. The resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Committee

Report: Referral to Main Committee

Mr DEBUS (Macquarie) (8.50 pm)—I move:

That the order of the day be referred to the Main Committee for debate.

Question agreed to.

Education and Training Committee Report

Ms BIRD (Cunningham) (8.50 pm)—On behalf of the Standing Committee on Education and Training, I present the committee's report entitled *Adolescent overload? Report of the inquiry into combining school and work: supporting successful youth transitions*, together with the minutes of proceedings and evidence received by the committee.

Ordered that the report be made a parliamentary paper.

Ms BIRD—Australian secondary students are facing more pressure than ever as they attempt to excel in their studies, participate in sporting and recreational activities and maintain an active social life. For an increasing number of young people there is an added dimension which is placing further pressure on their lives—the part-time job.

The proportion of school students in employment has increased significantly in the past two decades. Today there are over

260,000 young Australians combining school and work. Despite the rise in student workers, the impact of competing demands on young people's lives is not well known. The committee was therefore tasked with examining the impact of combined study and work on successful youth transition. Above all else, the fundamental purpose of schools is to provide an education for their students. This view was shared by many students who were adamant that it should not fall to schools to accommodate their part-time work commitments. Nevertheless, the inquiry confirmed that achieving the right balance can be highly problematic for some young people. There are, we found, considerable positive benefits for young people who combine school and work. Not only were those who found the right balance rewarded with a range of social and economic benefits but their chances of a successful transition into further education, training or work were also significantly enhanced.

However, the nature of part-time work for school students has changed significantly. Extended trading hours in the retail sector and late night trading in the fast food industry prevail today and contribute to students working not only longer hours but also later hours than ever before. Student workers can be susceptible to exploitative working conditions because their part-time jobs are often their first experience of the workforce and they lack awareness of their rights and obligations, including pay and conditions. The vulnerability of students in the workplace highlights the need for adequate protections and a shared community responsibility by parents, employers and schools to ensure that students are protected against working excessively long hours and often very late or, indeed, very early hours.

While students' part-time jobs do not necessarily reflect their career aspirations, young workers acquire a range of generic

skills from their jobs that they clearly see as beneficial to their future employment. For many students, the acquisition of these skills is not formally documented anywhere. In considering mechanisms for students to record their employability skills, we were cautious not to place too much burden on employers with respect to additional reporting requirements, which would particularly affect smaller businesses. Nonetheless, it is important that young people are provided with opportunities to attain formal recognition of the skills attained not only through their part-time jobs but through the full range of activities undertaken beyond the classroom, including paid and unpaid work, community or volunteer activities and sporting and recreational activities, particularly when it is recognised how important these experiences can be for them in attaining employment and further education. Senior secondary certificates have been revised to incorporate increasing flexibility to accommodate greater numbers of students who may not be suited to traditional schooling models.

The inquiry was also presented with a broad range of programs and initiatives at the state and local levels which seek to provide flexibility in assisting students to combine school and work, including targeted programs for students at risk of disengaging with their education.

It is important to acknowledge that not all young people have equal access to the opportunity of participating in part-time work. However, it is also important that we see the evidence of the role of part-time work in the successful transition of young people and that we have policies and programs in place to support that process.

I want to thank my committee colleagues and my deputy chair, the member for Tangney, Mr Dennis Jensen, who is in the chamber with us, for their work. I particularly

want to thank the secretariat. I will very quickly acknowledge the secretary, Glenn Worthington, the inquiry secretary, Justin Baker, the senior research officer, Ray Knight, who is with us today, and the members of the committee for their work on this report. (*Time expired*)

Dr JENSEN (Tangney) (8.55 pm)—I also wish to address the recommendations of the report entitled *Adolescent overload?* produced by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training. I would like to state at the outset that it must never be forgotten that the primary purpose of school is education. The recommendations in the report relate to students combining school and work. Lots of young Australians do this, but the committee wanted to ascertain what impact this had on their lives and, specifically, on their career development.

The first recommendation of the committee is most significant. It recommends that the government ensures that further research is done to examine particularly part-time employment and its impact on students' academic performance and retention, including the motivations of students who work longer hours. A further recommendation is that community-volunteer work and working in a family business be included. This will ensure that all such activities are taken into account and that volunteer work is given the credit it deserves but often does not get because 'if you don't get paid, it's not real work'.

Recommendations 3 to 6 cover employers and supervisors. The recommendations include giving employers and supervisors a code of practice by which they can assist students in documenting their acquired employability skills; establishing a national employer of choice for youth program to support and recognise good employers; giving students a tool kit of helpful information,

which would be circulated throughout Australian secondary schools; and ensuring collaboration between jurisdictions to achieve harmonisation of existing state based legislation regarding the employment of young people as well as national consistency of regulatory measures. Other recommendations are for a national commissioner for children and young people; a national definition for what constitutes engagement in part-time senior secondary study and part-time work for statistical and reporting purposes; government engagement in research to quantify the number of students in part-time study and employment; cooperation of governments to ensure that structured workplace opportunities are available to all students participating in school based vocational education and training; evaluation of local programs targeting disadvantaged students; and more promotional material in schools about government income support benefits and services for students.

I commend this report as it tackles one of the social issues which rarely gets any publicity. Everyone has or knows kids who have jobs to get some extra money to buy the latest gadget, to socialise or even to save for a car—and that is fine. What we are addressing here, however, is not far from the sentiments expressed earlier today in relation to protecting and cherishing our children. A significant proportion of students with part-time jobs, estimated to be around 10 per cent, are working to meet personal living expenses, to pay for their education or to supplement their family income. This is vastly different from doing a few hours at Maccas for extra spending money. This is working to survive and this involves children. We do not want to be here in years to come, apologising again for failing to support children who, for whatever reason, fall through the cracks in our welfare system.

One Queensland girl helps buy food for her family with her wages. Another girl, typical of the many who have left home, cannot survive without working because she does not get any assistance from Centrelink as she is under 18 and her parents earn over \$60,000 per annum. There was a South Australian student who worked over 30 hours a week in years 11 and 12 to support herself because she obtained no family support whatsoever.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms AE Burke)—Order! The time allocated for statements on this report has expired. Does the member for Cunningham wish to move a motion in connection with the report to enable it to be debated on a future occasion?

Ms BIRD (Cunningham) (9.00 pm)—I move:

That the House take note of the report.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms AE Burke)—In accordance with standing order 39, the debate is adjourned. The resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting. Does the member for Cunningham wish to move a motion to refer the matter to the Main Committee?

Ms BIRD (Cunningham) (9.00 pm)—I move:

That the order of the day be referred to the Main Committee for debate.

Question agreed to.

Economics Committee

Report

Mr CRAIG THOMSON (Dobell) (9.00 pm)—On behalf of the Standing Committee on Economics I present the report of the committee entitled *Review of the Reserve Bank of Australia Annual Report 2008 (Second Report)* together with the minutes of the proceedings.

Ordered that the report be made a parliamentary paper.

Mr CRAIG THOMSON—In September 2008, as the impact of the Lehman Brothers collapse became clear, countries around the world tried to protect their economies from the downturn. The Governor of the Reserve Bank noted that by February 2009 the resulting contraction in economic activity in the December quarter was severe in many countries and that global growth had suffered its biggest setback in decades. Just 12 months later, the Australian economy proved its resilience by avoiding a recession.

At the August 2009 hearing the governor was optimistic about the Australian economy and noted that Australia had several advantages including a sound financial system, an absence of the worst of the problems afflicting some countries, exposure to an emerging China and scope to use macroeconomic policies to cushion the downturn. In addition, the Reserve Bank acted decisively through its monetary policy decisions. In September 2008 the policy cash rate was at a contracted level of 7.25 per cent. With the collapse of Lehman Brothers it became self-evident that rates would need to be cut. Where the Reserve Bank showed leadership was through the size and speed of the cash rate reductions that occurred and they occurred with equal significance and decisiveness in terms of fiscal policy acting in concert with monetary policy.

Between September 2008 and April 2009 the Reserve Bank reduced the policy cash rate by 425 basis points. Three rate reductions were in the order of 100 basis points each. It was also notable that the Reserve Bank held off when the policy cash rate reached three per cent. Financial markets were at one point factoring a cash rate of less than two per cent. The contribution the bank's monetary policy made to underpinning the economy during the height of the downturn cannot be underestimated and will

certainly be a benchmark response for future governors of the Reserve Bank to note.

While the Reserve Bank's approach to monetary policy during the height of the financial crisis showed sound leadership, the period ahead is no less challenging. It is now apparent that the bank has turned to its core objective of inflation targeting. In October 2009 the Reserve Bank was possibly the first among central banks to increase rates. The governor has made it clear that the emergency rates during the crisis would be inappropriate as the economy started to grow. The bank's objective is now to lift rates to a normal or neutral setting that will provide for long-term growth and core inflation in the target band.

The management of monetary policy, however, during the next six to 12 months will be associated with some risks. The first challenge for the board is the timing and the size of the rate increases. The governor commented that the timing and pace of those adjustments, if and when they come, will be a matter for careful consideration, taking into account all the relevant factors including what might be happening with market interest rates. While the economy is returning to high levels of growth there is still some fragility in the economy. Unfortunately unemployment could still rise and manufacturers and other export-based industries are under pressure from the strong Australian dollar. The bank must be certain that any rate rises during the next 12 months do not work against the economy's return to trend levels of growth. Conversely, the Reserve Bank needs to ensure that inflationary forces are kept in check and that medium-to-long-term inflation is forecast to be in the target band. These challenges are why the next hearings with the Reserve Bank in February and later in August 2010 are significant. The Reserve Bank has an important responsibility to the Australian community and it will need to

account for its performance, particularly during the cycle ahead.

On behalf of the committee I would like to thank the Governor of the Reserve Bank, Mr Glenn Stevens, and the other representatives of the Reserve Bank for appearing at the hearing on 14 August. I would also like to put on record on behalf of the committee our thanks to the secretary and the secretariat generally for the work they have done with this committee. The next public hearing will be on 19 February 2010 in Canberra. I commend the report to the House.

Mr MORRISON (Cook) (9.05 pm)—I echo the comments of the member for Dobell and my thanks go to the Reserve Bank governor and his entire staff for the work that they do as well as the secretariat of the committee for their hard work in putting together the report.

It is a privilege to be involved in this committee and have that opportunity to address what are some of the weightiest issues this parliament considers. The Reserve Bank governor, in the course of the hearing that was undertaken earlier this year and in his numerous statements since then, has outlined—and these are echoed in the report—some fairly sound warnings and some fairly sound observations about what is taking place with our economy.

Firstly, I think we have to acknowledge, and the Reserve Bank governor has made it very clear, that the conditions the government based a series of judgments on have not proved to be as bad as anticipated. The Reserve Bank governor has said on numerous occasions 'the risk of serious economic contraction in Australia has now passed'. That was on 3 November 2009. In his speech on 15 October he says:

Now that the risks of really serious economic weakness have abated ...

He also says:

The period of greatest weakness in the Australian economy has probably passed.

The government sometimes suggests that the opposition is being reckless in making these observations but I merely restate the observations made by the Reserve Bank governor through this process. The other thing the Reserve Bank governor said on 15 October was that:

The Board is also conscious, though, that a risk-management approach requires policy to be recalibrated as circumstances change.

The Reserve Bank governor knows that circumstances have changed. He has said that very clearly to our committee. He has said it very clearly in the various statements that he has made in that capacity, but I am disappointed that the government does not seem to be heeding that message. Circumstances have changed. Policy is required to be recalibrated. The Reserve Bank is doing that job. The government is not recalibrating its policy and is continuing to spend money on the same timetable and the same process.

The other point that the Reserve Bank governor made was about delays in the delivery of the various programs and stimulus packages that eventuated. At the time of our hearing back in August, he was not concerned that there might be slippage in the program. But, as we have seen since then, with delays in the education program and also those that I am noticing in the housing program, as these stimulus projects start to lag and fall into a different part of the cycle, there is one inevitable conclusion, and that is to put further pressure on interest rates than would otherwise be the case.

In addition to warning about how conditions have changed and that there is a need to reconsider one's position, the Reserve Bank governor has said that it is important for monetary policy and fiscal policy to work together. The Reserve Bank governor has

made that very clear. In fact, the Treasurer has also made it very clear. In February of last year he said:

It is very important that we put in place a fiscal policy that backs up the monetary policy which is put together by an independent Reserve Bank ... And because, as the Minister for Finance and Deregulation was saying, spending has been out of control, we have got to bring it back into control.

I will further quote the Treasurer. He said on 23 February 2008:

One of the reasons the Reserve Bank has been backed into a corner is that you ... spent and you spent and you spent and you spent.

In the context of the Reserve Bank's comments and warnings, I still find it a concern that, while the Reserve Bank makes these warnings to the government, we are not getting the prudent response from the government that we would anticipate. The Reserve Bank is choosing to be prudent, but the government are continuing to spend in an effort to promote themselves rather than taking the pressure off interest rates, which will inevitably be in the system for the reasons the Reserve Bank governor has outlined.

Thirdly, the Reserve Bank governor has made some very important warnings about bottlenecks that will frustrate our recovery, particularly in the housing sector. There was significant discussion about this matter in the hearings. He made it very clear that this is a supply problem. It is not an issue of finance. It is not an issue of demand management or other demand factors; it is a serious issue of supply. He also made it very clear that monetary policy was not the tool to control asset prices and it would not be used by the Reserve Bank for that purpose. It is not in their charter to do so. He has highlighted that supply issues of land zoning, land approvals and other constraints that exist at a state and local government level must be addressed. Otherwise, we are going to have a very serious

housing affordability problem. The government can focus on other areas, particularly the public sector, as far as housing goes, but if they do not address private housing we will have a major issue.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms AE Burke)—The time allocated for statements on the report has expired. Does the member for Dobell wish to move a motion in connection with the report to enable it to be debated on a future occasion?

Mr CRAIG THOMSON (Dobell) (9.10 pm)—I move:

That the House take note of the report.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—In accordance with standing order 39(c), the debate is adjourned. The resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Economics Committee

Report: Referral to Main Committee

Mr CRAIG THOMSON (Dobell) (9.10 pm)—by leave—I move:

That the order of the day be referred to the Main Committee for debate.

Question agreed to.

Public Accounts and Audit Committee

Report

Ms GRIERSON (Newcastle) (9.10 pm)—On behalf of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit, I present the committee's report entitled Report 415: *Review of Auditor-General's reports tabled between September 2008 and January 2009*.

Order that the report be made a parliamentary paper.

Ms GRIERSON—On behalf of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit, I present the committee's report. In doing so, I point out to the House that, as prescribed by its act, the committee examines all reports of the Auditor-General and reports the results of

the committee's deliberations to the parliament.

This report details the findings of the committee's examination of five performance audits tabled in 2008 and 2009. These five reports were selected for further scrutiny from the 15 audit reports presented to the parliament between 23 September 2008 and 28 January 2009. As usual, these reports cover a range of agencies and highlight a number of areas of concern. The two key themes the committee encountered were the need to adequately and effectively report progress towards goals and the need to maintain adequate and up-to-date customer records.

The committee reviewed the business partnership agreement between the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and Centrelink. While we were pleased to find that interagency dispute resolution had been improved, we were disappointed to find that the agencies have not managed to fully implement an ANAO recommendation from 2004 to ensure that the business partnership agreement is kept up to date. Accordingly, we recommended that the agencies fully implement the recommendation before the commencement of the next business partnership arrangement in 2010.

As a result of the investigation into Centrelink's tip-off management system, we found that Centrelink was acting quickly to implement all ANAO recommendations. Through the hearing process, we found that Centrelink was still retaining data that was based on unsubstantiated claims against a number of customers. The retention of this information has the potential to prejudice further claims made against a customer. We therefore recommended that Centrelink ensure that such information is deleted from the tip-off recording system as soon as it is identified.

In reviewing the management of disability employment services by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, we found the agencies had effectively planned, managed and implemented their policy initiatives. Additionally, we were satisfied with their implementation of the ANAO's recommendations. However, we found that the agencies were unable to report effectively on progress towards achieving the objective of enhancing the quality of life of people with a disability. Accordingly, we recommended that the agencies monitor and report on progress towards achieving this important goal.

We also examined the Australian Sports Commission's management of the Active After-school Communities program. This program provides support to service providers who deliver after-school physical activity sessions for primary school children. The program has proven to be very popular with students and it has been well implemented, considering the rapidity of its rollout. We were concerned at the ANAO finding that some adults working on the program had not completed the appropriate security checks for working with children but found in our hearing that these had now been completed and were mandatory and that waivers were no longer available. We note that it is difficult to report on the success of the program outside of anecdotal evidence, but we believe the development of motor skills is a key factor in developing an interest in physical activity. We recommended that the Australian Sports Commission determine ways to measure the development of motor skills and that they seek to have funding for the measurement of motor skills development included in their next funding bid.

Finally, we looked at the administration of Job Network outcome payments. We were

pleased to see the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations addressing the issues noted in the audit report. However, we remain concerned that it is difficult to determine the contribution outcome payments make to Job Network expenditure, and we recommend that the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations provide disaggregated financial data on estimated and actual expenditure on outcome payments.

I would like to acknowledge the valuable work of the Auditor-General and the staff at the Australian National Audit Office. I would like to thank the committee secretary, Russell Chafer, and research officers Mr Shane Armstrong, Mr Ian McDonald, Dr Narelle McGlusky and Ms Natalya Wells.

Public Accounts and Audit Committee Report

Ms GRIERSON (Newcastle) (9.15 pm)—On behalf of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit, I present the committee's report entitled *Report 416: review of the major projects report 2007-08*.

Order that the report be made a parliamentary paper.

Ms GRIERSON—On 6 December 2006, the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit unanimously agreed to recommend that the Australian National Audit Office receive additional funding to produce an annual report on progress in major Defence projects. This report would detail cost, schedule and capability information for a number of large acquisition projects. The government agreed with that recommendation and approved funding for the report in the May 2008 budget.

The committee's purpose in recommending funding was to provide a means by which accessible, transparent and accurate information could be made available to the parliament and the Australian public about

the state of Defence's major acquisition projects.

The MPR 2007-08 is a pilot of that report—it provides information on nine selected DMO projects. The report is comprised of a series of Defence Materiel Organisation Project Data Summary Sheets that provide a snapshot of key performance data for each of the projects, an overview by the DMO and a review undertaken by the Auditor-General.

In accordance with its statutory obligation to examine all reports of the Auditor-General, the committee has reviewed the major projects report 2007-08. Having completed that review, the committee is very encouraged about the benefits of the report to the parliament and the Australian public. However, the pilot report has also reaffirmed in the minds of the committee members that establishing and maintaining the reporting systems that underpin the MPR is an evolving process. Major acquisition projects are complex and often diverse in nature. This creates challenges for both the DMO in presenting consistent data across projects and for the ANAO in reviewing this work. The purpose of this review is to provide guidance and direction to both the DMO and the ANAO and, to that end, the review outlines some of the ways the committee believes the MPR can be improved. For example, the review highlights again the importance of ensuring that lessons learned on previous acquisition experiences are not only documented but incorporated into future policy and practice. The review also reinforces the need for benchmarking scores to convey as much information as possible so as to provide the reader with a tool for assessing a project's development, and the presentation of information on capability achievement is reiterated as another key area for further development.

It is the committee's intention to continue to monitor the MPR process closely. This includes keeping a watchful eye on the issues that gave rise to the scope reduction and qualification contained in the pilot report and the agencies' adherence to the MPR schedule.

The major projects report is a real step forward. It increases transparency and accountability around Defence acquisitions and provides the parliament and the Australian public with an opportunity to assess the progress of major acquisitions while they are still in train.

This week, we look forward to the release of the next MPR for the year 2008-09. The next MPR will report on a further six projects and the committee is hopeful that by 2010-11 the major projects report will be reporting progress on up to 30 of Defence's major acquisition projects.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to congratulate Mr Ian McPhee, the Auditor-General, and Dr Stephen Gumley, the CEO of the DMO, on the cooperative manner in which they and their staff have worked to produce the MPR 2007-08. We very much look forward to seeing the MPR evolve over time into a comprehensive, high-quality, reliable document which the committee believes will be of great benefit both within and outside of the Department of Defence. The committee stands firm in its commitment to continuously monitor Defence's acquisition processes and outcomes and to provide input where necessary. Ultimately the MPR should provide the Australian public with confidence that Defence procurement dollars are being spent wisely to provide our highly valued Australian Defence Force personnel with the quality support they deserve.

I give particular acknowledgement and thanks to Russell Chafer, the secretary of the

committee, and Dr Kris Veenstra, the inquiry secretary.

Treaties Committee

Report

Mr KELVIN THOMSON (Wills) (9.19 pm)—On behalf of the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties, I present the committee's report, incorporating a dissenting report, entitled *Report 107: treaties tabled on 20 August and 15 September 2009*.

Order that the report be made a parliamentary paper.

Mr KELVIN THOMSON—Report 107 of the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties reviews 10 treaty actions:

- one taxation agreement with New Zealand;
- two taxation agreements with Jersey;
- one taxation agreement with Belgium;
- three agreements for the reform of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank;
- a recasting of the Chapeau Defense Agreement with the United States;
- an agreement with the Republic of Singapore concerning the use of Shoalwater Bay training area; and
- a minor treaty action amending the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade.

The committee has recommended that binding treaty action be taken for the three IMF and World Bank agreements in report 104, which was tabled on 9 September this year. In this report, the committee expresses support for the remaining agreements and recommends that binding treaty action be taken in each case.

The committee has made additional recommendations on the three agreements to reform of the IMF and the World Bank and the recasting of the Chapeau Defense Agreement. Consequently, I propose to direct most of my remarks to these treaties.

The three treaties for the reform of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank are the:

- Proposed Amendment of the Articles of Agreement of the International Monetary Fund to Enhance Voice and Participation in the International Monetary Fund;
- Proposed Amendment of the Articles of Agreement of the International Monetary Fund to Expand the Investment Authority of the International Monetary Fund; and
- Proposed Amendment of the Articles of Agreement of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the World Bank) to Enhance Voice and Participation in the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Participation in the IMF and the World Bank is based on a voting system that provides a guaranteed minimum number of votes for each member nation, and additional votes based on relative economic weight of each member country.

These additional votes are called 'quotas'. Quotas are allocated using a formula that incorporates the GDP, openness, economic variability and the international reserves of each member nation.

The number of quota votes has increased significantly since the establishment of the IMF and the World Bank, while the basic vote allocation for each member nation has remained the same. Consequently, there has been a shift in the balance of power within these institutions towards the countries with greater economic weight.

The two voice and participation amendments aim to redress this imbalance by increasing the number of basic votes allocated and then fixing the proportion of basic votes to quota votes in perpetuity. The change will result in a decline in the voting power of the countries with larger economies.

The voice participation amendments were recommended by the governing bodies of the IMF and the World Bank in 2008. While these are commendable reforms, there is a broad recognition within the international community that they do not go far enough, and they have attracted criticism from larger developing economies.

In light of this criticism, the IMF released the final report of the Committee on IMF Governance in March this year. The report recommends, amongst other things, that the next review of voting power be brought forward from 2013 to spring 2010.

The governance reform recommendations appear to have had some impact. The Department of the Treasury advised the committee that the G20 group of nations has agreed to bring forward the next review of voting power to January 2011 and that there is an expectation that that quota vote increase for small economies will be substantial.

The committee believes Australia should continue playing a significant role in improving the legitimacy of the IMF. As a consequence, the committee recommends the Australian government should make use of its profile in the international community to support reforms that improve confidence in the IMF's decision-making process.

The World Bank has gone some way further in progressing its voice and participation reforms. On 6 October the Development Committee of the World Bank released a proposal to increase the quota of votes allocated to developing countries to at least 47 per cent. This proposal will be considered by

the board of governors in the northern spring of 2010. The committee recommends Australia support this proposal.

I will now turn to the IMF investment authority amendment, which will permit the IMF to diversify its income base.

The IMF's income can, at present, only be derived from the marketable obligations of member nations. In other words, the IMF relies on interest payments from loans made to member countries for its income.

The new funding model combines income from lending activities with new sources of income, including a mandate to invest funds.

The IMF Board of Governors has indicated that the investment policies will reflect the public nature of the funds to be invested and include safeguards to ensure that the broadened investment authority does not lead to actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

The committee is of the view that additional safeguards are necessary to ensure that the IMF's investment strategy does not conflict with its goals of international economic stability and fostering growth and economic development. In particular:

- IMF funds should not be invested in such a way as to endanger those funds through high-risk investments;
- IMF funds should not be used to invest in the manufacture of arms or military equipment; and
- IMF funds should not be used to invest in environmentally damaging industries.

The committee has recommended accordingly.

I now turn to the recast Chapeau Defense Agreement, amending the agreement which came into effect on 1 December 1995.

The original Chapeau Defense Agreement clarified the legal status of liability claims between the Australian Department of De-

fence and the United States Department of Defense as a result of death, injury or damage to property that occurred as a consequence of cooperative research, development, test evaluation or production programs and the provision of logistic support.

The amended agreement's origins are in advice from the United States Department of Defense that, contrary to a previous understanding, United States law requires the United States Department of Defense to have agreements binding in international law covering all personnel programs.

In other words, a treaty would be required for each personnel program involving an Australian citizen placed with a United States defence organisation or a United States citizen placed with an Australian defence organisation.

There are currently 28 bilateral arrangements, relating to 400 Australian personnel placed with the United States defence organisation, and 102 United States defence personnel placed with the Australian defence organisation. None of these 28 documents are legally binding under international law. As a consequence, they do not meet the requirements for cooperation under United States law.

The Australian Department of Defence determined that the most efficient way to accommodate the United States's requirement was to amend the existing Chapeau Defense Agreement to incorporate terms and conditions covering the exchange, secondment and liaison of personnel between the two nations' defence organisations.

The amended Chapeau agreement will extend the application of the Chapeau Defense Agreement's terms and conditions to cover personnel loans, secondments, exchanges and liaison officer activities.

During the public hearing into the amended agreement, committee members

expressed their concern that Australian personnel may be subject to the death penalty if convicted of certain offences in the United States as a result of the amended Chapeau Defense Agreement.

In response, the Department of Defence advised that the agreement did not provide for immunity from the United States criminal law for ADF members who are serving in the United States and participating in defence commitments under the agreement.

In other words, an ADF member could be subject to the death penalty if sentenced to that penalty by a United States court following conviction for an offence committed in the United States.

The committee has in the past expressed some concern about treaties for defence cooperation exposing the Australian defence personnel to laws and regulations that do not meet the Australian community's expectations for the treatment of sentenced prisoners.

The committee remains of the view that the Australian government should be doing its best to ensure that defence personnel convicted of a crime while serving in another country should not be subject to penalties harsher than those applied to similar crimes in Australia, and has recommended accordingly.

I now turn to the agreement with the Republic of Singapore concerning the use of Shoalwater Bay training area.

The agreement provides the Singapore armed forces with access to the Shoalwater Bay training area to conduct unilateral training activities, in particular Singapore's major annual exercise, Exercise Wallaby.

The primary concern in relation to this agreement is the potential environmental damage caused by the exercises.

The committee notes that while the prevailing community view is that the department is strongly committed to environmental awareness and to protecting Shoalwater Bay, there were some concerns expressed about the impact of fire on the Shoalwater Bay training area. Vegetation burning should not be so regular as to damage rainforest and make the area more fire prone.

There are also various tax treaties included in this report. The committee considered the taxation agreement with:

- New Zealand in relation to reducing the barriers to bilateral trade and investment;
- Jersey in relation to offshore tax evasion and the exchange of information relating to taxes; and
- Belgium to bring our agreement into line with the OECD tax standards.

These agreements will encourage international economic relationships and increase transparency and fairness in the tax system. The committee supports all these tax treaties.

ADJOURNMENT

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms AE Burke)—Order! It being 9.30 pm, I propose the question:

That the House do now adjourn.

Victorian Bushfires

Mr HUNT (Flinders) (9.30 pm)—Earlier today, I addressed the Main Committee and made reference to the fact that the township of Rye was threatened by inadequate fire protection on land owned by the Victorian government. As we approach the summer season it is time to pause, reflect and examine fire protection and management in Victoria. It is a state which has been all too badly seared over this last year.

Only this last week there was a fire at Point Nepean, which was caused by a fire lit on the third day of a heatwave, in one of the

state's windiest areas—an area which contained unexploded ordnance. It is an area known to the minister. It was the subject of a ministerial visit only a few months ago—I was there at the time—but we now see it was not subject to any ministerial control, as demonstrated by the way in which a bushfire was allowed to be lit by public hands in the middle of a heatwave.

Against that background I want to make three strong, clear points about what I believe to be systemic failures in bushfire management and protection in Victoria. First, there have been years of inadequate action on vitally needed fuel reduction. There has been fuel reduction in that time but it has been inadequate, though not at the behest of the fire authorities—local or state. They have sought permission and responsibility for fuel reduction and they have sought the right to conduct fuel reduction but they have been denied by ministerial fiat within the Victorian state government. That is unacceptable, it is undesirable and it is, and has been, plainly and dangerously wrong. It was not a failure by our firefighters, who have urged action, but a systemic political failure at the state government level due to an ideology which rejected fuel reduction on the premise that it was an assault on the environment. That policy was environmentally wrong and has been a grave error.

The second systemic error is that the state government has been consciously and deliberately silent in defending its Country Fire Authority members, volunteers and processes through the royal commission process. I believe that the CFA in Victoria is the finest group of volunteers and professional firefighters in the world. Are there lessons to be learned from Black Saturday? Of course. But I know that in the days leading up to Black Saturday, on Black Saturday itself and in the weeks following the tragic fires, all arms of the CFA and the state and federal authorities

performed magnificently—I share that praise across all authorities. It leaves me quietly ashamed, therefore, that state ministers have failed to stand up for the CFA during the royal commission process. We saw that again today where evidence was led against the CFA. We have not had the defence of the volunteers or the fire authorities that we would expect. It has been a shameful process in which ministerial responsibility has been absent and ministers should take responsibility if there were any failings. But on Black Saturday itself and in the days leading up to and following it we should be thankful for that which was done by the volunteers and the CFA. As to the tsunami of the fire itself, on that day, in that place, I do not believe our firefighters could have performed more heroically.

That leads me to my third point, which is that there must be clear ministerial parameters for genuine fuel reduction programs. In that process, the state government minister in charge of the Department of Sustainability and the Environment, the Victorian Minister for the Environment and Climate Change, must explain why he authorised burning off not during the course of the year but on the hottest day since Black Saturday, on the third day of a heatwave, in an area renowned for windy conditions. This is a time for ministerial responsibility. It is a time when the volunteers look to their ministers for leadership, guidance and responsibility, not a time when they want to see responsibility passed down the chain of command. The difficult times are when leadership and responsibility are required and I urge that of the Victorian government. (*Time expired*)

Forde Electorate: Trade Training Centres

Mr RAGUSE (Forde) (9.35 pm)—I rise tonight to reflect on the gratitude of the constituents of my electorate of Forde following a wonderful announcement that has been

made within the last couple of weeks. On 5 November, just a couple of weeks ago, Julia Gillard, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Education, announced the results of the second funding round for trade training centres, part of our \$384 million commitment to trade training in this country.

Three high schools in my electorate, which had been well under-resourced for so long, are to be beneficiaries under the program, which is a wonderful model. They will receive a grant of \$3.9 million towards creating a hub for hospitality training. The three high schools, Windaroo Valley State High School, Beenleigh State High School and Loganlea State High School, have come together in collaboration and through cooperative processes and planning to secure for our community in the seat of Forde this wonderful opportunity to provide hospitality training. It is a large commitment by our government but certainly well deserved for the teachers and administration staff. I want to pay special tribute to the principals: Kay Louwrens, from Windaroo Valley High School; Desley Hodge, who was acting principal during the planning period and is now Deputy Principal again, and Matthew O'Hanlon, from Beenleigh High School; and Allison Crane, from Loganlea High School, who has done an enormous amount of work in this community.

These particular high schools in the community of Forde have been seriously under-resourced. They are providing and have provided wonderful educational products. In the area of Forde, which is so diverse, to be able to offer hospitality training is something that will benefit the much wider community and certainly the community of South-East Queensland.

The multisite Trade Training Centre will allow our students to build on what is currently occurring at local schools, with year 9

to year 12 students starting traineeships and apprenticeships. The multisite Trade Training Centre will be beneficial in delivering education to students at the three high schools while servicing approximately 10,000 students across what they call the ENABLE schools project, which takes on about 11 high schools. In the area of Logan and Logan City, which is a major part of my electorate, it is one of the largest employers. It is also part of the northern end of the Gold Coast, where hospitality is a major interest and where there have been skills deficits in providing services to local business. So this particular project and investment will certainly bring benefits to the community for a long time.

I want to add another great announcement, about part of our rollout of our health services, the commitment to the GP superclinics. You may be aware that there was a superclinic planned somewhere for the south side of Brisbane. There was a lot of negotiation and planning and cooperation between different agencies about where that should be located. I was pleased to be part of the announcement by our Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, and our Minister for Health and Ageing, Nicola Roxon, just in the last couple of weeks. They have announced that two superclinic hubs, part of a hub-and-spoke model, will be established in Logan and Annerley, and two further, complementary satellite sites will be announced in the broader Brisbane and south-side region.

This is a project and a cooperative model that involves the University of Queensland, as a major partner, and also the Logan region in the hospital services that will be provided in that region. This is on top of a previously announced \$44 million expansion of the hospital emergency centre for Logan Hospital. This region has been underresourced for a long time and I am so very proud to be the member that has been part of the process of

being able to provide the services to our community. The Logan site for this particular service—and it is a very busy site, of course—will have a GP service, a refuge and disadvantaged persons' service, a maternal and women's health service, and a paediatrics and early intervention clinic, services that are very much needed within our region. This announcement of the large investment of \$7.5 million towards the superclinic for the south side of Brisbane will certainly benefit not only my electorate but also the whole region it services through that corridor.

This week, along with all the announcements of these projects, there were the schools celebrating their award nights. Having attended six of those award nights during the week, it was great to see the benefits that are now starting to flow from our investment in education. It is not only through our Trade Training Centre developments but also through the Building the Education Revolution program, with the rollout of new buildings, new assets and the IT resources that are being put into these schools. It is great for the region and great for Forde. (*Time expired*)

Home Insulation Program

Mr SCHULTZ (Hume) (9.40 pm)—I rise tonight to speak about the insulation installer debacle, or the home insulation rebate scheme. I rise because this issue has been raised a number of times in this House. In the last week or two, I have been getting a significant number of calls from constituents who are concerned about a number of so-called legitimate installers who visit residences offering to provide a quote to insulate a home. They then arrange an installation date to return to the job. Upon return, the job done always comes up short with the installer never having enough insulation product for the whole job, and in some cases it is

only after the installer has left that the homeowner discovers that the job has not been completed.

In one case in the city of Goulburn, after the initial quote was given by one company a different installation company arrived to do the installation. The installer spent no time at all and said that the job was complete and could the owner of the home complete the paperwork. There would be no need to pay any money as the installation company would claim the government rebate direct, which would pay for the whole job. It was only the diligence of the homeowner, who checked the job before signing, who saw that the company had covered less than half the roof cavity. He then demanded that the job be properly finished before he would sign.

In another case, again in the city of Goulburn, a quote was given and an installer arrived to do the job with only nine installation batts for a roof cavity of 100 square metres. This time the installer said that he was told that it was only a top-up. In this case the resident was elderly and the installers refused to leave before having the government rebate forms signed. I could go on. Other cases include companies just looking in the roof cavity of a home, reporting to the residents that their home was fine and did not need insulation, but could they please sign the forms so that the government would know that their home had been inspected, and they could, of course, get the \$1,600 rebate kickback.

The reason for my raising this matter is that it is a shocking misuse of a scheme that has been very badly planned and has not been able to foresee the fraudulent practices that are right throughout the country on this particular taxpayer-funded initiative by the current government. It also shows the lengths that illegitimate companies and fraudsters will go to. I have reported it to the minister. I

have supplied the information to the minister, including the documentation which identifies the companies, and I have said to the minister—because it is a blatant rip-off of the Australian taxpayers' dollars—that he really should stop sitting on his hands and do something constructive about either charging these people or doing something to remove their government accreditation. On every piece of documentation that has come through my office, these bodgie, dodgy individuals and firms have been accredited by the government. That is simply not good enough. It is a misuse of taxpayers' resources and it is a classic illustration of the lack of control this government has had when it is putting these schemes together. All it is doing is making all the dodgy operators in this country rich at the expense of the exercise that it is supposed to have achieved, and that is the insulation of homes making a significant contribution to energy consumption in this country.

Braddon Electorate: Program Funding

Mr SIDEBOTTOM (Braddon) (9.44 pm)—Unlike my friend the member for Hume, many families in my electorate have benefited greatly from the insulation projects, and also the installers that are doing it have done so with propriety and with integrity. I am very positive tonight to be able to present two excellent funding announcements that the electorate of Braddon has been the beneficiary of. First and foremost of those is in the beautiful Circular Head district, which is in the western end of my electorate. The Circular Head community has gained funding of \$4.5 million for a trade training centre. What is unusual and exciting about this trade training centre is that it is shared between two schools, the Circular Head Christian School and the Smithton High School, as well as the Tasmanian Polytechnic in Circular Head. The Christian School gets \$1.5 million and there is \$3 mil-

lion for the Polytechnic and the Smithton High School. They will integrate trades training between them so that they can share it with their students across these campuses. I think this is a wonderful example of integrated learning and resource sharing in a very integrated community.

The Circular Head Christian School will focus on agriculture, aquaculture and horticulture—very important industries in Circular Head—while the Tasmanian Polytechnic and Smithton High School will concentrate on automotive, general construction, electrical and metal industries. So it is a great example of a community working together and I was really proud to be part and parcel of that application. I thank the Circular Head Council, the Tasmanian government, both those school communities and the community in general.

It just reminds me that we are also spending \$9 million in Circular Head on other activities in relation to Primary Schools for the 21st Century, for science and language centres in the region and for the National School Pride and Computers in Schools programs. On top of that, there are the election commitments of nearly \$1 million to the Circular Head community in terms of the recreation centre and the little athletics headquarters. So Circular Head is booming, doing well, although of course the dairy industry at the moment is experiencing tough times, particularly with the low prices they are receiving from their processors, quite unfairly. But we hope that better weather and better times will see them through.

The other great funding proposal for my electorate affects King Island and will have implications for Flinders Island in the Bass Strait. That is \$15 million allocated through the Minister for Resources and Energy, Martin Ferguson, for a commercial scale renewable energy project which will be located on

King Island but will have implications not just for King Island and Flinders Island but for all regional and local communities. It attempts to integrate renewable energy technologies into the main system, which unfortunately now relies on diesel generation. You can well imagine the CO₂ emissions from that and the prohibitive costs of diesel fuel for King Island and other islands. The idea is to provide a baseload and peak power for King Island's mini grid system to reduce the island's reliance upon diesel generators. In fact, so much so that they want to be able to use renewable energy for over 50 per cent of the energy needs of the island and to reduce the CO₂ emissions by more than 70 per cent.

I really look forward to the implementation of this terrific project under the Renewable Energy Demonstration Program and I think it will have significant implications for the rest of Australia as well. So well done to the minister and to Hydro Tasmania, and I look forward to seeing the results of this program well underway on magnificent, beautiful King Island.

Gilmore Electorate: Climate Change

Mrs GASH (Gilmore) (9.49 pm)—I rise to comment on the recent House of Representatives report *Managing our coastal zone in a changing climate*. I would like to start by congratulating both the committee and the chair for their hard work and recommendations. It is no secret that my electorate of Gilmore forms a large part of the New South Wales coastline with approximately 1,200 residences, land and areas for development that will be affected by rising sea levels and coastal erosion. This will be a huge cost financially and for future development and job creation opportunities.

I would also like to acknowledge and congratulate Shoalhaven City Council for the work that they have been doing in relation to this issue since 2004. Council have taken it

upon themselves to consider new sea level benchmarks and assess coastal hazards for future planning purposes. Formal notice has been given to property owners who have been identified as at risk. This is no small task for a council which relies on ratepayers' funds to take such action, particularly when around 60 per cent of the land mass affected is national park or crown land. This brings us to the all-important question of who will pay for any future action, planning changes and additional costs incurred as a result. Will council bear the brunt? Will individuals whose properties may be at risk pay? Or will other levels of government take responsibility for specific issues?

The committee has made some recommendations and I will list those that directly affect Gilmore. Recommendation 10 suggests that the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government undertake a study into the human and resourcing needs of local governments to effectively plan for and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Recommendation 19 requests that the Productivity Commission undertake an inquiry into the projected impacts of climate change and related insurance matters, with a particular focus on insurance costs for certain properties, affordability and the possible withdrawal of coverage for some areas. It is essential to find out where the gaps will be in our region and define who is responsible for them.

Recommendation 20 is to develop state specific policies by 2011 to assist with the planning responses, and recommendation 44 highlights the importance of an intergovernmental agreement with special focus on who does what. But it does not give us any indication of who will ultimately work this out and allocate the resources. It simply points to the need to do this, and I am concerned that if no ultimate responsibility is taken there will be no action taken. Finally, recommen-

dation 46 is also significant for my constituents as it cites the needs for a national coastal advisory council to provide independent advice on coastal matters. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, Gilmore is predominantly coastal and will be affected not only by the expected sea level rises, storm surges and foundation erosion but also by any decisions that are made at any level of government to do with the handling of this issue. Local representations would be vital on such a committee.

As a first step, I urge the federal government to initiate more coastal based research, consider the consequences and delegate responsibilities to the state and local governments, who naturally should be involved in the process. The New South Wales Labor government's contribution to this comprehensive community consultation in Gilmore has been a mere \$25,000, which speaks volumes about their concern for and commitment to the issue.

In closing, I would like to reiterate my key concerns. Challenges lie ahead for coastal communities like the Illawarra and the Shoalhaven. Cooperation is needed from all levels of government to address the matter, with clear responsibilities allocated for proper management. Any advisory committee set up to assist government bodies should feature local representation. Lastly, more research is needed to establish the cost of the problem and the resources required to tackle it. While the coastal zone report is a great start, I am more interested in seeing what is done with the information from this point on and what role the federal government plays in delegating the costs and responsibilities to avoid cost-shifting in the future.

Flynn Electorate: Coal Industry

Mr TREVOR (Flynn) (9.53 pm)—
Tonight I want to bring to the attention of the House the substantial community concerns

that are being expressed by members of the coal community of Blackwater in my electorate of Flynn. I am a proud supporter of the coal industry. The coal industry provides and supports thousands of direct and indirect jobs for people in my community of Flynn. These people are not only my constituents; many of them are my personal friends. They are people I went to school with, played football with and shared a beer with—some, to this day. My family has lengthy experience with coal—some good and some bad. My late father, Allan Foo Trevor, carted coal from Moura and Blackwater for over 20 years, as a train driver for Queensland Rail, with firemen Matty Smith, Nev Radel, Alan Bosel and Kerry Brodie by his side.

My mother-in-law, Judy Martin, now Judy St Leger, was married to the late Harold 'Mick' Martin. Mick and Judy moved to Moura, in Flynn, in 1960 with their five daughters. Mick, as a mineworker, carted one of the first loads of overburden from Moura mine. The coal company provided no accommodation, so the family of seven lived in a tent. After about 12 months the family of seven moved into a one-room hut with a lean-to. They drank dirty water and used a pit as a toilet. Finally, Judy, with the assistance of the CFMEU—she thinks it was—and pregnant with her seventh daughter, appeared before Judge Gallagher. Judy recalls that she was perhaps the first woman to appear before the Arbitration Court of Queensland. She argued for the mine owners to provide proper accommodation for their workers. She won, and the first homes for mineworkers in Moura, in my electorate of Flynn, were ordered to be built.

It is with a great touch of irony and certainly some sadness that, some 40 years on, I stand here in the federal parliament and plead again with the coal companies, this time at Blackwater, to provide better accommodation for their workers and to leave

a better community footprint on Blackwater. Hundreds and hundreds of good men and women, as I have recently observed, are being forced to live like battery hens in dongas in the middle of the town of Blackwater. It is desolate and parched. There is no landscaping. They have no family life. They work 12-hour shifts and they have a long drive home. Some make it and some do not. The parks of Blackwater need fixing. Affordable housing needs to be made available. The state government needs to free up some land immediately. Community infrastructure needs to be put in place for the boom times ahead, and the coal companies concerned need to address proper housing requirements by way of long-term vision, not short-term profit. The community and workers of Blackwater deserve nothing less. All they want is a fair go. With the coal industry set to boom and thousands of new jobs to be created in the electorate of Flynn, Blackwater and its residents are crying out for help. The time for action from all parties is now. I thank concerned residents for bringing this matter to my attention. I also thank the Queensland state MP Vaughan Johnson for standing up for his community. I do hope someone listens. It is the right and proper thing to do.

Before I close, I want to send a clear message to all the mineworkers of Flynn: please do not be fooled by the 'Let's cut emissions, not jobs' scare campaign being run by the Australian Coal Association in my electorate. Our economy is good, our democracy is strong and many announcements have been made over recent months regarding new mines to be opened and others to be expanded, in Flynn alone. Thousands of new jobs will not be lost; thousands of new jobs will be created. I am deeply, deeply disappointed that the coal industry has sought to use its power, influence and money to publicly scare the wits out of our workers, including the mums and dads of my commu-

nity of Flynn and the people I have grown up with.

Question agreed to.

House adjourned at 9.58 pm

NOTICES

The following notice was given:

Mr Ciobo—To present a bill for an act to change the administrative procedures for the Producer Offset, and for related purposes.

Monday, 16 November 2009

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms AE Burke) took the chair at 4.00 pm.

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Forrest Electorate: World Diabetes Day

Ms MARINO (Forrest) (4.00 pm)—I rise to speak on World Diabetes Day, which was held on Saturday, 14 November. It was created in 1991 by the International Diabetes Federation and World Health Organisation in response to growing concerns about the escalating health threat that diabetes poses. It is the world's sixth-leading cause of death. It is Australia's fastest growing chronic disease with approximately 275 people across the nation developing the condition every day, so I would encourage everybody in this place, and also the general public, to make sure they are tested. Current data shows that diabetes now affects 285 million people worldwide and will cost the economy at least \$403 billion in 2010—or 11.6 per cent of the total world healthcare expenditure.

Diabetes brings different challenges to a range of Australians. Given this, the theme for World Diabetes Day for the period 2009 to 2013 is education and prevention. In my electorate of Forrest, there are more than 6,000 people with diabetes. We have a number of service providers and educators who give support and education for individuals with diabetes as well as their families. These services are greatly appreciated and vitally important. In late October this year, through Diabetes WA, constituents in my electorate were given access to a free online interactive lifestyle and diabetes prevention education program. The program is entitled 'My health balance' and it engages people through active involvement, motivating them to persist with their goals and achieving results. This online program is of great assistance to people in regional and rural electorates like mine, who sometimes find it difficult to regularly travel to meet with dietitians and physiotherapists and others.

As a serious condition, there is currently no cure for diabetes and research is vital to investigate how to prevent and improve the management techniques until a cure is found. The Diabetes Research Foundation of WA has strengthened this research since 2005. Through the foundation, more than \$1.7 million has been distributed to WA scientists and clinicians in their pursuit for better understanding. Additionally, they have raised more than \$2.5 million towards the creation of a centre for diabetes research in Perth. This is a lifelong disease that affects families from all over the world. In conclusion, I strongly support World Diabetes Day and its aim to raise the awareness of the disease and highlight the vital research being conducted into finding a cure. Finally, I would encourage everybody who is listening to this or who reads this to be tested for diabetes.

Leichhardt Electorate: Unemployment

Mr TURNOUR (Leichhardt) (4.03 pm)—I rise today to talk about the ongoing challenge we face in dealing with unemployment in Cairns and to welcome the report released last week by Advance Cairns, a peak economic development organisation in my electorate of Leichhardt. We are working on building a strong partnership with Advance Cairns to tackle the unemployment challenge we face. The report, by Cummings Economics, provides a very useful input into that discussion and ongoing planning.

The report found that unemployment had increased significantly in Cairns, which we already knew, and that it had come off a higher base compared with the north-north-west region, obviously based on Townsville, the Mackay-Fitzroy-Central West region and the Northern Territory. The report makes very interesting reading and found unemployment over a three-month average in 2009—July, August and September—to be 12.3 per cent in the Far North compared with the north-north-west over that same period of 3.7 per cent. Interestingly, the majority of unemployment increases had been due to a drop in construction in Cairns and the Far North, and the vast majority of those people became unemployed as a direct result of a downturn in the construction industry hard hit by the global recession.

Interestingly too, although the north-north-west had a lower unemployment rate, they had also had a significant reduction in unemployment but, because their labour force is not growing like that in Cairns—people still love to come and live in Cairns—their actual unemployment rate had not increased significantly as compared to Leichhardt's. It highlights the need for us to continue to work in partnership with the business community to very much deliver on the economic stimulus program. Between Leichhardt and the neighbouring electorate of Kennedy we have \$460 million of economic stimulus going in to support jobs today while we build the infrastructure we need for tomorrow. There is construction going on in schools. We announced recently—and I had the Minister for Housing up in my electorate last week to confirm this—300 social housing units to be built in my electorate, and we are looking at some National Rental Affordability Scheme houses. Thirty of them have already been built. All of these projects are creating jobs today and are going to support employment, particularly in the construction industry, which, as I have said, has been particularly hard hit and is the reason for unemployment growing by almost six per cent.

I am looking forward to next week, when we have members from Advance Cairns coming down. As I have said, we are building a strong partnership with the local business community. I would like to thank Russell Beer, the Chair of Advance Cairns; Bill Calderwood, the Chair of Tourism Tropical North Queensland; Jeremy Blockey, the head of the Cairns Chamber of Commerce; and our local mayor, Val Schier, for the work they are doing, in partnership with me and the Minister for Employment Participation, Mark Arbib, so we can really focus on the unemployment challenge we face, be confident about the future and make sure that we come out of this recession in better shape than we were in previously.

Australian Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice

Mr SIMPKINS (Cowan) (4.06 pm)—I would like to make some points about the proposed new Australian Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice and the strong concerns that many Australians, including indeed many of my constituents, have about the proposal that has been put forward by Free TV Australia. The Australian Communications and Media Authority, or ACMA, ultimately has the responsibility for authorising any changes to this code of practice, and that will always be the case for safety. I would like to raise in particular a number of concerns that have been drawn to my attention regarding the proposed new code.

Firstly, the code seeks to retain the requirement that formal complaints can only be made in writing. It is astounding that emails are not acceptable. Emails need to be acceptable as a means of complaining about breaches of the code. We members of parliament accept emails and act on emails. Why then is Free TV Australia being so precious on this matter? I suspect that, if emails were allowed, there would be many more complaints about programs and other

issues of dissatisfaction concerning free-to-air TV. It is for this reason that a restriction on complaints is desired by Free TV Australia.

I would also advocate a reduction in the number of days allowed for responding to complaints, to 15. That is in line with the recommendation of the Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts in June 2008. Thirty days, as stated in the proposed code, is too long. I would also advocate a very hard line on all free-to-air television, particularly as to the need for the absolute retention of the G classification zone for every digital free-to-air station. That means that, if a child is watching television between 6 am and 8.30 am or between 4 pm and 7 pm on a weekday or between 6 am and 10 am on the weekends and changes the channel, their parents can have confidence that the G classification zone will still be in place as protection for that child. With regard to illicit drugs or the abuse of drugs in the G classification zone in programs, any acceptability or normality should be eliminated completely by having no references or visual descriptions as being allowable. The use of illicit drugs and the abuse of legal drugs are not normal activities and should not be depicted for children under any circumstances.

These are some of the problems. This proposed code of practice presents an opportunity to increase the protections, not, as Free TV Australia has done, to suggest weaker protections. Above all, I reiterate that a better and easier means to make complaints is essential. I urge Free TV Australia to consider the submissions that have been made and strengthen the protections and, as well, make complaints easier to make. If the code of practice were to remain worse than its predecessor document, I would urge ACMA to not accept the code until it has been properly written and reflects the community standards of this nation and the need for safety for all Australians.

Robertson Electorate: Forgotten Australians

Ms NEAL (Robertson) (4.09 pm)—I rise to speak on Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's national apology to the forgotten Australians and former child migrants. This historic apology begins the process of healing for more than 500,000 Australians who suffered as foster children in orphanages, children's homes and in other institutions around Australia. The full significance of this suffering is brought home most tellingly by the sheer number of people affected and this is shocking.

The personal stories heard today, in the foyer of parliament, were extremely affecting. Today I had the privilege to hear the harrowing life story of one of my constituents, Sharyn Killens, who lived through juvenile detention at both Parramatta Girls Home and the equally notorious Hay Girls Institution. Sharyn's story is one of heartbreaking separation from family. It is also a story of triumph over great adversity. For decades she knew nothing of her father. Her mother was unable, or unwilling, to share any details. After 40 years, Sharyn found out that he was an African-American serviceman stationed in Australia after World War II. In 1996, after eight years of searching, she was finally united with her brothers and sisters in America, but tragically her father had already passed away.

Today I attended the national apology along with Sharyn and many hundreds of people who suffered terrible neglect and abuse while in the care of institutions. There were many tears but also many old friendships reignited in what was a very emotional ceremony. Sharyn spoke to me not from a backward-looking sense of bitterness at the fate she was subjected to, although she had every reason to be bitter. Instead she talked of the national apology as a

chance for the people of Australia to embark upon a healing process. She said the apology would be seen as a wake-up call to the nation. 'Australia,' she said, 'must now ensure that the human rights of all children in institutions—past, present and future—are protected.'

Sharyn is now a well-known singer and entertainer. She has spent two years with author and fellow entertainer Lindsay Lewis writing Sharyn's biography, entitled *The Inconvenient Child*, a harrowing but triumphant account of her life. She featured recently on ABC Television's *The 7.30 Report*. I commend Minister Jenny Macklin and the Rudd Labor government for initiating the national apology to the forgotten Australians. Every indication today is that it is a great moment for our nation.

Flinders Electorate: Bushfires

Mr HUNT (Flinders) (4.12 pm)—I rise to address the issue of bushfire risks on the Mornington Peninsula. Only last week we had a fire at Point Nepean which was an avoidable fire. It was the result of a lack of ministerial oversight. The minister knows the site well. He was there only a few short months ago. He pledged to protect Point Nepean and one of the first things to occur under the Victorian government is that they set it on fire on the third day of a heatwave with temperatures in the mid-30s in one of the windiest areas of the state. It is an area which also has a significant issue of unexploded ordnance. That issue of unexploded ordnance has been dealt with progressively over the last few years, but to have a ministerial policy which allows a bushfire to be lit on the third day of a heatwave in one of the highest wind areas in the state is pure ministerial negligence. I would hope and expect that the minister will stand up, take responsibility and not send out departmental officials. I will have more to say later this evening on ministerial responsibility in relation to bushfires and making sure our CFA is protected from, firstly, having to fight unnecessary battles and, secondly, having to defend actions which are the direct result of ministerial policy or omission.

As part of that, I want to deal with a second threat on the Mornington Peninsula and that is the issue of fire risk in Flinders Street, Rye, on four hectares of land owned by the Victorian department of education. This land is heavily overgrown and presents a significant fire risk. The site was originally earmarked as the new home of Rye Primary School. We have been contacted by constituents who live nearby, Brian and Helen Kelso, and they fear, in their words, that the site is 'a disaster waiting to happen'.

I would say constructively to the Victorian government that this is a high-risk bushfire site which has not been maintained, which could be maintained and which needs to be dealt with as a matter of urgency. Obviously, now that the land has dried out, it would not be appropriate to use a burning technique in a concentrated residential area. It would require selective clearing and clearing of groundwork, but it is absolutely clear that the local CFA wants the authority to clear the site. They cannot speak on the record, of course, but we do know that they want that done. We do know that they believe it is a fire risk. We do know that the residents believe it is a fire risk. This is a bomb waiting to go off in the heart of a residential area, a four-hectare site covered in dried out, heavy bush. I would urge the minister to take steps. You have been notified, so please listen. (*Time expired*)

Sri Lanka

Mr MURPHY (Lowe) (4.15 pm)—This afternoon I rise to speak about the plight of the Tamil people who are fleeing persecution in Sri Lanka. As we are all aware, this year was the bloodiest in the history of the 30-year civil war in Sri Lanka with more than 20,000 innocent people killed by the Sri Lankan Security Forces amidst repeated warnings from the United Nations and other leaders. Madam Deputy Speaker, these killings occurred during the first five months of this year. The Sri Lankan government declared in May, as you know, that the Tamil rebellion had been completely wiped out.

I acknowledge the recent visit of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Stephen Smith, to Sri Lanka and thank our government for its appointment of our special representative, Mr John McCarthy. Mr McCarthy is currently in Sri Lanka to deal with the problem of people smuggling and to stem the flow of boat people from Sri Lanka. He is having direct discussions with his Sri Lankan counterpart and President Mahinda Rajapakse.

Last week I met representatives from the Australian Federation of Tamil Associations who gave me a copy of their recent submission made to our Prime Minister. In that letter they requested that the Prime Minister use the opportunity of being with other like-minded leaders in the forthcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting forum in the Caribbean to initiate a discussion on these matters with the aim of finding a permanent political solution in Sri Lanka. They also told me they have conveyed the same message to the British Prime Minister, Mr Gordon Brown, through his special envoy to Sri Lanka, the Hon. Des Browne MP, whom they have met recently in Canberra. They also advised me that they have suggested to our Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Chris Evans, the reintroduction of the 215 Sri Lankan special assistance class BF visa that was first introduced during the time of the Keating government.

AFTA argues that by reintroducing this visa at this stage the people smugglers could effectively be starved of potential boat people, and the offshore processing would be much cheaper than the expense involved in granting the same number of people permanent residency visas by taking them through the Christmas Island detention facility. Further, AFTA notes that during the peace talks between 2001 and 2008 there were no Tamils arriving on Australian shores by boat. This, they suggest, is evidence that the Tamil people fleeing Sri Lanka today are not economic refugees but genuine refugees fleeing from an oppressive regime in Sri Lanka. While we must maintain a strong policy on border protection and punish the people smugglers, we must not punish the genuine refugees. I see merit in what AFTA has submitted to our government for its consideration for action on two fronts: one being an interim solution to stem the flow of boat people from Sri Lanka, and the other being the permanent one that is good for the political stability of Sri Lanka. (*Time expired*)

World Diabetes Day

Mrs MOYLAN (Pearce) (4.18 pm)—Saturday, 14 November was World Diabetes Day. All over the world iconic buildings were lit in blue. In fact, there were some 600 iconic buildings, including this Parliament House and Old Parliament House. In virtually every state, buildings were lit in blue. This dramatic backdrop highlighted the global challenge of the rising scourge of diabetes within our communities. The theme for the day was ‘Understand diabetes and take control’.

Last month, in Canada, the International Diabetes Federation met and a new president was elected to carry on its work around the globe. The person handing over the baton to the new president, Professor Jean Claude Mbanya was Professor Martin Silink AM, an Australian endocrinologist whose life work has been in the field of diabetes. In his work as Chairman of the International Diabetes Federation, Professor Silink led the campaign in 2006 to unite for diabetes. This campaign was hugely successful and it included the landmark passage of the United Nations Resolution 61/225 on diabetes. It was supported by this parliament and by the government of the time. The resolution recognised that diabetes poses a severe risk to families, member states and the whole world. It declared 14 November to be a United Nations-observed World Diabetes Day.

This day commenced in 2007 and now calls on all countries to develop national policies for the prevention, care and treatment of diabetes. No one should ever underestimate the enormous challenge it was to get the United Nations member countries to agree to such a resolution. One can only begin to imagine the enormous amount of work that took. This was in no small part due to the commitment and the energy and indeed the knowledge of Professor Silink who was tireless in his pursuit of achieving this outcome. I think that, as a country, we can be very proud to have people of the calibre of Martin Silink, who was the first President of the International Diabetes Federation from Australia. I think this is the first opportunity we have had in this place to mark World Diabetes Day and on behalf of the Parliamentary Diabetes Support Group, I want to pay tribute to the work of Professor Silink as the immediate past president of the IDF and thank him for all that he has achieved as president. I would just like to take the opportunity to wish the new President of the International Diabetes Federation, Professor Jean Claude Mbanya, all the best for his term in that important office.

Calwell Electorate: Blind Creek Bike Path

Ms VAMVAKINO (Calwell) (4.21 pm)—On Tuesday, 20 October I was very pleased to announce the construction of the Blind Creek bike path in Sunbury. The Blind Creek shared bike path project is part of the Rudd government's \$40 million National Bike Paths Projects fund and a key element of our economic stimulus plan. The project's total cost is \$348,272 with an NBPP contribution of \$210,000. Importantly, this path has been delivered in partnership with the Hume City Council. The project will construct a total of a two kilometres by 2.5 metres shared path along the north and south banks of Blind Creek in Sunbury. As such, the path will allow residents of the newly established estates of Phillip Drive to travel by bike past the Killara Primary School to the back of St Anne's Primary School and St Anne's Church. The path will also run to Sunbury West Primary School, Clarke Oval and the Sunbury Leisure Centre, which will then link with existing parks to Sunbury Secondary College to Salesian College and, of course, to the town centre. The north side of the path will run from the Killara Primary School to Kerri Court, while the south side path will run from Blind Creek Boulevard to halfway between Tracie Court and Dawn Court.

Importantly six jobs will be supported during construction of the project helping deliver an economic boost to the township of Sunbury. While I am particularly pleased to see this investment in Sunbury infrastructure, I am also happy that the National Bike Paths Program will help promote healthy and environmentally friendly lifestyles in the Sunbury area as well as provide support for our local economy. By building better cycling infrastructure, the government is helping take cars off our local roads and reduce carbon emissions over the longer

term. This program ties together our need to invest in infrastructure and our need to create jobs as we continue to navigate our way on the road to recovery from the global financial crisis. Moreover, the Rudd government is building community infrastructure that will encourage healthier lifestyles amongst residents and create more sustainable communities. I am very pleased with the manner in which the Rudd Labor government has been working hand-in-glove with our local governments.

Hume mayor, Jack Ogilvie, who has been living in Sunbury for over 30 years, also welcomed the announcement. Jack told me the other day that he welcomed any money going to Sunbury that would get the locals out and engaged in passive recreation. He noted that this path will go a long way to improving the health and wellbeing of the people of Sunbury. Blind Creek is one of Sunbury's main waterways and people love getting out and about where there is water.

It is great to be able to deliver this kind of upgrade to Sunbury. I look forward to its completion and I certainly look forward to being given the opportunity to ride my bike on the Blind Creek bike pathway.

Medicare Benefit Scheme

Mr BALDWIN (Paterson) (4.24 pm)—I rise this afternoon to bring to the House's attention a concern on behalf of the constituents of Paterson. Many sufferers of severe arthritic conditions will be affected by cuts to the Medicare Benefit Scheme. The removal of items 50124 and 50125 from the Medicare Benefit Scheme make a mockery of Kevin Rudd's promise to fix our health system. First the Rudd Labor government cut the Medicare rebate for cataract surgery which allows many to have their sight restored. Now those who suffer from painful arthritis will need to pay more or go without injections, which will have a life-changing impact for them. The Rudd Labor government made these cuts while it continues on its reckless spending spree. Taxpayers are now being hit in the hip pocket for the Rudd Labor government's costly mistake, spending for spending's sake, which has led to rising interest rates and cuts where it hurts—in the joints of our locals, especially the elderly.

I received a letter from a local resident earlier this month that summed up the devastating impact that this decision is having on patients. She said:

My husband suffers Rheumatoid Arthritis and Osteoarthritis in many joints, quite severely. I also have osteoarthritis. We both worked physically hard during our working lives and this has contributed to the conditions we both have. I recently attended a specialist appointment and was shocked to find out we had to find an extra \$24 unexpectedly to cover the cost of the injection. I feel this is a disgrace and definite discrimination against us with our illnesses. We both benefit greatly by being pain free for weeks after receiving them, and cannot see how we can now afford to pay for them every 4 months.

This local resident has rightly asked why this decision had been made when no other groups with chronic diseases have had their funding cut from under them. Why would the health minister, Nicola Roxon, remove the rebate for these joint injections if she understood the major difference they made to the everyday lives of sufferers? Any doctor would be able to point out the health benefits of these treatments. One may only conclude that she is not in touch with her portfolio.

I am no mathematician, but I am a taxpayer and a caretaker of our family budget. It seems ludicrous that the Rudd Labor government can afford to send our country into enormous debt, rolling out a \$42 billion stimulus, yet it cannot afford to spend \$12 million annually for this

pain-relieving treatment. The government's insulation bungle alone would have funded 16 years worth of joint injections. It is clear that patients in our health system are being punished for the Rudd Labor government's poor money management. Adding further insult, the cuts were made without consultation, without listening to the stories of local sufferers, who rely on these treatments to go about their daily lives. The heartless Rudd Labor government needs to review this decision and review it now to avoid another long and overdrawn bungle which is most costly to vulnerable Australians.

Dirtgirlworld

Grafton Daily Examiner

Ms SAFFIN (Page) (4.27 pm)—The village of Whiporie is on the Summerland Way between Casino and Grafton in my electorate of Page. I frequently stop there for a cuppa or a sandwich as I drive around the electorate. A local couple, Cate McQuillen and Hewey Eustace live near Whiporie. They used to play in a pub duo called Two Pot Screammers. But their creative talents are about to be recognised worldwide. Their company, mememe productions, has teamed up with Canada's DECODE to launch *dirtgirlworld*—a great name—an exquisite new television series for young children. The show, about a gumboot-wearing girl who grows awesome tomatoes, knows cloud names and drives a big orange tractor, will launch on ABC1 and ABC2 from 4 December. I have seen the preview of it, and it is wonderful. I know that children will love it, but I suspect that adults are going to like it too. I have been to their place and watched it. *dirtgirlworld* has already had its international launch in Cannes. I had this lovely email about Cate and Hewey rubbing shoulders with *Friends* star Lisa Kudrow and fashion queen Donatella Versace on their private yachts. It was so not them. But I suspect that their lives are about to change because of what has happened with this production.

Dirtgirlworld's message of encouraging kids to lead environmentally sustainable lives is very much down to earth. It is very localised. It even has one of the local schools in it, the Wooli local school. They will also be able to benefit very much when the NBN is rolled out, because it will be important to have that sort of access where they live. It is just great. I cannot wait to see it launched. I congratulate both Cate and Hewey.

I would also like to congratulate the Grafton based *Daily Examiner* on recently being judged the best newspaper in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific in the under 25,000 circulation category. Judges said that it was a great all-round newspaper with a very strong design and excellent connection with the community. What a great way to mark the 150th anniversary of the *Daily Examiner*—or DEX as we call it. Former editor Peter Chapman, current editor David Bancroft and their team can be very proud of this achievement.

A division having been called in the House of Representatives—

Sitting suspended from 4.31 pm to 4.47 pm

FORGOTTEN AUSTRALIANS

Debate resumed.

Ms JULIE BISHOP (Curtin—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (4.47 pm)—Childhood should be a time of growing, nurturing and learning; a world of innocence, a world of trust. We hope that all children grow up in a loving environment with adults there to provide all-encompassing support and help heal any hurts. In societies around the world there is universal condemnation for those who rob children of their innocence or who betray their trust. Nelson

Mandela once said, 'There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children.'

Today, as we support a national apology to the forgotten Australians and former child migrants, we feel a sense of shame that it was under the care of Australian governments that many thousands of children were subject to horrific abuse. Those of us who grew up under the care of loving parents cannot conceive of a childhood devoid of love or of being subject to mental, physical or sexual abuse, which in some cases went on for years. We ask: how this could have happened such a few short years ago? We are not talking about events of 100 or 200 years ago; these events occurred within many of our lifetimes. These terrible events took place behind closed doors, hidden from the general view of society. It is unforgivable that when children raised complaints of abuse they were in many cases told they were liars and were then subject to even worse treatment. In a submission to the Senate inquiry that produced the report *Forgotten Australians: a report on Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children*, one person said:

We had no one to turn to ... No one believed us, not the teachers at school, not the police, no one.

The report detailed a culture of secrecy, silence and absolute control. Children were subject to a system that dehumanised them. They were robbed of their self-worth and their humanity.

Members of parliament can speak about the circumstances leading to this motion and this apology, but nothing replaces the words, the memories and recollections of the forgotten Australians—now the remembered Australians. One submission among many to the Senate inquiry was:

All my life, as a child in those dreadful homes I was told I was 'ugly', 'would end up a prostitute' and 'should never have been born'. It took me years of struggle to even realise I was a person. ... It is only recently I have gained enough confidence to believe I am a decent person and as good as everyone else ... we really never knew what we were.

This process was taken to extreme lengths and to lengths far beyond what could possibly be necessary to maintain discipline. The only explanation for much of the behaviour of those responsible for the abuse is that they were motivated by malice or vindictiveness or just plain cruelty. Another submission from Western Australia revealed the pettiness that was, in its own way, as cruel as verbal or physical abuse. It says:

I received a parcel from an Aunt, it was a beautiful hand-knitted red jumper which I never wore as it was taken away from me and I didn't know what happened to it until I saw it being used to wash the floor. For a little girl who was so pleased with her new jumper it was devastating.

Another submission from someone who was in a home in my electorate in Perth says:

We were never allowed to keep the presents as the nuns used to take them off us when we got back to the orphanage and would sell them at their fetes.

It is little wonder that it all had such a profound impact on the lives of children subject to such relentless mental torture. Yet another submission says:

Because of being constantly told I was nothing and would end up in the gutter and no one wanted me or ever would, the core negative beliefs I have are my reality. They are the deepest most profound assumptions and expectations I have of myself, and therefore I find it hard to function as a 'normal' human being, beyond my frontdoor. This is just the way life is to me now, and these negative core beliefs continue to govern my life and reality.

A submission from someone who was in Swan Homes in WA says:

The punishment inflicted was to have her hair shaved off, and she [a young girl of 7 or 8] was compelled to wear a sugar bag as a dress all day for a period of time ... she even wore it to school, which was a public school some distance from the institution, and the children had to walk along public streets to get to this school. It would be difficult to imagine the trauma, that this child was compelled to suffer, or the effect it would have had on her in later life.

From another orphanage, the submission says:

There was no one to trust, to confide in, to cuddle, to read us bedtime stories. No one gave us an affectionate 'goodnight' or stopped for a chat. And yet all the while I ached with a question that would not go away. What can be so wrong with our parents that makes it better to be brought up by such cruel and uncaring people as this?

We cannot imagine the terror of very young children torn from their families and cast into what must have felt like the pits of hell. The stories that were submitted to the Senate inquiry are as bad as anything Dickens could have dreamt up for his 19th century tales of sordid orphanages and workhouses in London. These children were told that society did not value them, that they were worthless flotsam. The Senate inquiry heard stories of children who ran away from disgusting predators and sadistic people who had been employed to provide care to the children. Again, another submission from someone who was in a home located in my electorate says:

... if any girls ran away, when they were caught they were publicly flogged. Us girls used to have tears in our eyes watching this, but we couldn't do anything.

Another says:

... you knew who ran away because when you got up the next day, the boy was standing in the 'quad' with his hands on his head. The punishment for this was not carried out until that night when he was caned on the hands in full view of the rest of us. If you pulled your hand away you were then whacked on the legs.

And the following description of the treatment of those who ran away and were brought back for punishment to a home, again, in Western Australia which says:

We were all assembled in the gymnasium where we were told to form up in a line in the shape of a horseshoe, the three boys being punished [for absconding] were instructed to remove their clothing ... each of the boys was then told to get on to his hands and knees and they had to scuttle across the floor in this fashion to where the line began, as they did this they were lashed with a rattan cane across their buttocks, as they reached the start of the line they had to crawl between the legs of the other boys and were unmercifully bashed and kicked. ... When they reached the end of the line they had to remain on their hands and knees and were flogged back to the start.

Did anyone ask why they were running away? While these stories of physical and mental abuse are heartbreaking, it is the stories of sexual abuse which are most profoundly disturbing. Again, a submission from a home that was in my electorate says:

The night times were hard on us as the brothers would come in and have their ways with us. There were other kids besides us all getting the same things done to them. We just didn't know when it was our turn to be raped, so that's why I still cannot live with the nights.

A division having been called in the House of Representatives—

Sitting suspended from 4.55 pm to 5.03 pm

Ms JULIE BISHOP—Before the division, I was recounting some of the horrific stories contained in the submissions to the Senate inquiry. I will finish on this one.

All the time while the priest was assaulting me (or other children) the sister would stand at the door looking the other way. If another sister came she would flash her torch on the ground and the priest would stand behind the partition until the sister flashed her torch again. After this he would resume his abuse. I don't know how often this occurred but would estimate that the priest came 3 - 4 nights per week and would assault several children on the one night. I was raped on a regular basis. The older children were picked more often than the younger ones.

How could anyone read these submissions or hear these stories without feeling an overwhelming sense of shame? As the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition said in the Great Hall this morning, we must never again allow this systematic, institutionalised abuse to occur. We must always ensure that light reaches the darkest recesses of inhumanity and that the most vulnerable receive appropriate mental, physical and emotional care.

Many did not survive the ordeal. As a society we must not allow young children under the care of the state to be cast into circumstances of institutional neglect and abuse of any sort. We must never lose sight of the fact that, regardless of one's family background, we all have the right to live free from fear and free from the threat of physical and mental abuse.

The state failed more than 500,000 children over many years. For that we are sorry and we apologise. Permanent scars have been inflicted on many thousands of Australians, and for that we are sorry. We cannot heal these wounds, but we hope that our heartfelt and sincere apology helps many to take a positive step on the journey that lies ahead. I support the motion.

Ms PARKE (Fremantle) (5.05 pm)—I rise to support this apology to the forgotten Australians and to former child migrants, many of whom experienced suffering, abuse and neglect while in care. I support it on behalf of the people of Fremantle and I add my personal apology as a member of this place. The apology that this national parliament has given today is certainly not made before time, and I understand that it is very welcome throughout the care leaver and child migrant support community. It is hoped that this act of saying sorry will give some comfort and perhaps some additional closure to those who have suffered while in care and that it will also be the springboard for concrete measures to alleviate the ongoing pain and difficulties they continue to experience.

There is no greater act of responsibility, there is no heavier weight of care and there is no larger placement of trust than that which exists in undertaking the care and custody of children who are without the benefit of a secure and capable and loving family. A society's capacity to look after children who find themselves in those circumstances is one of the best measures of its compassion, of its commitment to a broad safety net for the protection of the vulnerable and the disadvantaged, and of its principles of social responsibility and social justice. But when the state or a private organisation or a church under the state's supervision provides care of that kind, it of course does so with the mantle placed upon it of utmost responsibility. It does so with full acceptance of the highest duty of care. So at the same time as we recognise that looking after children who are without a family to provide for them is an expression of human society at its best, we also recognise that taking care of children brings with it a profound responsibility to deliver that care.

Unfortunately we know that children in our keeping—that is, children for whom Australian governments, state and federal, had ultimate responsibility—were not properly cared for. This is made clear in the *Lost innocents and forgotten Australians revisited* report, where it states:

The Committee concluded that there had been wide scale unsafe, improper and unlawful care of children, a failure of duty of care, and serious and repeated breaches of statutory obligations.

We made, at the start of this government, a national and bipartisan apology to Indigenous Australians, in particular the stolen generations. And this apology today, although of course substantially different, is aligned to that earlier act of responsibility and contrition because it too concerns a failure by government to anticipate institutional harm that would be done to the most vulnerable in our society, that would be done to children: a failure to adequately oversee their care and to recognise the harm being done, a failure to stop it occurring at the time and to properly acknowledge what had occurred when the evidence was there to be seen, and a failure to take responsibility and apologise for the grave wrongs committed or left unchecked.

The truth is that there were aspects of the system of institutionalised care of children in Australia and of the system of child migration that were wrong in themselves—some that can perhaps be seen more clearly now than they could have been at the time, but some that ought to have been recognised as being of great potential harm even then. And that is in addition to those aspects of the system of care that were not inherently bad, but which were administered or practised badly, harmfully, abusively, neglectfully. And so we apologise today for all of those wrongs and for the harm and hurt and suffering that was experienced by many of the 500,000 children in care and the 7,000 child migrants.

I encourage all interested Australians to consider the most recent report from the Senate Community Affairs References Committee, whose 2009 inquiry report, *Lost innocents and forgotten Australians revisited*, forms the foundation of this national apology and builds on the two earlier reports of that committee: the *Lost innocents* report of 2001 and the *Forgotten Australians* report of 2004. I commend both the current members and the former members of that committee who contributed to the work of those earlier inquiries and reports. I particularly want to pay tribute to former senator Andrew Murray's perseverance and courage. Above all, I thank the inquiry participants, especially the care leavers and former child migrants who were part of the process which has delivered this positive step today, but which may have caused them further pain. I commend the Prime Minister and the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs for the government's response to this issue and the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition for their extremely moving addresses earlier today.

As I have said, the apology itself is but one of the recommendations listed in the report *Lost innocents and forgotten Australians revisited*. Other recommendations go to issues like the need for reform to the existing national freedom of information and privacy legislation so that care leavers are not unnecessarily obstructed in their effort to repair those lost family connections.

The issue of redress, especially in the form of financial compensation, is critical to providing a real and meaningful response to those who suffered institutional harm and neglect. Redress schemes, which operate at the state government level, are vitally important and the government of Western Australia deserves credit for being one of only three states to have established a redress fund. Redress WA was set up by the Carpenter government, with \$114 million in administrative support services and redress funds. I am glad to see that, in her submission to the Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee, Dr Joanna Penglase, Co-founder and

Project Officer of Care Leavers Australian Network, described Redress WA as ‘the best redress scheme operating in Australia’, but I am sorry that the current Barnett government of Western Australia has chosen to dramatically reduce the redress payments available to individuals under the scheme. I support the member for Swan, the WA Labor opposition and others who have called for the WA government to reconsider this shameful decision.

Aged care is one of the critical policy areas when it comes to addressing the current and future needs of care leavers, because those who have experienced institutional abuse and neglect have an entirely understandable revulsion at the prospect of, again, entering a similar, though benign, care environment. For that reason, I fully support the consideration and funding of appropriate models of aged care through the aged-care innovative pool and I applaud the federal government’s decision, announced by the Prime Minister today, that care leavers will be considered as a special needs group for aged care.

I want to talk briefly about two Fremantle constituents who are here in Parliament House today: Mr Laurie Humphreys and Ms Margaret O’Byrne. At the age of four, Mr Humphreys was given to the care of Nazareth House, an orphanage in Southampton, upon the death of his mother, who died giving birth to twins. Mr Humphreys subsequently migrated to Australia, arriving in Fremantle on the ship *Asturias* in 1947. He became a Bindoon boy at the Boys Town facility, operated by the Christian Brothers in Bindoon. Incidentally, Mr Humphreys’ friend Mr Eddie Butler, now of Balcatta, who arrived on the same ship with him in 1947 and was also a Bindoon boy, is also here in parliament today. Mr Humphreys has written a book about his life entitled *A Chip Off What Block?: A Child Migrant’s Tale*, which details the time he spent in care, his experience as a child migrant and his later attempts to reconnect with his wider family.

Recommendation 30 of the *Lost innocents* report called for the Australian government to acknowledge that the Commonwealth had promoted child migration schemes. It is interesting to see how the perceived benefit of those schemes was understood in Australia at the time. Mr Humphreys was landed in Fremantle on 22 September 1947 and, on 23 September, the *West Australian* newspaper reported a statement by Dr Prendiville, the Archbishop of Perth. I quote from that article, as reprinted in Mr Humphreys’ book:

His Grace said that he was glad to welcome not only the children, but also other migrants who were disembarking here. At a time when empty cradles were contributing alarmingly to the problem of Australia’s empty spaces, it was necessary to seek external sources of supply.

To some degree, the transport of child migrants to Australia was seen as remedying a shortage of supply. In effect, it was a shortage of labour. This was reflected in the lives of child migrants in WA, who, even if they were not abused or directly ill-treated, as many were, still spent their early years doing hard menial work. Because Mr Humphreys is plainly a resilient, resourceful and good-humoured man, his account treats the circumstances of his care and the emotional consequences of his upbringing in a very even, matter-of-fact way. While he was not subjected to the worst forms of abuse and neglect that are known to have occurred he did, nevertheless, experience a hard young life—a life in which he was put to strenuous and sometimes dangerous physical labour, a life in which he was physically punished and at times punished arbitrarily and brutally, a life in which education and training were minimal and which were provided without reference to his interests and wishes and a life in which the truth of his living relatives was not presented clearly to him. He was told his father was dead and that he

was alone in the world, only to have news of his father later relayed to him and then, out of the blue, he was joined at Boys Town by his younger brother, Terry.

In his book Mr Humphreys describes what happened when they were introduced:

One of the men standing nearby said, 'Go on, show some emotion,' but for some reason I couldn't. It was a shock to discover after all this time that I actually had a brother and I didn't know how to react. Terry told me years later that it was good having a big brother at Bindoon as the Brothers left him alone.

Later in life, Mr Humphreys took it upon himself to seek out and reconnect with his siblings and half siblings and their families, most of whom lived in Britain and Europe. He writes about the complex nature of rediscovering family:

In relation to blood lines there was no doubt of where I fitted in, but from lifestyle and habits formed I was completely different. ... The emotional scars from these reunions are another story. Mary and I were never able to say goodbye. For both of us the emotion has been too much. ... Most of the migrants I have spoken to have said that their reunions have left them in limbo. Some became even angrier. It was like tasting something pleasant and forgetting the name of it, thereby creating the fear that you might never taste it again.

Laurie Humphreys has made an enormous contribution to community life and the Fremantle electorate through his participation in local government with 21 years as a councillor for the City of Cockburn; as a representative for the Australian Timber Workers Union and, later, the Transport Workers Union; and as an advocate for child migrants. He is the WA representative of the Alliance for Forgotten Australians and he has formed a WA group called FACT: Forgotten Australians Coming Together.

At the end of his book Laurie Humphreys writes:

Overall, my life has been extremely blessed. I consider that I have worked hard: I have devoted much of my time to better the life of workers and the community. But most of all I value my family. I am not rich. I wasn't well educated, but the life I've created for myself was built on a never-give-in attitude. I've travelled through life with my sense of humour intact, something I do share with my family. I imagine that my fortitude for not giving in was developed during those 4-14 years, when I was on my own with no one to advise me or show me how, and when I was, to all intents and purposes, an orphan.

Another Fremantle constituent, Margaret or 'Margo' O'Byrne, who is here in parliament today with her husband, Eitan, has also written a book called *Left Unsaid*, recently launched by Queensland Premier Anna Bligh, which documents her and her brother Michael's experiences in Queensland institutions after they were taken from their mother. The flawed nature of the system under which children were institutionalised was highlighted in the Brisbane Children's Court decision in which the judge found Ms O'Byrne, then aged 12, and her brother, aged 11, guilty of the charge of being neglected children.

Like Mr Humphreys, Ms O'Byrne found the process of writing a book cathartic. It is humbling to see that after all that Ms O'Byrne and her brother suffered through neglect and poverty; through the suicide of their father and the alcoholism of their mother; through the cruel, brutal treatment they had at the hands of the nuns and priests charged with their care, that both Ms O'Byrne and her brother have determined that they will not be the lifelong victims of their treatment. They have adopted the attitude that you can get bitter or you can get better, and their strength of spirit in outshining the damage done to them is something I acknowledge and celebrate today. Ms O'Byrne is now an accomplished facilitator within the Fremantle area.

I have been a representative of the Fremantle electorate for nearly two years and almost every week I undertake work or meet constituents, and make representations that remind me of what a privilege it is to be a member of this place. This is never more true than on occasions like this one. We are all transients here in the federal parliament, but we are part of a continuity that reaches back to 1901 and that casts forward into Australia's future for who knows how long.

Today we rightly apologise, as a government and as a national parliament, for wrongs that were allowed to occur by the Australian government in previous incarnations. They may be wrongs that we, as members, do not feel personally responsible for, but I would observe that collective responsibility means nothing if the responsibility is not in some way felt by the individuals who make up that collective, from representatives to citizens.

Let us remember that the echoes of the cognitive mistakes of the past carry through into contemporary Australia. There was an unrecognised danger in regarding child migrants as the solution to a labour shortage. The same danger exists in the way we have approached, in recent times, short-term migrant labour. These people are not children, but they are often at a disadvantage because of their financial circumstances and their language skills. Some have been exploited and abused. The lesson for government is that people are not units of labour; that a society is not the same thing as an economy. It is the same lesson, but I suspect we will go on learning it for some time yet.

Finally, we should perhaps reflect that Australian governments in the future may well be obliged to apologise for our errors and failures. So by taking responsibility for things that have occurred in the past, as we do today, we also have the opportunity to remember that the duty of care, which was not discharged to the forgotten Australians and child migrants, is the same duty of care that we must remain ever vigilant to uphold.

Mr CHESTER (Gippsland) (5.19 pm)—It is an honour to rise on this historic occasion to support, on behalf of Gippslanders, this apology to the forgotten Australians and former child migrants and also record my personal sorrow over the events that have taken place in the past and offer my personal apology. Before I begin my main remarks I would like to comment on the events of the day. We have just heard from the member for Fremantle, who, in keeping with her style in this place, has exhibited an enormous amount of empathy and thoughtfulness towards and respect for the people whose lives have been affected in such a way as to warrant today's apology. I think that is of great credit to the member for Fremantle and it is also of great credit to this place that we have gathered here today in such circumstances. I think all members present really appreciate being a part of today, particularly when we look at the remembrance ceremony earlier in the Great Hall. Serious work was certainly done in this parliament here today as we came together to deal with what the Prime Minister described in his motion as 'an ugly chapter in our nation's history'. We came together to offer our nation's apology and also to say we were truly sorry to the forgotten Australians and those who were sent to our shores as children without their consent.

It was a day, really, for the forgotten Australians and former child migrants themselves. While politicians might want to wax lyrical and talk about the event, in a sense it really was a day for the people whose lives had been fractured by the experiences that they had had as young children in our care. As a father of four children and a member of this place, I really struggle now to understand the fact that our state failed so many people so badly, having

abandoned them, given the sense of betrayal that they must have felt in those circumstances as young children. I find it hard to think that such events could occur in the past. I take up the member for Fremantle's cautionary tone that we need to be mindful that such events might be continuing today in some form or other. We must be ever vigilant in that regard.

It is hard not to get emotional when you read the accounts in the Senate reports and also the personal accounts of the experiences of these children. The neglect and the abuse which have occurred are a fundamental breach of the trust that we have as a community and as a government, particularly as to our most vulnerable citizens, our children. I want to give credit to the Prime Minister for the way in which he spoke today and also to the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I think for many of us who have not had that direct experience they made it all come to life that the challenge we in this place face as members of parliament is to ensure that we take steps to prevent such abuse from ever occurring again. So it goes without saying that the motion has the unqualified support of the opposition.

I think today was really a major step forward for us as a nation in recognising that appalling treatment has occurred in the past and that many of these young children have suffered at the hands of institutions, whether they be government run or church run ones or ones run by other charity-type organisations. I found the contribution before in the main chamber by the member for Swan to be quite captivating as he told of his personal experiences. He is an absolute inspiration to us, given the fact that he was placed in a babies home at the age of six months and was made a ward of the state of Victoria. He quoted some harrowing examples of other constituents he has met since that time. I think that the member for Swan is a very humble man and that perhaps would not like to be described in these terms, but he himself is quite an inspiration given what he has been able to achieve in his life after such a difficult start. If you read his maiden speech, which I recommend to other members, you note there is not a trace of bitterness as he tells the story of his life, in which two of his sisters were lost in tragedies related to alcohol abuse. I am sure that Steve Irons, as a survivor of the system that was in place, has taken a lot of heart from the apology that was given today by the Prime Minister and endorsed by the opposition in a great bipartisan way.

I just make the point, though, that I am concerned—and this is a very real fear in my mind—that once all the nice words are finished with today there will not be the will to go further and make sure that we do everything in our power as members of parliament to make sure that this emotion filled day is capitalised on with a commitment to prevent such abuse from ever occurring again in the future.

It is not the size of the roof of the institution in which the abuse takes place that matters. If the abuse still occurs under a smaller roof we still have a major problem in our community. It is somewhat smug and perhaps idiotic of us to even pretend to think that this generation is not making at least some of the same mistakes with the current generation of children in our nation. The abuse continues to occur, albeit under a smaller roof—perhaps not with the blind acquiescence of the system that we may have seen in the past, but abuse does continue of Australian children on our lands and it is perpetrated by Australian sex offenders in foreign lands.

I refer to the contributions of the member for Warringah and the Leader of the Opposition who both join me in cautioning about the need to learn from past mistakes. The Leader of the Opposition said in his contribution in the Great Hall:

And just as we ask ourselves whether in different circumstances we too could have spent our childhood in a “home”, as you did, so we should ask ourselves whether we too could have neglected you and abused you as others did.

Or could we have been a Minister, a Bishop or a member of a worthy charity committee that presided over these homes, but did not know, or perhaps did not want to know of the neglect and the abuse that you were suffering.

Those homes are long closed and they will never re-open. But when we hear a child scream in pain in the next apartment, or we see a little boy at school with bruises, or a little girl who seems sleepless and withdrawn—do we say: it’s none of our business?

The Leader of the Opposition went on to refer to his meeting with the National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect. I have also had the opportunity to meet with NAPCAN on several occasions and regularly attend meetings of the Parliamentarians Against Child Abuse and Neglect. NAPCAN’s purpose is to stop child abuse and neglect and ensure the safety and wellbeing of every Australian child.

The figures are quite damning according to research that NAPCAN circulates quite widely. Thirty-three thousand individual Australian children are known to be abused or neglected each year. That is, one in four girls and one in seven boys are sexually abused by the age of 18. Thirty thousand children are living in out-of-home care for their care and protection, one in four children have witnessed violence against a parent and one in 10 teenagers regularly binge drink. When we talk about abuse of young people in our institutions over the most recent decades and still quote figures of that nature in 2009, as I said before, it would be smug and idiotic of us to think that our children are necessarily safe today.

NAPCAN works, as I said, to try to prevent child abuse and neglect wherever it occurs and to ensure the safety and wellbeing of every Australian child. It has a range of approaches in that regard: it does advocacy work, it promotes social change, it attempts to build resilience in our children and young people, it tries to develop a professional and parental skills and knowledge base, and it works to try and strengthen community capacity. The field that we are referring to is incredibly complex and difficult. It is emotionally charged. The underlying factors which contribute to the abuse occurring are the main reasons why it becomes so difficult for an organisation like NAPCAN to break the cycle of abuse and neglect. It is one of those topics that we have not liked to talk about as a community. Regretfully, we have turned away from where we may have held suspicions and have not necessarily believed the children as they have come forward with allegations. I congratulate NAPCAN on the work they are trying to do and urge all members to do whatever they can in their work as representatives of their regions to support NAPCAN and Parliamentarians Against Child Abuse and Neglect in the parliament.

There is another area that NAPCAN is focused on. I recently attended a function in the parliament titled Don’t Trade Lives. It is particularly relevant in the context of the motion today as it refers to insidious human trafficking and the impact it is having on young victims, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. As much as we refer to migrant young children who were forced to travel to Australia and were put to work, often in difficult and menial conditions, an ongoing form of abuse is occurring today. Reverend Tim Costello was the guest speaker at the function that I attended with NAPCAN. He made it very clear that there are reports through the Asia-Pacific region of children still vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, such as bonded

labour schemes, commercial sexual exploitation and domestic servitude. It is challenging for us all to confront these very difficult issues and not simply look the other way.

In my own electorate of Gippsland the challenge is there for us as a community as well. We have rates of child abuse which are a constant cause of concern in our community. We have a significant issue in the Gippsland region, where the rates of Indigenous child abuse and sexual assault are way beyond what would be accepted in any humanitarian and civilised situation. It is the same, I think, in the broader community. We must remain ever vigilant. I am concerned about the situation in Gippsland. The government of the day at the state level has admitted that 60 per cent of child protection cases in Gippsland were not allocated a case worker because the government department is struggling to recruit staff. We are simply not on top of the situation we are faced with in Gippsland at the moment. I say to the House that we are kidding ourselves if we believe we are anywhere near on top of the situation of child abuse and neglect as it occurs throughout our nation at the moment.

We need to provide the resources and we need to understand that we have a whole-of-community responsibility to confront this problem. Today we have had the Prime Minister apologise on behalf of the nation, on behalf of the government, but I put the challenge out there to the community in a wider sense: we must all remain vigilant, not just those in leadership roles and members of parliament but those in our communities, wherever we find ourselves. We need to be ever vigilant and look out for those children who are defenceless in the face of those who may prey upon them.

I support the motion before the House, but I would like to add perhaps one more positive note. I would like to thank those carers and foster workers who have done the right thing and have worked tirelessly in the past to assist young people who have been abandoned or orphaned. The member for Swan noted in his maiden speech that some foster parents have in fact saved lives. We need to be careful that we do not become so risk averse, from the negative publicity about removing children from some situations, that they are left in the kinds of appalling conditions and risky situations that have often in the past resulted in serious injury and death.

In closing I would like to read from the motion before us today and offer my complete support:

As a nation, we must now reflect on those who did not receive proper care.

We look back with shame that many of you were left cold, hungry and alone and with nowhere to hide and nobody to whom to turn.

We look back with shame that many of these little ones who were entrusted to institutions and foster homes, instead, were abused physically, humiliated cruelly and violated sexually.

We look back with shame at how those with power were allowed to abuse those who had none.

I would like to take up the Prime Minister's final words in speaking to the motion:

So, let us therefore, together, as a nation, allow this apology to begin healing this pain.

... ..

And let us also resolve this day, that this national apology becomes a turning point in our nation's story.

A turning point for shattered lives.

A turning point for Governments at all levels and of every political colour and hue, to do all in our power to never let this happen again.

For the protection of children is the sacred duty of us all.

As I said earlier, a lot of words have already been spoken here today in relation to the apology to the forgotten people. I believe there is enormous goodwill in the heartfelt commentary on behalf of both sides of the House. What it needs now is action from us and a commitment to ensure that we never let this happen again. When it comes to the health and wellbeing of our children we must all commit ourselves to never looking the other way—to shining the light in dark places. Every child has the right to live in a safe environment that protects and fosters them in their formative years. We need to provide our children the environment where their physical, emotional and social needs are all catered for. That is an individual family responsibility and a community responsibility. But where those families and communities fail, for whatever reason, governments have a role and a sacred trust to step in and provide assistance to our nation's children. We must make the prevention of child abuse a national priority for our community. The momentum gained from today's historic apology must be capitalised upon. Our nation's people are watching us. Our children deserve the best chance to achieve their full potential in the future.

Ms RISHWORTH (Kingston) (5.34 pm)—I rise today to support the motion before the House. It is with some sadness that I rise to speak because, over the last few months and years, I have heard many stories of the forgotten Australians, of some of the issues they faced and the emotional, physical and sexual abuse that some of them suffered. So it is with sadness that I rise to support this apology, but I am very pleased that this bipartisan apology has been made. I think it is very important that we do acknowledge that there are over 500,000 forgotten Australians—people who as children spent a period of time in homes, orphanages and other forms of out-of-home care between the 1920s and the late 1970s. I also recognise the 7,000 former child migrants who arrived in Australia through the historic child migration scheme and were subsequently placed in homes and orphanages.

I recognise that this apology does mean different things to different people. For some, this apology is something they have fought very hard for, and for others it only awakens a lot of memories of the things that happened to them in the past. So this apology does mean something different to everyone. It is my hope that this apology will start a process—whether it is a continuing process or the start of a process, for some it might be the end of a process—and will mark something in that process and mean something very special to people.

For me, the ongoing consequences of the abuse that these people suffered are not surprising. It is not surprising that the severity of abuse, the feelings of not being secure and of being lonely have led to the damage caused to these people. I am not surprised about that, but hearing firsthand some of these stories has been very moving for me and also, as I have said, very saddening.

I was particularly moved by the stories of two women in my electorate who have been fighting for an apology for a long period of time. In fact, in South Australia under a process before a former Supreme Court judge, Ted Mullighan, a lot of the state wards came forward. There was a large inquiry into what had happened to them. Both of these women were involved in that and have been involved for a long time in telling their stories. They have been brave enough to tell their stories so that others could identify with them and be willing to speak out.

The important part—the Prime Minister did talk about this; it was a theme in his speeches—is being able to tell one’s story, to be able to express it and be heard without people judging, to be heard without people not believing. Just being able to tell that story is an incredibly powerful process. I do know that Mr Mullighan also found the same experience during his inquiry. He said a number of times that telling their story was a huge part of the process. Certainly the two women in my electorate, Josephine Cavanough and Lila Ophof, have also found that telling their story has been an incredible part of the process. I would like to acknowledge some words from Josephine.

A division having been called in the House of Representatives—

Sitting suspended from 5.39 pm to 5.59 pm

Ms RISHWORTH—I was speaking about two of the women in my electorate, Josephine and Lila, who attended the apology today. I want to quote Josephine, who said: ‘We can’t change the past, but we can look forward to the future and let the healing begin.’ Today is a very special day for her. It was also a very special day for her because she finally got to meet some of the relations whom she had never known. In fact, today was the day that she met her aunts for the first time. Josephine had a very lonely childhood. She was separated from her 16 brothers and sisters. She says that during her time at the Sisters of Mercy orphanage she was fed bread and water, beaten and sent to solitary confinement. This was a very difficult and upsetting time for her.

At age 13 she was forced to relocate to Adelaide, where she lived on the streets for a few years. Since that time she has been piecing her life back together. She has been trained as a chef and has done courses in mining skills and communications. She has also raised two children. What she has been able to achieve is a real testimony to Josephine’s strength of the character.

Lila told me that the most important thing for her about the apology today was that she no longer felt forgotten, which she had for a long time. She said to me that now she would be one of the remembered Australians. It was also very empowering for her to hear that she was not to blame. How can a three-year-old be blamed? For so long she had believed that she was to blame for her mother giving her up. She still does not know why, and a question that she is continually asking is, ‘Why did this happen to me?’ But today was a time for the powerful realisation that it was not her fault. She was just a child and there was a duty to look after her. She experienced an awful childhood, one with no love and no care. That has been really awful for her.

Lila was not funded by any of the organisations to come here today. I want to pay tribute to a company in my electorate, Wirra Wirra winery. Many in this chamber may be familiar with their wine. They have no relation whatsoever with Lila. Our office spent some time trying to find some sponsorship that would enable Lila to come over and hear and see this apology. Wirra Wirra were incredibly generous, paying for her airfare and enabling her to be part of this. I cannot give a big enough shout out to them, because in a time of need for someone who had been forgotten for so long they acknowledged her and helped her get here.

This has been a great process for both of them. Both of these women are very keen to support and help others who have been in this. In fact, Lila says that since there has been some publicity and because her picture has been in the paper others have come up to her and

thanked her for what she has done. Both of them have a very strong and real commitment to helping others.

I support this motion. It was a very emotional day for both of these women and for the many people here. It was a very emotional day for me. I feel honoured and privileged that these forgotten Australians have been able to share with me and with many other people their often very personal and sad stories, stories that have stayed with them for so long. I hope that sharing those stories—without judgement and without people disbelieving them—and gaining real recognition and acknowledgement will help some of these forgotten Australians move on. In conclusion, today marks a point when these Australians and child migrants are no longer forgotten. They will be acknowledged and remembered for many years to come. In saying that, while they will be acknowledged and remembered, I hope that we also—as other speakers have said—learn from those mistakes of the past. No child should ever have to experience what these close to 500,000 Australians went through. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr BALDWIN (Paterson) (6.05 pm)—I rise today to speak to the national apology to the forgotten Australians and former child migrants. Today we sat in the Great Hall and listened to the Prime Minister read the apology—a very heartfelt speech—and we listened to a very heartfelt speech by the Leader of the Opposition. We saw the gathering of people and we saw an outpouring of emotions. Then we gathered in the chamber and listened to the presentation by Minister Macklin and then a speech by the shadow minister, Tony Abbott. But the one that hit me was the speech by Steve Irons, the member for Swan. While many members can stand up and speak about the emotions of their community, none of us can truly understand what people like our friend and colleague Steve Irons has been through. Many tens of thousands of children went through what Steve went through.

It would be a mistake to believe that every child was abused, that every child was not cared for as they should have been; but many, many were abused. Listening to Steve talk about his brother and those lost years was very emotionally charged. Andrew Murray, a former Democrat senator, was a person I got to know during the time I served as the Chair of the Public Accounts and Audit Committee. The *Sun Herald* reported on 30 August 2009, after the announcement that there would be an apology, that Andrew Murray said:

... the apology represented the culmination of a decade-long Senate campaign.

And further:

... it would be a symbolic and emotional “Rubicon” for hundreds of thousands of people who had been let down by governments that had failed in their duty of care.

The Leader of the Opposition quoted from *Forgotten Australians: a report on Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children* today, which uses Nelson Mandela’s words:

Any nation that does not care for and protect all of its children does not deserve to be called a nation. I am proud to be a member of parliament and represent my constituents in this place but I am somewhat embarrassed and somewhat concerned by guilt when I think that there were people who stood in parliament, like I do now, in years gone by, who not only allowed this to happen but actively promoted the stealing of children.

Between 1947 and 1967 there was collusion with the British government, when over 7,000 children were sent to Australia from England, children who were packed up and sent. They

went to the wharf with a variety of stories. They were not bad children. One thing I believe is that no child is born bad; they are the creature of the environment in which they are raised. That is perhaps why the Nelson Mandela quote is important. We should not only protect our children; we should nurture our children. We should give them the best opportunities they can have in life.

The Commonwealth's push to 'implement good white stock' into its dominions was nothing more than a cruel action by governments of the day, blinded by obsession at the expense of young people who knew no different. These were young people who were told they would be coming to Australia for a better life, young people who may have been told that their parents were deceased when they were not, young people who were told that they would be cared for and looked after and that this was the land of opportunity. Sadly, they were disappointed.

I can remember that as a young fellow at school we would have fundraisers. There would be fundraisers for things like the Barnardo homes and a variety of others. We would hear about these homes. I was very fortunate because I came from a very loving family but I can always remember that when I was a little bit mischievous my dad would say to me, 'If you play up you'll be going to the boys home.' So if they used that as a threat to try and bring you back in line how bad was it for the people who were living there—who were growing up there?

As much as we, as members of parliament, might think that we can understand, unless you have been there you can never experience the emotional cruelty, the beatings and the torment. When I talk to young people who have experienced these things they say to me—and it is probably true too of people who suffer domestic violence—that they will stay and suffer the punishment because at least they feel loved in that environment. But can you imagine being placed into an environment where you are getting beaten, abused and raped and nobody loves or cares for you?

Perhaps the greatest crime in all of this was the fact that these kids had no-one to turn to. No-one believed them and the more they brought up the issue the more they were beaten and abused. Governments failed them; churches failed them; charities failed them; but, importantly, communities failed them. Communities knew what was happening and at the time they failed to bring churches, governments and charities to account. And that is something that is very hard to forgive. While I stand here today as a proud Australian participating in this apology, can I tell you I also feel like a guilty Australian because I am part of that generation that allowed it to continue.

As I have connected with people in my community I feel it is important to recount some of the stories from those people. One such story is from a local resident, Norma Collins, who in 1954 started her journey as a forgotten Australian. After the passing of her mother, eight-year-old Norma was too innocent and too young to understand. She was institutionalised at Rathgar Home for Girls, South Grafton, with her older sister. At the same time the bond with her older brother was lost when he was sent to work on a rural property.

Norma spent her formative years as one of half a million orphans neglected and forgotten by governments, churches and charities. Norma was not given the love and attention that an eight-year-old child should have been given. She was a child wanting the simple thing that we take for granted—love from a mother. She wanted love from a mother who died too young. Norma craved individual care; instead she often felt isolated and lonely. Norma recalls one

night when she reached out for human kindness by creeping into a matron's bedroom, requesting a simple hug. But like so many others, this simple display of affection was rejected; instead, she was smacked and sent to bed. For Norma this is a lasting reminder of how she and others in the home were treated like sheep. They had basin haircuts, a shared wardrobe and a long list of daily chores. You were no longer a child with a personality and needs; you were simply a number—one of many without a loving home to call your own.

What Norma missed was the love and attention that a family home could have provided. Norma was a strong child and made the best out of an otherwise hopeless situation. She made friendships that continue today. After four years in Rathgar, Norma was finally released into the care of family. However, she was so shy from shame and embarrassment that she regularly hid from other children and family members. This poor self-perception was only perpetuated when she learnt how others viewed and treated orphans from the school. She once heard that other local children were told to stay away from the orphans, who were seen to be a bad influence. This made Norma retreat even further from the community she could have been a part of.

Patty, also from my electorate, tells of the heart-breaking story of her experiences at Rathgar in the 1970s. After losing her 36-year-old mother from heart problems, Patty and her three sisters and brother found themselves facing an uncertain future and were placed in institutionalised care. Patty's strength, despite her troubled childhood, is evident today. She remembers better not her own story but the stories of her sisters and brother. Being separated from her siblings at such a young age forced bonds to be broken that never should have been. She tells harrowing stories of her sister being sexually abused by her holiday parents. Another sister was sent to a prison like Parramatta Girls Home for being rebellious. Her brother was shunted from home to home. Patty attributes the lack of a father figure in his life as a major contributor to his gambling problem now.

Patty recalls two loving house mothers during her time at Rathgar—Mrs Tibbs and Mama Joyce—who tried their best to bring up the girls in a close-to-normal environment where possible. In another harsh reminder, she realised she was not part of a real family when these motherly figures retired and the centre was taken over by a husband and wife whose approach to the home was very different. Suddenly, contact with the outside world ceased and so, as a 14-year-old, she ran away looking for a better life.

For girls like Norma and Patty and the other half a million forgotten Australians, childhood had to be survived rather than enjoyed. The Australian government robbed them of the chance to be children, a right which every person in this nation deserves, and for that I am deeply sorry. Today's apology to the forgotten Australians and former child migrants is a milestone in our nation's history. It was a sad era which will never be repeated.

Those who attended the apology today, listened to their radios or watched at home on the television acknowledged the survivors, remembering their stories and allowing the Australian government to shelve the responsibility for decades of pain and suffering in institutionalised care. We can only hope now that this burden has been lifted from the shoulders of orphans and migrants who believed for years that they were to blame; they were not.

As I sat in the great hall watching the apology this morning, I could not help but recall my own childhood. I was one of the fortunate few children that emigrated from Britain with loving parents wanting a fresh start for me and my siblings. Even with the constant and loving

support, the transition to a new country and culture was very, very difficult. I cannot begin to imagine what life would have been like if I had migrated alone, as 7,000 former child migrants were forced to do through historical migration schemes.

Through three unanimous Senate inquiries, the consequences of institutionalised care were frighteningly illustrated. With emotional and physical deprivation and shocking levels of neglect and abuse, children lost family connections and, in the process, much of their identity. As adults, many still grapple with the demons of their childhood and yet have been brave enough to come together today to share their stories with the nation. Thank you, Norma and Patty, for being amongst those with enough courage to say, 'I will not be forgotten any longer.' You are certainly survivors, having now raised your own loving families despite the failure of your government as a protector.

So I stand as the member for Paterson, an elected member of the Australian parliament, to echo today's apology, which is long overdue. I understand that this will not change the past or the lasting legacy of these experiences for those who suffer. However, with sincere respect, I place my apology on the public record for constituents like Norma and Patty, who have travelled to Canberra today to take the first step in their journey towards healing. They also hope to rediscover their fellow orphans who took the place of extended family. Norma was quite adamant that her message should be passed, reinforced and remembered by others. 'Leave the shame in the past', she said. 'Let others know you were in and out of home care. This way, institutionalised brothers and sisters may be able to find one another again and reform the bonds that were lost.' I promise Norma and Patty and the other forgotten Australians and former child migrants, 'You will now and forever be remembered Australians.'

Ms KING (Ballarat) (6.19 pm)—I add my voice to those of the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition in giving my apology to the Forgotten Australians and former child migrants. Today's apology extends to a large number of Australians—around 500,000 of them; 500,000 people who spent time in children's homes, in orphanages and in out-of-home care, alongside some 7,000 former child migrants who came to Australia at part of child migration schemes to then be placed in children's homes and orphanages. Today's apology extends to these people; it also extends to their families and to future generations, to give us a better understanding of this disgraceful tragedy in our past century.

It is a particularly important apology for the people of Ballarat. It is important for the many Ballarat people who were residents in institutional care and their families. It is also very important for those of us who were not to formally apologise for what happened in these institutions in our community and to recognise what happened to the children, now adults who live among us. Ballarat had three major institutions: Ballarat Orphanage, St Joseph's homes for boys and Nazareth House for girls. The Alexander babies home and a number of smaller institutions also existed. One estimate is that over 15 institutions operated in Ballarat at some point over the course of the past century.

A significant number of children grew up in Ballarat institutions. The Ballarat Orphanage alone saw some 4,000 children in care. Many of these children continue to live in Ballarat and have raised their families there. The stories heard in my region are similar to those heard from all corners of Australia in this debate so far—stories of children accommodated in large institutions without love, without the sort of nurturing care and warmth that is every child's right; unfortunately, all too often, stories of abuse, of children beaten with a belt or a cane and of

young boys and girls sexually abused—raped by their carers and abused by the people who were supposed to give them care. We have heard of staff bashing children senseless while other children watched in horror and despair. Those are stories of children who wanted just one thing: to be loved.

One of these stories is of Frank Golding. Frank, who was only three, and his two brothers found themselves in institutional care on Christmas Eve in 1940. While many children were thinking of the joys of Christmas, the beauty of family and the laughter of friends, Frank and his brothers found themselves alone. Frank's once forgotten story has been realised in his book *An Orphan's Escape: Memories of a Lost Childhood*. I highly recommend Frank's book to anyone who truly wants to understand what happened in institutions in Ballarat. Frank tells many stories throughout his book, few which give a sense of his larrikin and kind-hearted nature and many of which give an explanation of his harrowing experiences suffered in institutional care. The book tells a story of a child forgotten. The book is one of thousands of stories that exist around Australia.

To do justice to Frank's story, I want to quote fairly extensively from it. Like many others, the picture of arriving at the orphanage is a vivid one, one which has clearly stayed with him. He wrote:

I touched each shaft of the iron fence as the policeman pulled us towards the great double gate. The spikes towered above our heads as I ran my hand over the cold bluestone base. The gravel crunched under our feet as we drew near the dark-red building. Looking up at the balcony on the second floor, Billy read to us the words cast in iron 'Orphan Asylum, 1865.' This was a grim place, this Ballarat Orphanage. Solid like a fortress.

Like many children, Frank and his brothers questioned what they had done to have this happen to them.

Why were we in this place? ... orphans haven't got parents. We were not orphans. What did they mean by Asylum? Mum told us about the lunatic asylum up near the lake. That was the place where mad people got locked up. Why were we being punished? What had we done?

Frank was lucky in one way: at least his two brothers and he were in the same institution. But the sibling groups meant little as children were separated according to age.

With scores of children to play with, the idea of brothers and sisters soon lost its meaning. We shared surnames but not much else. Some children told us they had brothers and sisters in other orphanages. Years later I met people who never knew they had siblings until they discovered them while piecing together the jigsaw of their families decades after their stay in institutions. Some have tried to reunite as family but found that physical resemblance is not a sufficient basis to make up for the lost years. To stare across a train station at a 50-year-old stranger who looks like you can be both thrilling and disturbing. To become sisters again can be stressful.

Frank spoke of those who worked in these institutions. He wrote:

A hard core of staff stayed for ever but otherwise there was a high turnover and constant shortages. It has been said that staff in children's institutions fell into three categories, the devoted, the dull and the deviant. To which I would add the disciplinarians. Many of those with compassion couldn't bear to stay after they saw what the orphanage was like and what they were expected to do to keep the children under control.

Frank outlined story after story of his experiences that are chilling to read. Unfortunately, for Frank, they are not only a story; they are his reality. These are stories that are difficult to hear

but they must be told and we, as members of the Ballarat community, have a responsibility to listen to every one of them.

I know there will be people in my own electorate who served, or whose parents served, on the boards of these institutions or who worked in them and who will say, 'But these institutions did good things as well,' and that the children were happy; that at the time people thought it was the right thing to do. Again, I refer to some powerful words from Frank:

I have been asked, sometimes with aggression: isn't all that positive achievement the result of the stable upbringing provided by the Orphanage? It has been said I thrived, and I should remember what we were taught all those years ago: "For what we have received may the Lord make us truly grateful." I thank the authorities for a roof over my head and three meals a day for more than ten years. I lived with two hundred children in the Orphanage and I made friends with many of them. They, and the extraordinary diversity of experiences we shared, taught me important skills for coping and surviving. We had some good times and managed together through some bad moments. Those chosen by the State did not sexually abuse me as they did other children. But I do not feel grateful for the salvation of avoidance. I should never have lived under the dark shadow of chance and I should not still be weeping for those little kids who were picked out to be buggered by paid predators.

It is incredibly important that we do not gloss over what these places were like for the people who experienced them. No matter how difficult or embarrassing it is, these forgotten children should expect no less from us.

Frank, along with others who grew up in my electorate, was here today in Parliament House, and I thank him for his permission to use his story. I encourage Ballarat residents to learn a little about Frank's story and what happened, in our own community, to Frank and to the hundreds of children just like him in care in Ballarat institutions.

Today's apology has been a very long time coming. The federal government, through the Senate Community Affairs References Committee, has reported in detail on this issue over the past decade. Three separate reports of inquiries under the committee include *Lost innocents* in 2001, *Forgotten Australians* in 2004 and *Lost innocents and forgotten Australians revisited* in 2009. These reports told us something that many Australians had known for years. They spoke of the abuse that children in institutional care suffered, the physical and emotional suffering, the neglect. These reports unanimously called for a national apology. The Senate committee recognised that a national apology was an important part of the healing process for those who had suffered at the hands, the poor policy decisions, of our governments.

The first report, *Lost innocents: righting the record*, gave a stark assessment of the treatment of children who were brought to Australia from the United Kingdom, Ireland and Malta via child migrant schemes. Australia made a commitment to protect these children. The report showed parents consented for their children to migrate because they were told of the wonderful care their children would receive in Australia. Some of these children were sexually assaulted and were abused by their carers. They were alone.

In 2004, the Senate committee delivered its second report, *Forgotten Australians: a report on Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children*. This report reflected on the half a million children who spent time in institutional care from the 1920s to the 1970s. It outlined many of the horrific things that occurred in this care, including many of those that I spoke of earlier.

In June this year the Senate committee released the *Lost innocents and forgotten Australians revisited*, a report on progress with the implementation of the recommendations of the two previous reports. With the Australian government's formal apology today we have specifically addressed the report's first two recommendations. They advised, as had been stated in the previous reports, that the Commonwealth formally apologise to our forgotten Australians and former child migrants.

The hard work of the Senate committee is to be congratulated. We have also seen hard work from many over recent years, and decades, to address this issue. I would like to recognise the hard work of the following: the Child Migrants Trust, Families Australia, the Alliance for Forgotten Australians, the International Association of Former Child Migrants and Their Families and the Care Leavers Australia Network.

Today we recognise the mistakes of the past. We as a nation placed our children in a position that was cruel and ugly. Children went to sleep in the coldness of the night, alone and afraid, and they awoke cold, alone and afraid. Because these children, these forgotten Australians and former child migrants, suffered enormous pain they did not have somebody to turn to when they needed care, when they were being neglected. They did not receive the love, the care, the security and the compassion that many of us take for granted today. When many of these children suffered both physical and sexual mistreatment they did not have anybody to turn to and, if they did, many of them were just not believed. The situation these children found themselves in was through no fault of their own. I apologise that we as a nation did not intervene to stop what was happening to them.

I support the motion moved by the Prime Minister today, because these experiences must be publicly recognised. With today's apology we start that process. I hope that this apology brings some small relief to our forgotten Australians and our former child migrants. I hope that, by coming together as a parliament to reflect on this dreadful past, we can realise the true extent of what has happened. Today's apology is long overdue. This apology should not be seen as the final step in a difficult journey but, instead, as the first page of a new book.

I recognise that scars never truly heal, that few memories will ever fade and that we cannot return lost childhoods and, in some cases, lost lives. But today I apologise. I would like to place my apology firmly on the record and say that what happened to these children was wrong and should never have occurred. I apologise to the over 500,000 forgotten Australians and former child migrants. I apologise to the thousands of children, now adults, who grew up in institutional care in my region. I apologise to those men and women who were placed in the Ballarat Orphanage, in St Josephs, in Nazareth House, in the Alexander Babies Home and in other institutions that operated in Ballarat. I apologise for the loss of your innocence and for the loss of your childhood. Most of all, I salute you as extraordinary survivors whose courage contributes to who we are as a city. Your stories should forever be recognised as a central part of Ballarat's history.

Finally, I want to give the last words to Frank Golding. I quote:

I have won some control over my past and understand the story, but the scabs still itch. What if ... we had not been infants in wartime when family life came under profound stress? What if ... the struggle by our parents to get us out of the Orphanage had succeeded earlier? What if the welfare department had been in less haste to condemn our parents? What if ... the state had supported and helped them

through their hard times, instead of condemning them as not fit to be parents? What if ... the child welfare system of the day had been instead a family welfare system?

What if?

Dr JENSEN (Tangney) (6.32 pm)—I wish to speak on behalf of one of my constituents whose appalling experience as a child in Neerkol Orphanage in Queensland is, sadly, just one of many covered by the Prime Minister's apology. Firstly, though, I would like to congratulate my colleague the member for Swan. He has a particular passion and commitment for this issue and his work in this area over a period of time deserves special commendation. I also wish to commend the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition for their expressions of understanding of apology and of sympathy. They spoke, most of all, of their gratitude and admiration for the many people who had the courage to come forward and tell their own stories of suffering, to relive the horrors so that we may better understand what occurred but, more importantly, so it may never, ever happen again. This is a critical point. We need to move forward, acknowledge what has happened in the past and actually rectify some things that occurred in the past.

In this speech the people I am being particularly critical of are individuals at Neerkol but, more importantly, the Queensland government officers who were supposed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children in these institutions. All of these people betrayed these young Australians in the most callous and indescribable ways imaginable—in some cases, unimaginable. Too often we hear of generic claims of abuse and sometimes of sexual and physical abuse, even institutional abuse, but often we do not appreciate the terrible reality that is too often glossed over by glib generalisations. Therefore, I shall lay out the story of Mrs Sandra Pollard, as provided by her and her current husband, to show that she was abused many times over not just by some of the priests and nuns running Neerkol but by the system—successive Queensland state governments, which not only sought to avoid taking any meaningful responsibility for what occurred but even attempted to blacken Mrs Pollard's name in order to shift the blame. That particular exercise was possibly one of the most disturbing, disingenuous and malignant pieces of political posturing it has been my misfortune to read about, and I shall return to it later.

I shall now recount Mrs Pollard's painful history as she has written it out for me. Mrs Pollard's life started out in a manner which, sadly, was to echo throughout the formative years of her life. When she was eight years old she was sexually abused by her stepfather. Her mother was dying of cancer and could not protect her. After her mother died, the department of children's services left young Sandra with her stepfather. After several years of abuse, her stepfather was caught in the act. He was given a good behaviour bond, and Sandra and her siblings were committed to the Neerkol Orphanage.

The *Weekend Independent* of November 1997 reported the hell on earth at Neerkol, outlining the physical, psychological and sexual abuse. One former inmate said, 'I cannot recall a single happy day in that place. The physical and psychological brutality was unrelenting. Every memory I have is of being brutalised.' This was Sandra Pollard's childhood. The newspaper said:

Not only were the children 'contracted out' by the then State Children Department to work in harsh conditions on Queensland farms, but in some cases, years of meagre wages, supposedly kept in trust for them, simply disappeared.

Mrs Pollard wants to know who was responsible for this money. Where is the accountability?

There were outbreaks of typhoid which were made worse when ‘those who were sick were not notified to the doctor and isolated’, according to a medical report. Sick children were not getting the appropriate medical treatment for typhoid and, worse still, living with healthy children. What an absolute disgrace! Mrs Pollard said that, because of the substandard nutrition she received at Neerkol, she suffered serious bone degeneration which resulted in the removal of all of her teeth while she was there. Mrs Pollard spoke of children who died and were given no autopsy but just buried in the grounds at Neerkol. Again, who was responsible? Where is the accountability?

Let us look at something as simple as drinking water. An Irrigation and Water Supply Commission related to the state children’s department stated: ‘... this water would be suitable for stock watering and for the irrigation of ... crops.’ These young children were drinking water fit only for animals and irrigation. Then a medical scandal: the Senate report *Forgotten Australians* stated in chapter 4:

Children in orphanages and Homes have been used for medical experiments for many decades. Some of these have been reported in medical journals. Many questions are raised, not least of all is that if these experiments were known, what other experiments may have occurred that were not officially reported?

Not only were these children used as guinea pigs, but it appears that there is a good chance that the vaccines they were given were contaminated by the SV40 virus, which has been linked to some cancers. Mrs Pollard wants to know: who was responsible for this program? Again, where is the accountability? An investigation by the *Age* found that at least four batches of vaccine—almost three million doses—were contaminated with the virus between 1956 and 1962. Two of those batches were released after testing positive to contamination.

Sandra Pollard was vaccinated and Sandra Pollard has cancer. She cannot even get insurance because her illnesses are all pre-existing conditions. For the sake of people like Sandra Pollard, it would be only right if there were tests available for SV40 to give them peace of mind. With all that Sandra and others have been put through, I think it would be the least that we could do. I stress the word ‘do’ because so often, in cases like this, there are many fine words, of sympathy, of apology, of apparent understanding, but the words only go so far. What I think would mean so much more for these victims of abuse and of experimentation, who have suffered from the repercussions for much of their lives, is action.

If that was not enough suffering and degradation, in 1967 Sandra was sexually abused by a priest, and the later court records are available to confirm this. She was sent out of Neerkol to a cattle station, where she was again abused.

She subsequently married John Pollard and finally found happiness. Unfortunately, in the late 1980s, awful memories started to surface. By 1994, Mrs Pollard could no longer tolerate these memories and she went to Queensland to get documents under FOI in an effort to deal with her problems. In a written statement given to me, she says, ‘I was trying to find the proof I needed—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr S Georganas)—Order! The debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 192, and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**Pinjarra Pool**

Mr RANDALL (Canning) (6.40 pm)—There is a clear priority for the Pinjarra community: the long awaited and greatly anticipated Pinjarra pool. Unfortunately the project is drowning. It is now time-sensitive as options run dry and existing funding is jeopardised by the lack of federal government support. For years Pinjarra has been anticipating the pool. They want a place where they can come together, take swimming classes and undergo rehabilitation without having to travel far and wide. If the Rudd government was serious about putting working families first, it would take another look at its axing of the pool funding.

As a strong advocate of the project for the Shire of Murray, I was pleased the coalition delivered, not promised, \$1.1 million for the pool in 2007. The funding was under the Regional Partnerships program and it was cruelly torn up by Mr Rudd. The Shire of Murray's application for local community infrastructure funding earlier this year was unsuccessful. The shire was rightly confident about its chances because the pool project was and remains ready for construction as soon as the last piece of funding is secured. In fact, of the \$7 million required for the project, \$5 million has already been approved by the Barnett government, Alcoa, Alinta and of course the shire itself. Securing the final \$2 million would enable the project to get underway immediately. The pool would be of huge benefit to the wider Peel region. If the government is more serious about substantive community infrastructure than celebratory signs, it will consider throwing some of coalition's savings it is rapidly spending towards the Pinjarra pool. It is a highly worthy project that the community certainly deserves.

Riding for the Disabled

Mr ZAPPIA (Makin) (6.41 pm)—On 31 October 2009, I attended the handover of a brand new double horse float to the Riding for the Disabled Association by the Golden Grove Lions Club. I acknowledge and commend the Golden Grove Lions Club who, with the support of the Australian Lions Foundation, made an extraordinary effort to raise the funds required to purchase the float. Equally commendable was the understanding and concern shown by Lions Club members, who were driven by their care and desire to assist children with disabilities and their families. I am familiar with the work of the South Australian Riding for the Disabled Association, having been associated with it for some years. Several years ago I was able to support the organisation in securing its current riding facilities at Globe Derby Equestrian Centre.

Horse riding has been proven to assist children with disabilities with both their physical and mental responses. Of course, it also offers children and their parents a most enjoyable recreation activity. This is all made possible because of the extraordinary efforts of the devoted volunteers who keep the RDA organisation going and whose work has now been made easier with the addition of the new horse float, made possible by the work of President Ken Snaith and his team of Golden Grove Lions Club members. I also note that, in response to the growing recognition of horse riding amongst children with disabilities, the Special Olympics National Games organising committee for the 2010 event in Adelaide are collaborating with Riding for the Disabled Australia to showcase equestrian competition in the event. I wish them every success in including equestrian events in the National Games and providing another opportunity for children with disabilities.

Bill of Rights

Mrs MIRABELLA (Indi) (6.43 pm)—I rise today to comment on the government's proposed moves towards a bill of rights. As a member of the Liberal Party, a party founded as the champion of individual rights and liberties against the state—and we have seen since the formation of the Liberal Party a growing state interfering with people's rights—it is of great concern. I have received several petitions, which are not in the official form accepted by the parliament, from locals concerned about a proposed bill of rights. We have seen what has happened in Victoria, where there is a similar bill of rights regime. We have seen it being abused by criminals and rarely used for the greater good. But of great concern is why the government has not explained why a bill of rights is necessary. What deficiencies are there in existing laws? We have seen countries that can only be described as totalitarian regimes with bills of rights, but they in fact do not guarantee people's rights. We do not want to see a shift of power from elected representatives, who are responsible to the people, to unelected judges. The community is already angry at the judgments being given out to very serious criminals that do not reflect community standards, and there will be a shift of power to judges with a bill of rights. We have seen that, when the Left is in power and they introduce a bill of rights or similar legislation, there is in fact a limiting of liberty, not an extension of it.

Headspace Fremantle

Ms PARKE (Fremantle) (6.48 pm)—Last Wednesday, 11 November, I was honoured to launch the new Fremantle headspace centre, a drop-in and counselling centre for young people. Headspace has been a proven success as a source of support, information and services for young people aged between 12 and 25 right across Australia. The new centre in Fremantle is the only one of its kind in metropolitan WA and therefore it is an essential resource providing help and advice on mental health issues, relationship issues and drug and alcohol problems. I am proud to say that the federal government provided around \$1 million for refurbishments of the centre as well as funding towards better integration and coordination of services across the spectrum from counsellors, specialist nurses, GPs and health workers. I also want to acknowledge the significant contribution of the Fremantle GP Network to Fremantle headspace. I am convinced that contributions such as this are an invaluable investment in the future health, wellbeing and prosperity of our young people.

To tailor its services to what young people want and need in terms of help and support services, headspace relies on the advice of a youth reference group, which consists of 25 members from across Australia who are consulted by the organisation on a range of topics, including marketing campaigns, youth participation strategies and program development. Annabeth Bateman is one of the youth reference group members from Perth and she welcomed everyone to the new headspace centre on Wednesday with an inspiring account of her reasons for being involved with the organisation. Annabeth is a young person who is already contributing many things to this country. However, she and her fellow youth reference group members are also providing their skills to ensure that other young people who may not be so fortunate and confident can have a more promising brighter future. (*Time expired*)

South Australia: Road Infrastructure

Dr SOUTHCOTT (Boothby) (6.46 pm)—Like many residents of southern Adelaide, I was very pleased to learn that the state government proposed and committed to building an underpass, taking South Road under Sturt Road at Bedford Park, at a cost of about \$140 million.

This commitment was made in their 2006 roads policy document *RANN gets results*. Unfortunately, this is one area where Rann does not get results. Subsequent media releases were also issued by the federal government minister in September 2008 and in February and July 2009, all saying that funding would contribute towards grade separations along South Road at Sturt Road. The announcement last month of the superway means that residents of southern Adelaide have been short-changed and there is very little money left for the grade separation at Sturt Road and South Road. There is now only \$48 million left for a project which four years ago was calculated to cost \$140 million. This means that this project has now been pushed out beyond 2014. It is a selling out of the residents of southern Adelaide. They have been short-changed on this and duped by the promises of both the state Labor Party and the federal government. It is very detrimental for residents of Kingston but also for residents of southern suburbs such as Marino, Flagstaff Hill—(*Time expired*)

Coal Industry

Mr BIDGOOD (Dawson) (6.48 pm)—The Rudd Labor government are supporting local jobs by investing in a coal industry with a future. We want to support jobs and growth, and clean up coal for the industry's future in a low-carbon driven international market. The credible science is in and it says that climate change is real and we need to act in the national interest now. On this side of the House, we are taking steps to drop our emissions and protect jobs in the process through the CPRS. The Rudd Labor government are serious about supporting the coal industry under the CPRS. Unlike a Turnbull-led government, the Rudd Labor government will never give up and put up the white flag on the Australian coal industry by embracing a nuclear future for Australia. We are the party that supports jobs, jobs, jobs. We are investing \$135.6 million through the economic stimulus plan in Dawson alone. Those opposite voted against it. They voted against all of it—community infrastructure, science labs and bridges. They voted against communities and they voted against jobs. I wish to clearly state to my constituents in Dawson that the Labor Party is, always has been and always will be the worker's friend.

Do Not Call Register

Dr JENSEN (Tangney) (6.49 pm)—The former coalition government introduced the Do Not Call Register to protect Australians from overzealous telemarketers and businesses. It was initially very successful and well received, but a constituent of mine in Tangney has been having serious problems. He was getting persistent calls from Centurion Roof Coatings, despite his request that they desist. He then put his number on the Do Not Call Register, but the calls continued. In April 2008, my constituent lodged his first complaint with the telemarketing division of the Australian Communications and Media Authority, ACMA. He received a prompt reply saying that ACMA was monitoring Centurion. Despite this, by December 2008 he had received seven more calls from Centurion. On 24 December 2008, he received the most recent letter from ACMA, basically saying the same thing as the letter eight months previously. Since then he has heard nothing more from ACMA—and, in the *West Australian* on 17 October 2009, Centurion were again advertising for telemarketers. It is disgraceful that there appears to have been no action taken on this. I have written to the minister to investigate this lack of action immediately and to provide me with an explanation. This is intolerable and flies in the face of the whole purpose of the Do Not Call Register.

Ms Esther Friedman

Mr DANBY (Melbourne Ports) (6.50 pm)—On 12 October one of my constituents, Esther Friedman, turned 100. Born in Israel in 1909, she came to Australia when she was three years old. She celebrated her birthday with her daughters Ruth Leonard and Norma Brand, her nine grandchildren and her 11 great-grandchildren. In her earlier years, she represented Victoria in basketball. She played tennis until the age of 82, when she retired to take up competition lawn bowls, from which she retired only two years ago. She enjoys playing cards three times a week and watching sport on TV. I received this wonderful, beautiful, handwritten letter from Esther thanking me, and I would like to read it into *Hansard*. She writes:

Dear Michael,

I enjoyed the wonderful 100th birthday celebrations and wish to thank you and your staff for arranging the congratulatory certificates from the Queen, the Governor-General, the Prime Minister and yourself. They all added to the excitement of the occasion.

Many thanks

Yours

Esther Friedman

I hope when we are 100, we are all as capable of writing wonderful, handwritten letters like this. What a woman!

Gippsland Electorate: Cultural Centre and Museum

Mr CHESTER (Gippsland) (6.52 pm)—I rise to express my support for the construction of a new cultural centre and museum, as proposed by the Gippsland Ethnic Community Council. In 2007 the GECC opened the Gippsland Immigration Wall of Recognition, a monument which details hundreds of names of those who have migrated to Gippsland from overseas. The project was largely funded through state and federal contributions and through donations from local businesses and residents alike. The monument stands beside a lake in Morwell, in the middle of the Latrobe Valley. There is also a small deck over the lake which symbolises a port, depicting the manner in which many migrants landed in Australia.

The monument has now become a tourist attraction of the Latrobe Valley, and the community wants to extend it. The GECC now wants to add to this by building a migration museum across the other side of the lake and creating an educational walkway between the two attractions. A local volunteer committee has been set up to promote the venture widely and has been successful in securing funds from local sources again. The committee is also seeking funding from the federal government under its Jobs Fund, and I fully endorse the project. Gippsland is very proud of its rich history of multiculturalism, and this development will recognise the role played by people of many different cultural backgrounds in the overall development of the region. The project would build on the good work of the existing immigration wall, and I urge the government to review the committee's submission favourably.

Darling Range RSL: Memorial Day Service

Ms JACKSON (Hasluck) (6.53 pm)—I would like to thank the Darling Range RSL for their Remembrance Day service at the Darling Range War Memorial on Wednesday last week—and especially for the cuppa at the morning tea served afterwards. It was a warm day in Perth, but the service was still well attended. It was a very moving service and there were many veterans in attendance. I would particularly like to record my thanks to the president,

Fred, and secretary, Ray, for their work on behalf of veterans in the local veteran community. I thank them for the opportunity to pay due and proper tribute to our lost service men and women. I also acknowledge the Gosnells RSL sub-branch and thank them for the use of their hall for an Australian defence medal presentation on 4 November.

Gippsland Electorate: Landcare

Mr CHESTER (Gippsland) (6.55 pm)—I rise to highlight my concerns with the federal government's failure to commit to ongoing funding for Landcare facilitators in the Gippsland region. It is an issue that I have raised previously and directly with the minister responsible, and I will continue to raise it at every opportunity. It is my understanding that the community of East Gippsland undertook a rally on the weekend, where a large number of residents came to express their concerns with the government's failure to commit to practical environmental works as seen through the Landcare Network. Over the past 20 years we have enjoyed a great tradition in our nation of bipartisan support for Landcare, and it concerns me deeply that the current minister fails to understand how important it is to support these people at grassroots level who are doing the practical work that is required—work on reducing the impact of feral animals; work on improving the vegetation of the region. I encourage the government to keep funding Landcare.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr S Georganas)—Order! In accordance with standing order 192A, the time for members' statements has concluded.

ASSISTING THE VICTIMS OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM BILL 2009

First Reading

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah) (6.55 pm)—Since 11 September 2001, about 300 Australians have been killed or injured in acts of terrorism overseas. There were those killed or injured in the World Trade Centre, there were those killed or injured in the first and second Bali bombings, there were the victims of the London bombings and there were the victims of the two Jakarta bombings. These were not random acts of violence; these terrorist acts were premeditated acts of war in which the West generally, and in some cases Australia specifically, were directly targeted. The Australians killed or injured in these terrorist outrages are civilian casualties of the war on terror, and that is why they deserve assistance and help from the Australian government representing Australian society.

If a soldier is killed in the course of duty, his next of kin receives assistance. If a worker is killed in the course of employment, their next of kin receive assistance. If a citizen is killed in an act of criminal violence, their next of kin receive assistance. Under the state victims of crime schemes, the next of kin of the deceased and the victims under most circumstances of serious crime can receive up to \$75,000 in assistance. So I put it to this parliament: why should someone who is randomly assaulted outside a pub get up to \$75,000 in assistance but someone who is maimed for life by a terrorist attack overseas gets nothing at all other than their medical expenses and perhaps the disability support pension? That is why I have introduced this private member's bill: to help those people to ensure that Australian victims of international terrorism receive some assistance at least on the level of the assistance provided to the victims of crime here in Australia.

This bill provides for the establishment of a scheme to assist the victims of international terrorism modelled on the state and territory victims of crime schemes. In introducing this bill

I pay special tribute to the Newcastle victims of the second Bali bombing, many of whom I was with in the time after their injuries and with whom I have stayed in some contact. All of those victims, to their credit, have resumed more or less normal life. To their credit they do not normally think of themselves as victims and have displayed the grit and stoicism that characterises most Australians even under adverse circumstances. Still, some have been bereaved, others have lost their sight, their hearing, their jobs and the expectation of a physically and mentally comfortable retirement. They deserve our help and recognition, and this bill seeks to give it to them.

This bill will also, I understand, be debated next Monday in private members' business. I understand that it will be seconded there by the member for Paterson, who has stayed in close contact with some of the Newcastle victims. I also understand that the member for Newcastle, amongst others, will speak on this bill. I hope that this bill, or something like it or even a better scheme, will be adopted by the government. These people were targeted not because of anything they did but because of who they are—Australians. Australians who have suffered like that certainly deserve our help, which is why I commend this bill not only to this chamber but to the government.

Bill read a first time.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr MJ Washer)—Order! In accordance with standing order 41 the second reading will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

National Bike Path Program

Debate resumed, on motion by **Mr Ripoll**:

That the House:

- (1) notes that:
 - (a) building community infrastructure or improving community amenity has the potential to generate local jobs and increase skills and social capital;
 - (b) investment in cycling is regarded as a cost effective way to increase mobility and physical activity levels, make recreation accessible and boost regional tourism; and
 - (c) small shifts in transport modes to other forms, such as cycling, may provide substantial dividends and important benefits for the transport and freight sector and reduce congestion, increase efficiency and lower greenhouse gas emissions; and
- (2) supports:
 - (a) the Government's National Bike Path Program and other programs which encourage people to take up cycling;
 - (b) awareness programs, initiatives, organisations and individuals that promote cycling as a way of getting fitter, having some fun, reducing traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions; and
 - (c) policies, projects and initiatives that deliver increased options for cycling infrastructure.

Mr RIPOLL (Oxley) (7.01 pm)—I want to start by thanking Stephen Hodge and the Cycling Promotion Fund for their hard work and the assistance they have provided me for tonight's motion. Cycling is more than just riding a bike and that is the message I want to leave on people's minds tonight. Cycling offers an effective way to increase overall physical activity levels in the community. It obviously provides for better public health. It is an alternative

to motorised transport. It is an effective method of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It reduces congestion. It increases the ability of people to save money by reducing their fuel costs and a range of other things. There is the potential for cycling to actually make a real difference.

Australians young and old love to ride. We have all done it at some point in our lives. Some have forgotten how and others have continued to do it. You never forget how, but some have just forgotten how to get on. Cycling is Australia's fourth most popular recreational activity; 72 per cent of all children participate in cycling. Cycling amongst girls has jumped 16.1 per cent between 2003 and 2006 and this provides evidence that it really is a popular pastime as well as a sport. Very importantly, areas which have invested significantly into creating more cycle friendly environments, with encouragement and promotion programmes, have seen the largest increases in cycling participation. That is a key point.

Building community infrastructure and improving community amenity has the potential not only to increase cycling but also to create local jobs, and to increase skills and social capital. In particular, I note that investment in cycling and walking is not a cost but an investment in social capital. It enhances community liveability and community safety, and it provides a legacy of health and wellbeing. Overall, it provides for better communities. Connected at integrated streets, cycling provides better services and public spaces that encourage people to walk or to just meet their neighbours. It fosters social interaction and it provides opportunities to reduce crime. It really is more than just about the walking or the cycling itself. I am very proud to say that the Rudd government has invested \$40 million in bike paths projects nationally. It is going to build 174 projects which will create almost 2,000 jobs and traineeships, which is very worth while. It is not just the Commonwealth government but also local and state governments that have invested in cycling. For example, I note that local and state governments are investing in 72 projects in New South Wales, 23 in Queensland, 35 in Victoria and so on. There is cross-government investment and it needs to continue.

Cycling not only is about increased mobility but also is a recreational activity. It also increases people's levels of activity and boosts regional tourism. It can be a really cost-effective way for people to commute and it can change people's habits of a lifetime. Certainly on the health and physical activity side, it has been acknowledged by everybody that cycling can make a real difference. But people might not understand that a simple 30-minute-a-day trip on a pushbike can actually make an enormous difference and that it can actually halve the chance of people becoming obese or diabetic. It is a cheap way to save on the endless health bills in this country and right around the world.

What are the trends? What are people doing? It certainly makes sense for us to focus our efforts on increasing opportunity. It is all about opportunity. It is all about giving people that opportunity to get out and cycle. In fact, most people participate in non-organised, non-team type sports. That is the largest area. People are quite happy to cycle. In this country, cycling is now bigger overall than the top 10 sports combined.

It is a fact that we are now all living longer. In the national interest and in the interests of social inclusion, an ageing population means that our environments will need to adapt to encourage mobility as we get older. So we should be building appropriate infrastructure to make it easier to walk, to get around and for people to be active in their older years. Certainly there is plenty of evidence of that needing to happen.

I want to make a few comments about the economy and tourism. More bikes are sold each year than cars, with 1.2 million bicycles sold in 2008. The bicycle industry contributes \$900 million to the Australian economy. Cycle tourism boosts regional tourism in those areas that need it the most. In places like South Australia, where for 10 years they have had the now well-entrenched Tour Down Under, in which we saw Lance Armstrong this year, we have seen this making a huge contribution. I know that next year's Tour Down Under will be bigger and better.

I finish where I started by saying that cycling is more than just riding a bike. It is about your health, it is about transport, it is about community and it is about environment. We need governments and the community to invest in all of those things.

Mr CHESTER (Gippsland) (7.06 pm)—It is a pleasure to join the debate on the National Bike Path Program and I acknowledge the very common sense and practical contribution made by the member for Oxley. The motion notes that:

... building community infrastructure or improving community amenity has the potential to generate local jobs and increase skills and social capital—

and that—

... investment in cycling is regarded as a cost effective way to increase mobility and physical activity... and boost regional tourism.

The motion goes on to note that it supports:

... awareness programs, initiatives, organisations and individuals that promote cycling as a way of getting fitter, having ... fun.

I am comfortable with the broad range and the general thrust of the motion because it highlights some regional development opportunities that I believe we have not fully explored as a nation, particularly to improve the health of our communities and to provide economic and tourism opportunities in regional areas. All the reports that we see on almost a daily basis point to a nation which is getting fatter and a nation where the health impacts of long-term disease related to inactivity are a major concern for us and costing our nation a fortune, yet we have piles of strategies saying we should be investing more in infrastructure to support healthier lifestyles. I think the most important aspect of the motion today is that we actually need to see action coming out of state, federal and local governments.

I have spoken previously about the East Gippsland Rail Trail and emphasised my support for the plan to rebuild the Latrobe River timber trestle rail bridge, which is a real opportunity for the federal government to create five jobs in the immediate construction phase and to support ongoing employment in the tourism industry and the smaller regional centres associated with the rail trail. The motion before us highlights the very important point that we need to provide opportunities for people to exercise safely. It comes back to the saying 'If you build it, they will come.' If the facilities are there for people to exercise safely, I am confident they will use them.

That brings me to the Latrobe City Bicycle Plan and the situation in the Latrobe Valley. I note the presence of the member for McMillan, who obviously has a very good understanding of the Latrobe Valley region and probably has a better appreciation than most of what could be done in the Latrobe Valley with improved cycle links. There is a need to develop better access—to link the Latrobe Valley communities, which are only 10 to 15 kilometres apart and

ideally situated to capitalise on commuter traffic. We would get more vehicles off the road, reduce fuel costs and provide what would be a low-cost sporting opportunity for people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, of whom there are many in the Latrobe Valley region. Towns such as Moe, Morwell, Traralgon and Churchill and the smaller regional centres would benefit enormously from improved cycle networks and infrastructure and a cycle friendly environment.

The Latrobe City Council has made moves in that regard and I note that there was funding announced only a couple of weeks ago by the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government of \$140,000 for the Latrobe City Council's Bicycle Plan to construct some shared pathways in the region. Unfortunately, \$140,000 is not anywhere near what is required in the long term. Without wishing to sound churlish, there needs to be a multimillion dollar investment in new cycling facilities to promote healthier lifestyles in the region, to improve safety and to improve the liveability of the region by connecting these large and smaller communities. It is hard to think of a regional centre anywhere in Australia more ideally suited to a major investment in cycling infrastructure. So I commend the member for Oxley for putting the motion before the House tonight.

One area that concerns me greatly, and the member for Oxley did touch on it, is the need to provide a safe cycling environment. We have a situation where bikes and cyclists are very exposed, with only limited protection, interacting too closely with vehicles on roads which were often not constructed to accommodate bicycles on the shoulders. If we get ourselves into a situation where we are providing improved infrastructure, where there is a dedicated cycle path and children can ride to school safely, you will find that parents are more comfortable with allowing their children to ride to school. So there are issues which need to be accommodated at a local planning level and also more significant funding costs which will require some federal and state support.

I refer briefly to the La Trobe City 2007-10 bicycle plan. I congratulate La Trobe City for having the vision to work towards encouraging greater participation in all recreational pursuits, particularly cycling, and to promote active living and participation in community life. It has got a plan for making sure that the road networks and the bicycle path networks are integrated with the footpaths and the public transport options, which will provide real opportunities for the people of Gippsland and the La Trobe Valley to exercise in a much safer manner. If we are going to wait for the state government, I am afraid we will be waiting for a very long time. The Brumby state government in Victoria has failed miserably in this regard. It recently released its \$115 million Victorian Cycling Strategy, which could have been renamed the 'Melbourne cycling strategy'.

Ms OWENS (Parramatta) (7.11 pm)—I thank the member for Oxley for moving this motion. Most of us would be aware that Bernie is himself quite a keen cyclist, as am I. I know probably as well as anybody that building cycling infrastructure is an investment in health and wellbeing and community liveability.

I had not been on a bike since I was at primary school, which was about 40-something years ago, and a friend of mine asked me to join a ride from Sydney to Canberra to present a petition for Work Choices. I agreed to do that ride, so I got on a bike again for the first time in 40 years and rode once around Parramatta Park, which is about three kilometres, had to push the bike up the hill and had sore muscles for two weeks. Six weeks later, I rode the 300 kilo-

metres from Sydney to Canberra and was well and truly hooked. I have been riding consistently since then. I have lost about 15 kilos, my heart rate has dropped about 25 beats and I have become a person with much more energy and focus than I had before. I now not only ride a lot but also race in the masters' competition.

I recently went online to get a photo of myself riding because I wanted one for a particular website. I looked at the shots of the A- and B-grade riders. They were riding round corners and looking really tough, pedalling like mad, gritting their teeth and sweating. I thought, 'Great, there will be one of me.' So I went down to D-grade, which is me—men's D-grade, mind you—and there I was: I was going around the corner, I was hanging off, my knee was sticking out and my shoulder was down. It looked absolutely fabulous: I was gritting my teeth and pedalling like mad, and behind me were two guys in their 70s riding along as if it was no problem at all!

That is well and truly my experience of cycling: because it is easy on the knees, you never forget how to do it and it is easy to get back into it, people in their 70s and 80s are still competing. In my electorate, I have Keith Oliver in the over-65 category who has won well over 15 world championships; Geoff Stoker who won four world championships in the masters' games and the recent world cycling games and broke two world records two weeks ago; and a group of men called the 'legends of Parramatta Park', all of whom are well over 65 and one who is in his 80s, who have ridden from Brisbane to Sydney and from Melbourne to Sydney with me—a distance of well over a thousand kilometres.

About eight of them joined me recently for a ride from Canberra to Sydney. Even in their 80s, they still race up every hill that has a name and compete in the sprint for every town sign. Even if you are riding 1,000 kilometres, you still have to sprint if there is a town sign and you sprint up every hill that has a name, and they can still beat me if they attack as a group, even in their 80s.

Cycling is an extraordinary activity that people can continue to do for their life. For many riders, as they get older, riding on the roads is no longer the option it was when they were younger. I am sure that Bernie rides on the road regularly—and so do I—but a lot of people as they get older, and women in particular, are looking for a much safer option and they are looking for those paths. In my area the M7, which is one of the best pieces of cycling infrastructure in the country, provides people the opportunity to ride as commuters, recreationally or in training on the one path. The water pipe, which is a cycling path built on the old water pipe through Prospect, is another one. Until recently it was 25 kilometres without a road. There is construction going on at the moment and we are fighting for its reconnection, but 25 kilometres without a road is an amazing piece of infrastructure.

We have many new paths being opened up in Parramatta. There are two new ones that have been funded by the federal government: one across the mangroves on the Parramatta River and another one that links Parramatta to Blacktown. These are incredibly important pieces of infrastructure that make it possible for people to get back on their bikes and do so safely.

I cannot commend this motion enough. We all talk about health; it is one of the big issues. Preventive health in particular is incredibly important, and providing people with facilities where they can exercise easily and in a fun way is unbelievably important. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr HARTSUYKER (Cowper) (7.16 pm)—I too would like to commend the member for Oxley for putting forward this motion. As he rightly pointed out, cycling is a sport that people can enjoy regardless of their age. I did not realise that the member for Oxley was such a fount of knowledge on cycling with his endless run of facts that he was able to provide us with. I certainly commend those facts.

On the North Coast we have a great environment and the opportunity to enjoy that environment by cycling is something that should not be missed. I think that further investment in cycling infrastructure can only help to make this sport grow. Where you have a very competitive tourism market I think that there are huge opportunities for communities to improve their appeal to tourists and visitors by offering better quality cycling infrastructure. Whilst there is cycling infrastructure around, all too often when you get to the really busy bits, the cycleway disappears and merges onto the main busy road. Quite often you will have a good cycle path for 50 per cent of the distance but then you have dangerous traffic conditions for the remaining 50 per cent. I think it is important that we become a lot more proactive in ensuring that our cycle paths conform to a cycling strategy, if you like, and when you get to those difficult areas of high traffic, the cycleway and the safety that it provides should be preserved. I think that is a very important point.

The health aspects of cycling cannot be overestimated. We have heard from previous speakers about the importance of cycling in relation to combating obesity and in relation to combating diabetes. I guess one of the really great things about cycling is that you can get fit without really noticing it—especially on downhill runs. The opportunity to actually enjoy your exercise without it becoming a grind is something that has a lot of appeal to people—especially when the whole family can participate, you can have a great day out with the family, and you can all be getting fit and enjoying cycling.

I have a vision for the east coast: with an ever-growing population, we should have an east coast cycle path to enable people to cycle safely from Victoria right the way up into Queensland. I think it would be a huge tourist mecca. I think it is something that would draw people from around the world. Australia has so many wonderful coastal vistas to be enjoyed; if we were able to connect much of the existing cycle infrastructure, fill in the gaps over time—and it would be a long-term process—and provide the ability for people to start in Victoria and ride way up into North Queensland, I think it would become one of the great cycling trips of the world. I think it would be an attraction for many international tourists as well as an attraction that can be enjoyed by locals. Just as many people travel the world to enjoy great rail journeys, I think that an east coast cycle path would be a massive point of difference between Australia and many other countries.

There are also the environmental aspects of cycling. For every kilometre that someone cycles instead of using a car, there is a benefit in reducing CO2 emissions. There is a lot of debate going on in this House in relation to the pros and cons of an ETS, but one thing is certain: if you ride your bike rather than taking the car, you are going to improve the environment by reduced consumption of resources and by reduced CO2 emissions.

I commend the motion. I think it is appropriate that we redouble our efforts to invest in cycle infrastructure. I certainly welcome the government's investment in cycling infrastructure; it is something that we should be looking to continue into the long term. It would be particularly beneficial on the North Coast, where we have a thriving tourism industry that is always

looking for new attractions. A cycle path that is currently under construction and which is getting longer and longer each year means that tourists visiting the area have an incentive to come back year after year to see the progress of the project. It is creating jobs in the construction phase and through tourism as thousands upon thousands of people enjoy the benefits of that cycle path.

I commend the member for Oxley, the member for Gippsland and the member for Paramatta for their contributions to the debate. I think it is a very worthwhile debate. I think that cycling is a sport that we should be supporting. We certainly should be attempting to make cycling as safe as it can be. Mixing bicycles with cars is always risky for the cyclist and I think that the more opportunity there is for the separation of bicycles from cars the safer the sport will become and the more attractive it will be to people of all ages.

Mr SIDEBOTTOM (Braddon) (7.21 pm)—Good evening, colleagues. May I commend the member for Oxley and all those others who have spoken on this recreation, wellbeing, health topic of shared pathways and bikeways. I could not think of a better place on earth to have a linear bikeway than between Latrobe on the north-west coast of Tassie—paralleling Bass Strait, all our rivers and all our townships, by the way—right the way through to Wynyard, which would be about 100 kilometres of magnificent bike track. We are actually on the way to achieving that through terrific collaboration between our local councils, the state government and, especially, the federal government. I do want to thank the federal government for its contribution. We have allocated about \$3 million so far to shared pathways along the north-west coast and also into Strahan and Tullah on the west coast, which is now part of my electorate of Braddon.

Devonport itself has magnificent pathways already along the beautiful Mersey River—on the Victoria Parade—and parallels Bass Strait before going on to the Don River and back to Bass Strait. It is absolutely magnificent there. What we would like to do is to join that up with a place called Turners Beach, which is a little further along the coast, and then into Ulverstone. At the last election we committed nearly \$800,000 to a bikeway between Turners Beach—a beautiful coastal residential and holiday area—and Ulverstone, which is by the beautiful Leven River. That is nearing completion now, so people will not have to make the dangerous journey along the highway. They will be able to take a cycle path and walk their way from Turners Beach into Ulverstone—a lot of people live at Turners Beach—and enjoy the pathways which already exist in Ulverstone.

Then if we take a couple of hundred more steps, wouldn't it be magnificent to have a bikeway into the beautiful township of Penguin, which is on Bass Strait? But our next allocation—a total of \$1.78 million—is to Burnie itself, for a bikeway from Emu River at a little section called Wivenhoe, right the way through to Cooe, which has a very Australian name. It will go right through to Burnie, which has totally re-invigorated itself after the decline of the pulp mill and has really invested in its future and its people. It is a vibrant city now and I would love to get Peter Garrett back to enable him to sing and talk about the cleanest city in Australia rather than the dirtiest. Anyway, Pete, take that on notice! It is a terrific bikeway that is going to be developed there. Then, if you go to Somerset—again, it is by Bass Strait—you find a beautiful little township. We allocated \$200,000 there for a wonderful community bike path, particularly giving access to people in wheelchairs. It also has terrific fitness equipment along the way.

To complement all this, you then move onto the magnificent township of Wynyard. It is great to doorknock there, because it is flat. Wynyard is a beautiful place by the Inglis River. It also borders Bass Strait. We have allocated \$139,000 to extend some of the tracks there. Then you make your way down to the west coast—and hopefully those who have bought raffle tickets in my raffle will win a ticket down there—to Strahan, a beautiful, cosmopolitan and international town with great access to the south-west and the Franklin. We are allocating \$300,000 to Strahan to develop a bike path there. And then there is the little tucked away township called Tullah. It is often forgotten about. It has the Wee Georgie Wood Steam Railway, a fantastic ride. We have allocated some money, with the council, who are putting in something like \$900,000 overall, for the development of shared pathways.

The story here is that pathways are the go. That is quite a good slogan—if you want to use it, you can. They are great for recreation and great for well being. Importantly, they are great for the community. Do you know what? Not only are we reclaiming our waterways and our rivers now but also reclaiming our communities by being together, getting out and saying hello and how do you do. You cannot experience that better than by coming to Braddon on the north-west coast of Tassie and the west coast. And I forgot King Island: they have got some funding, too.

Mr BROADBENT (McMillan) (7.26 pm)—It is rare to hear the member for Braddon waxing lyrical about his favourite place, Tasmania, and all of the parts of Tasmania that now have bike paths. You are looking at the former chairman of the Pakenham Shire Council bike path committee. Around 26 years ago, my first major responsibility at the Pakenham Shire Council was to take on the role of the chairman of the Pakenham bike path committee. Like the member for Braddon, we had a grand vision for our community and cycling into the future. We put that down on paper. There was to be a ridge line that went from Pakenham all the way to Upper Pakenham. There was going to be a shared pathway that went from Pakenham. You would be able to ride up there and go all the way to the pony club at Upper Pakenham. This was going to be the most glorious ride.

Then a developer came along and he decided that he was going to put houses on the land that we were going to put our path on. We took it to VCAT and we lost. That ridge line now, instead of having a bike way, shared footpaths and a beautiful opportunity for people to interact from the hills to the town, now has houses and no access for bikes to Upper Pakenham. The only way that we will be able to do it in the future is to build the path on the side of a road, with half the beauty that it would have had. We lost the fight. So I learnt early that in politics you do lose some times.

I congratulate Mr Ripoll, the member for Oxley, for his foresight in bringing this motion before the House. I was a young boy in Koo Wee Rup—not Cooe in Tasmania but Koo Wee Rup in Victoria. We had open drains and we had a horse named Darkie, who pulled a cart and moved forward every 10 feet through the voices of the men working with the cart. One of those men was Percy Osborne. I only knew him as Percy. He looked after Darkie the horse. The council depot was just down from our place. It was fairly exciting to be out there with Darkie and Percy Osborne. As a young guy, I did not know who Percy Osborne was. This guy on the cart cleaning the drains was a great bike rider who rode with Sir Hubert Opperman. It was only explained to me as the years went on just how important this man was who lived in Koo Wee Rup with me.

What have we done in our electorates? We have heard all about the joys of bike riding from all the experts who have been here today. I am surprised that the member for Braddon did not come in in Lycra today to make a real presentation. We have now fantastic rail trails. These are great trips. They include: Leongatha to Foster, Wonthaggi to Kilcunda, Mirboo North to Boolarra, Warragul to Yarragon and Warragul to Drouin, a brand-new path that the state government put in as part of the infrastructure program. Now there is a great path that you can walk or cycle down all the way from Warragul to Drouin. We need some money from the government for a double road to go right through there, but we have this most magnificent bike path. It is very important to us.

What can I shout about? I can shout about Kathy Watt because she comes from our area and I am a very close friend of her mother. She is an important person. We have two local sporting champions. The McMillan winners were Stuart Smith from Leongatha and Brenton Jones, a mountain biker from Jindivick. Also in my electorate there are many people over 55, a lot more than in most electorates. Many of them are taking up cycling as recreation. But it is quiet recreation.

It does not matter where you travel today, you will see cyclists. I like to drive to Queensland once a year to see my sister. Wherever you go on the road north, whether you go up the Newell Highway or you go up Highway 1, you will see groups of people of every age having their breakfast meeting after a ride or taking their morning activity on a bike. Caloundra is a favourite place of mine—not that it beats anywhere in Tasmania—and in Caloundra I would see dozens and dozens and dozens of people on their bikes. I have been having a break up there and I saw them undertaking this activity.

Cycling is growing out of all proportion across the whole of Gippsland. From the descriptions I have heard today, we are not on our own in Gippsland. Obviously this is happening right across the nation. It is good for Australia. It is a sporting area where we punch above our weight, always have and always will.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr MJ Washer)—Order! The time allotted for this debate has expired. The debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Royal Papua and New Guinea Constabulary: 1949 to 1974

Debate resumed, on motion by **Mr Morrison**:

That the House:

- (1) recognises the service of those Australians who were employed as field constabulary officers (Kiaps) in the Royal Papua and New Guinea Constabulary between 1949 and 1974;
- (2) acknowledges the hazardous and difficult conditions that were experienced by the members serving with the Royal Papua and New Guinea constabulary;
- (3) notes that former members of the Regular Constabulary of the Royal Papua and New Guinea Constabulary may be entitled to long service and good conduct medals, such as the National Medal, subject to meeting eligibility criteria;
- (4) supports moves to allow former members of the Field Constabulary to count their service towards the National Medal;
- (5) notes that qualifying service to meet the eligibility criteria for the National Medal must include at least one day of service on or after the medal's creation on 14 February 1975;

- (6) expresses concern that many former Kiaps may not meet the eligibility criteria for the National Medal, as eligible Kiap service ceased on 30 November 1973;
- (7) recognises that the Trust Territory of New Guinea, under the terms of the *Papua New Guinea Act 1949* and the Trusteeship Agreement for the Territory of New Guinea, held sovereignty unto itself and as such, was at law an international country (and foreign to Australia);
- (8) recognises that the Governor-General's assent of the *Papua New Guinea Act 1949* and the signing of the "Trusteeship Agreement" for New Guinea by the Australian Government, prescribed service activity whereby the service was carried out by members of the Australian Police Force and the service was undertaken as part of an international operation; and
- (9) calls on the Australian Government to change the eligibility criteria applying to the Police Overseas Service Medal so as not to prevent the award of the medal to those:
 - (a) Australian public servants who were employed through the Australian Government and served in the Australian administered United Nations Trust Territory of New Guinea between 1949 and 1974; and
 - (b) individuals serving in Papua New Guinea as sworn and armed Commissioned Officers of the Royal Papua and New Guinea Constabulary (at the time an Australian External Territorial Police Force).

Mr MORRISON (Cook) (7.31 pm)—This motion recognises the services of those Australians who were employed as field constabulary officers, known as Kiaps, in the Royal Papua and New Guinea Constabulary between 1949 and 1974. A number of them have joined us here in the chamber this evening with their families. It is wonderful to have them here for this occasion. Earlier this year when I was preparing for the Kokoda Mateship Trek with my good friend and colleague the member for Blaxland, Jason Clare, I had no knowledge of the Kiaps. But a very good friend of mine, Mike Douglas, a former Kiap, from my electorate, brought the role of the Kiaps to my attention. Mike has also been a keen servant of the Liberal Party for the last 30 years. The Kiaps were an extraordinary group of young Australians who performed a remarkable service for the people of PNG. They were some of our nation's finest. Their adventurous spirit was matched only by their commitment to the wellbeing of the people of Papua New Guinea. Their story remains largely untold. More Australians need to know the story of the Kiaps. It is deserving of recognition and much greater awareness.

Kiap is a word originating in New Guinea. In pidgin, it largely means captain. The best estimate of how many men served in these roles is around 2,000. The Kiaps undertook their service in Papua New Guinea between 1949 and 1974, after the end of the Second World War when the territory today known as PNG became an Australian managed territory known as the Territory of Papua and New Guinea. It gained its independence in 1975. From my limited experience during the Kokoda Mateship Trek, I found PNG to be a country of large impenetrable jungles, high mountain ranges and wide and wild rivers. The terrain makes it extremely difficult to move between places, resulting in the isolation of PNG's tribal groups and more than 700 languages among those tribes.

It was the job of the Kiaps to bring order and stability to a largely lawless and tribal land. The role of the patrol officer comprised many official functions and just as many non-official ones. The official duties included acting as a representative of all arms of the government for a particular area which was their domain, the exploration of new territory and bringing the rule of law to the country, not to mention brokering peace between warring tribes. They were the law. If they did not uphold the law then there was no law. In addition to district admini-

stration duties, the Kiap had to become familiar with the villages and the country under their control, undertake patrols and court work and have a broad range of knowledge. They were indeed jacks of all trades. They also sought to assist the economic development and the general wellbeing of the villages. The Kiap's ultimate aim was to build an orderly, prosperous and unified people living in peace and harmony. The work was often dangerous and the conditions were genuinely primitive.

In Philip Fitzpatrick's book he describes the kiaps as men with dogged perseverance who helped bring the emerging nation of Papua New Guinea to independence. During their patrols kiaps could have been killed by poison tipped arrows or spears or axed to death. They could have suffered from accidents or sicknesses like malaria or been exposed to snakes, crocodiles, large bush pigs and millions of mosquitoes. Patrols were certainly not glamorous; rather, they were hard, dirty uncomfortable work.

Although the job of a kiap was hazardous, it was not always in police work that kiaps encountered danger. Other aspects of the job were equally hazardous. Ross Wilkinson from Victoria served as a kiap and tells of the dangerous ancillary duties connected with the job, such as flying in light aircraft on search and rescue missions and the use of explosives for road and airstrip construction. A kiap was also expected to destroy unexploded ordnance from the war.

Kiaps were armed. Each was given a Lee-Enfield .303 rifle for police work and revolvers and shotguns for non-police work. Some died in drowning accidents. Others were murdered while on official police business, such as the East New Britain District Commissioner Jack Emmanuel, who was killed by disaffected landowners on the Gazelle Peninsula when he attempted to intervene in a land ownership dispute.

This motion seeks recognition for our kiaps. Points (3), (4) and (5) of my motion suggest that this recognition be provided by eligible service counting towards the National Medal. Point (9) of the motion calls for the service of kiaps to be counted towards the award of a Police Overseas Service Medal. This would require the amendment of the Police Overseas Service Medal Regulations 2007.

The Police Federation of Australia has given support to this initiative to formally recognise former kiaps, fully understanding the roles they performed as commissioned officers, which were very demanding and quite different to traditional policing functions, and the similarity of those roles to the ones currently performed by its members in areas of the South Pacific such as the Solomon Islands.

It is great to have our kiaps with us here this evening. I particularly want to thank Chris Viner-Smith, who is here tonight; Philip Fitzpatrick, who assisted with this motion; and Mike Douglas, my good friend from the shire.

Mr KERR (Denison—Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs) (7.36 pm)—I recently stood down from my position of Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs, but in that role I took the position, after receiving representations from those representing the former patrol officers, that our government should look at some way of appropriately recognising their service. I would hope that some means of doing so evolves that properly recognises the breadth of service. I know there is some discussion, even among those who served as kiaps and patrol officers, as to whether the mechanism that has been proposed by this motion is the appropriate one. It certainly puts a considerable degree of emphasis on the policing role

that kiaps had, but I think it is fair to say that kiaps were far more than police. Whilst it is true that they were all sworn officers, equally they represented the civil authority in the widest range of possible services. They were, in many ways, the face of government in the districts for which they had responsibility. I, like many who spent some time in Papua New Guinea, have the privilege of knowing a number of people who served in that role and I think that their service to Australia is something that should be properly recognised.

I note that in the recent PNG affairs newsletter that is produced by Keith Jackson, who has a long history of involvement, there is a discussion between Phil Fitzpatrick and Paul Oates about whether the particular mechanism that is proposed in this motion is appropriate—the reservation being the overemphasis, perhaps, on the policing function. Nonetheless, it is important for Australians to recognise the importance of the work of a few thousand young men—principally; there were a few women—who took these patrol officer roles at a time when our nation was yet to see that the country would evolve finally to full independence, although the kiap roles did continue right up to independence. Indeed, one of my close friends in Tasmania, a man called Rick Giddings, transitioned from working as a kiap to working as a magistrate resolving land disputes in Goroka. I am sure that a number had a similar history, moving from working within the administration as part of the Australian Public Service into administration roles with the newly independent government of Papua New Guinea, some perhaps even taking up citizenship in Papua New Guinea.

I commend the mover of this motion for bringing this issue to the parliament. In expressing reservations about whether this mechanism is right I do not mean to denigrate the principle. I think what is being sought is to use an existing form of recognition, to squeeze that very broad service that kiaps undertook into an existing form of recognition. It may be that a new model needs to evolve to properly recognise the range and depth of that service.

Finally, all Australians would benefit from greater exposure to and understanding of the work that was undertaken in Papua New Guinea preceding its independence. The ABC has produced a wonderful pictorial representation which was on television and I think it is available in DVD and in book form now as a publication called *Taim bilong masta*. There is a wide number of other representations of that work in published literature. It is an area of Australia's history which is underrecognised and the service that has been given to our country by those who provided the leadership on behalf of the Australian government during the period between the end of World War II and Papua New Guinea becoming independent is something that is insufficiently known. It is certainly true that in a number of instances people did serve in quite arduous circumstances. On the one hand, some lost their lives. On the other hand, I know that some served in circumstances that they remember most fondly. I know it is true that many people who served as kiaps came back to Australia saying that the period they served was the most memorable, most significant and most rewarding part of their lives, so it is not entirely a story of adversity and hardship. It is both a story of difficulty in some circumstances—and, as I said, regrettably some kiaps lost their life in the service of their country—and equally a story of a remarkably rewarding experience that they share now with those that served with them as they recall the service they gave to their country and to the now-independent state of Papua New Guinea.

Mr HARTSUYKER (Cowper) (7.42 pm)—I certainly welcome the opportunity to speak on the motion moved by the member for Cook. It gives me great pleasure to speak on behalf

of my constituents who served as patrol officers in the territory of Papua New Guinea. In particular, I wish to recognise the ongoing efforts of Bowraville resident Robert Cruickshank, who continues to campaign for official recognition of the kiaps. I welcome former kiaps and members of their family who are here in the Main Committee chamber tonight.

Kiaps were multiskilled field officers who often filled over a dozen roles within the remote Papua New Guinean communities they served. A note written by a kiap in 1955 describes the challenges of being a patrol officer. He said:

Changing times have necessitated field staff officers to have further qualifications. Now he must also be a typist, storeman, mechanic, radio operator, driver, agriculturalist, coroner and undertaker, police investigator, anthropologist, security agent, hotelier and diplomat; stevedore, shop and factory; hygiene, labour, industry and prices inspector; airfield, wharf and bridge construction expert; census taker, electoral returning officer, economist, re-forestation officer, social surveyor, defence counsel, departmental liaison officer, electrician, mayor and social organiser, local authorities propagandiser and organiser.

That is quite a list of responsibilities indeed. He went on to say:

In addition to these normal qualifications, for an officer to remain in the service, he must practice monastic celibacy ... he must be prepared to live in sub-human habitation, give his undying, unquestioning, unrecognised, unreciprocated loyalty, and for any hope of promotion possess certain academic qualifications, and to remain sane, possess a sense of humour.

I rely on the words of others in that regard. Every kiap's duty statement contained the traditional bureaucratic proviso at the end that said that on top of all those other duties they were required to carry out 'any other duties that may be directed to be carried out from time to time'.

The kiaps lived a dangerous existence. There was an ever-present threat of attack from hostile tribes and locals, and many kiaps were murdered on patrol. The harsh conditions on the frontier also proved to be very dangerous, with accidents and illness claiming the lives of kiaps. The list of kiaps killed in boating and aircraft accidents is extensive and I think it is fitting that these men and their surviving comrades should be officially honoured by the Australian government.

There is no doubt the kiaps played a valuable part in the development of Papua New Guinea in the period after World War II. When peace returned to PNG after the war, many of the towns and other signs of progress had been destroyed. Gardens and villages had been ruined and the plantations were damaged or neglected. The kiaps were usually representative of all arms of government in a frontier area and they often brought the first trickle of European civilisation to that area. The extraordinary efforts of these men and, as we have heard, a small number of women ought to be officially honoured by the Australian government because their stories make up a valuable chapter in our nation's history. They have achieved amazing results with limited resources and in the most inhospitable conditions.

I will close with a statement from Norm Richardson, an ex-kiap, who appropriately described the efforts of his kiap comrades by saying:

They went where others feared to tread and did so without unnecessary bloodshed or disruption of the life of the people, frequently to the detriment of their own health and well being.

The country was changed from a state of constant fear and predation, village upon village, to one of free travel, cooperation across language groups and peace between long standing tribal combatants.

I pay tribute to the amazing achievements of the kiaps in New Guinea and offer my wholehearted support to this motion. I should also say that it is unfortunate that bureaucracy can get in the way of appropriate recognition. The time has now come to strip away that bureaucratic impediment and to allow proper recognition of the kiaps, which they most justly deserve.

Ms HALL (Shortland) (7.46 pm)—Firstly, I would like to congratulate the member for Cook for bringing this very important motion to the House. In addition, I would like to say that it is very appropriate that we give recognition to the role the kiaps played in PNG. Furthermore, I would like to put on the record that I know that this has been a long campaign—it has gone over six or so years—and that you are getting towards the end of the road now. I truly believe that there is going to be some form of recognition in the very near future.

I have recently been to PNG with the Standing Committee on Health and Aging and we visited a number of remote villages. We were looking at the delivery of health services, Australia's relationship with PNG and how we work with PNG to deliver those services. Whilst I was there, I became very aware of the role that kiaps played, not only in law and order and protection which I will touch on in a moment and the other issues that the member for Cook mentioned in his motion, but also in the actual coordination and delivery of health services in those very remote areas. I think that is a role that is not widely recognised and, when it was no longer played after 1974, it left quite a gap in the provision of health services in those areas. It has been a long road since then to get to the stage we are at now, where we are probably coming to terms a little with just how difficult it is to deliver those services in those areas. We visited a number of the Torres Strait island villages and we also went to Daru and spoke with the governor of that area and of the gulf area. They explained to us the sheer logistics that are associated with delivering those services. The kiaps were there; they coordinated it and without them there—I know that some of you are kiaps who worked there—that service would never have been delivered.

PNG is very different to Australia. We have remote areas in Australia, but our remoteness is different. The issues we have around keeping peace and harmony within the community are very different. The role played there by kiaps—and some of you are here tonight—was of vital importance. You kept those communities together. You kept those tribes together. You kept villages and districts functioning. And it was not just the villages that you lived in; it was also an area, a district, a region. You had just such enormous responsibility—as the member for Cowper detailed previously.

I have spoken at some length with the previous parliamentary secretary about the role that you played, and he really brought home to me how big the gap was that was left—particularly in the delivery of health services—when you were no longer there, and I concentrate on that because it is an area that I am particularly interested in.

I know you have met with Senator Faulkner and I know that negotiations are taking place in relation to recognition and how that recognition should be tangible. I know that the government is working to see that formal recognition is given for the vital role that you played from the Australian perspective and from PNG's perspective. I conclude by thanking you very much and congratulating the member for Cook for bringing this very important information to the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr MJ Washer)—Order! The time allotted for this debate has expired. The debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Homelessness in Australia

Debate resumed, on motion by **Mr Bradbury**:

That the House:

- (1) notes the impact of homelessness on individuals and families around Australia;
- (2) acknowledges the strategies of the Rudd Government in addressing affordable housing and homelessness;
- (3) recognises the important work of not-for-profit and other community-based organisations in tackling homelessness; and
- (4) congratulates the Nepean Campaign Against Homelessness on the launch of its Regional Taskforce and the work that it has been doing to improve access to affordable housing.

Mr BRADBURY (Lindsay) (7.52 pm)—It is estimated that every night 105,000 Australians are homeless. These are the people sleeping rough on the streets, under bridges or in parks in our communities. They are people like Patrick, who recently phoned my office late on a Friday afternoon. He had been robbed by another resident of the shelter at which he had been staying and had slept in a park for the previous two nights. He also has terminal stomach cancer and was desperate for somewhere warm and safe to stay for the night.

Homeless people are often victims of domestic violence, alcohol or drug abuse or sufferers of mental illness. Increasingly they are low-income families or pensioners who have become unable to afford their private rental properties but face a wait of sometimes years to enter public housing. They are also the people going from couch to couch at friends' homes or staying in caravan parks or hotels, after having found themselves with nowhere else to go.

Debbie Peckham knows what it is like. She lives with her two children in temporary accommodation. She is currently housed in Barnardo's temporary accommodation in Kingswood and told *Penrith Press* on 22 September 2009:

'I know this isn't forever,' she said. 'I'm always thinking "OK, we're moving again, I've got to start packing."'

The impact of homelessness is profound. It can disrupt the development of young children, who miss out on formal schooling, and cause further social dislocation and instability for families and individuals who are already being pushed to the fringes of our communities.

I am proud to be part of a government that has not only put homeless and housing affordability back on the national agenda but also is building more homes to house those in need. We have come a long way since before the last election. We now have a federal housing minister who is tackling this role with great passion. We have a white paper, *The road home*, which has delivered a bold target for the future: halving homelessness by 2020. We have put some serious financial support on the table, increasing the Commonwealth investment in addressing homelessness by 55 per cent to \$800 million over the next four years. Through the national affordable housing agreement that was struck with the states and territories, there will be an additional \$6.1 billion over five years for social housing and support for those in the private rental market at risk of becoming homeless.

Through the stimulus package we have made the single biggest Commonwealth investment in social housing by funding the construction of 19,200 units around Australia. In my electorate of Lindsay the first two social housing units approved under the stimulus package are nearing completion and a further 250 units will be constructed over the next 12 months. Significantly, more than \$2.7 million was spent on repairs and maintenance for 583 dwellings in my electorate, which helped to increase the number of social housing dwellings available to tenants. These houses would otherwise have been uninhabitable. The social housing program is also complementing other schemes like the National Rental Affordability Scheme, which will deliver new houses to low- and middle-income families and individuals at 20 per cent below the market rent. Increasing the number of houses that are available to people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless will help people like Debbie Peckham and Patrick.

We are also blessed to have outstanding networks of not-for-profit and community organisations which are providing essential support, assistance and direction in the homeless policy. I would like to take this opportunity to particularly acknowledge the work of the Nepean Campaign Against Homelessness. Established in 2007, the Nepean Campaign Against Homelessness has brought together a regional consortium of community housing groups, not-for-profit community organisations, churches, philanthropists, councils and government authorities and is convened by Stephanie Brennan, who I would like to thank for her dedication and commitment to this campaign.

In September the Nepean Campaign Against Homelessness launched a regional taskforce with the Minister for Housing with the goal of working within the policy framework set out by the Rudd government to deliver real outcomes in the Nepean region, including innovative solutions like the Common Ground model, which locates homelessness services and employment services in a combined accommodation facility. I would like to acknowledge the following members of the regional taskforce: Councillor Karen McKeown; Michael Vassili; Nick Sabel; the chair, Felicity Reynolds; Stephanie Oatley; Mary Waterford; the Hon. Phil Koperberg; Trish Doyle; Liz Giles; Katie Price; and Captain Colin Young. I would also like to single out Richard Eastmead, the owner of the Good Guys in Penrith, for his outstanding effort in engaging the local business community and raising the profile of homelessness in our community.

We have begun an important new phase in our policy approach to homelessness. I look forward to seeing the positive impacts that these efforts will have over the coming years.

Mr MORRISON (Cook) (7.57 pm)—As the shadow minister for housing I welcome this opportunity to participate in this debate on homelessness. In focusing on homelessness I want to stress once again the coalition's bipartisan support for some \$3.5 billion worth of initiatives that have been announced by this government since it came to office. In doing so I also generally commend the Minister for Housing, who I know has a very sincere and deep commitment to addressing this issue. We may disagree from time to time about some of the methods, but I have no doubt about her genuine conviction and sincerity on this matter. I commend her for it and for bringing the issue of homelessness to far greater public attention in this place and more broadly.

The coalition are supporting many initiatives in this area from the government. We also recognise that in the last census around 105,000 Australians were considered homeless and around 16 per cent were sleeping rough on the streets—and I am sure the numbers have in-

creased since then. While there had been a decline in youth homelessness, which was the single biggest component of homelessness in the five years leading up to that statistic, what was equally disturbing and concerning was the significant increase in homelessness amongst families. I think all of us would shudder at the thought of parents struggling with kids without a home. As a parent I find that unthinkable, and it obviously demands our attention in this place.

In that period of time also the number of people on public housing waiting lists reduced by 30,000. During that same time, despite an investment by state and federal governments of around \$4 billion, there was a reduction in the number of public housing dwellings by more than 10,000. What that says is that, in order to address issues of housing and homelessness, at least from an economic perspective, we have to address issues like ensuring they have a job, they have growth in their income and they have wages that can support them in private accommodation. At the end of the day, our goal should be to have fewer people requiring homeless services, fewer people requiring supported accommodation in the area of social housing and more people able to live sustainably in the private housing market. To do that we have to focus on the causes, not the symptoms, in this very critical area.

In the area of homelessness—and this is particularly where the coalition has lent its greatest support to the government—we have supported strongly initiatives such as A Place to Call Home. This is an excellent initiative which gives capital resources and support to not-for-profit organisations such as Mission Australia to go out and put beds in place. That is what they do. It is an excellent initiative. Equally, the Reconnect Program, which was a program of the previous government, and other programs which seek to connect homeless youth, in particular, to employment and other life circumstances are very good programs which deal with the root causes of homelessness.

Those who will always have to rely on homelessness services, rather than those who may need them from time to time for economic reasons, will be forced to do so because of fairly drastic life situations in their own journeys. These include mental illness, severe life disruptions caused by death, disability or things of this nature, juvenile justice issues, substance abuse and a range of other dramatic events which forever seem to disadvantage people from being able to achieve a sense of sustainability with their own housing needs. These are the people I want to make sure that we focus our attention on and provide services and support to. To do that, we need to ensure that as many people as possible are not competing for those services for economic reasons.

While I support elements of the motion put forward tonight—in particular, points (1) and (3)—and take on good faith the presentation made by the previous speaker about the work of the local community organisations, which I am sure is accurate and worthy of commendation, in my opinion, the government's strategy focuses far too much on the public dimension of this problem and not enough on the private dimension. Ninety-five per cent of Australians live in private housing. The Reserve Bank governor has made it crystal clear that the affordability pressures that are built into our housing markets across the country are being caused by a chronic dislocation of supply and demand. We need to build around 190,000 dwellings each year to make up for the backlog and to cope with future population pressures. We are building fewer than 140,000. As long as that remains the case, because of blockages in supply—principally at a state and local government level—and we have a national affordable housing

agreement which does not require one state or territory government in this country to release one block of land or approve one dwelling unit, we will have a problem. This is where the focus needs to be—on a comprehensive policy, not one that looks only at the public domain.

Ms VAMVAKINO (Calwell) (8.02 pm)—I rise tonight to speak on the very important social issue of homelessness and I want to begin by congratulating the member for Lindsay for bringing the issue of homelessness to this chamber. It is hard to talk about homelessness without talking about a denial of the opportunities afforded to most Australians—opportunities which exist on the premise that a person is living in the comfort and security of a stable home. On any given night up to 105,000 of our fellow Australians are homeless, divorced of the connection to all that was once theirs and, from it, losing all opportunities that would otherwise be available to them. With a lack of a point of stability, it is difficult for homeless people not only to obtain and keep a job but also to participate in many other of life's aspects.

If we are going to change the landscape of opportunity for the homeless across Australia, we as a government need to create supported and sustainable living arrangements and social housing programs to accommodate our most vulnerable citizens. We need to ensure that, as Australia moves forward into a progressive future, it does so in the company of all its citizens. That is why I am encouraged by the federal government's National Affordable Housing Agreement as well as the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness—which aim to do just that. From these key initiatives, specialist housing services are made available and new initiatives, programs and services to tackle issues of social inclusion and housing affordability are created.

These initiatives reflect the fact that the Rudd Labor government is not just about building bricks but is as much about tackling the effects of homelessness and its root causes. These are key measures that build a solid framework from which the government's white paper on homelessness, entitled *The road home*, is brought to fruition and key initiatives are rolled out to meet its objective of halving the rate of homelessness by 2020. By identifying interim targets, the government has ensured that this will occur in an environment of transparency and accountability.

I would like to acknowledge here today the important work that community based organisations undertake in the field of homelessness. Having worked closely with the Reverend David Peake of E Qubed, which is part of the Anglicare Australia-wide network, I have come to learn firsthand of the local initiatives being put forward to address what is described as the 'web of disadvantage'. The proposals put forward by David Peake, through his E Qubed project, aimed at building a social enterprise centre, are designed to address the disproportionately high rate of disadvantage in Broadmeadows and surrounding areas. They aim to tackle the staggering figures shown in the 2007 *Dropping off the edge* report authored by Professor Tony Vinson, which maps the distribution of social disadvantage throughout Australia. In this report, Professor Vinson cites Broadmeadows as the most disadvantaged community in Victoria.

David notes that, of the young people involved in the programs he has attended to over the last 30 years, roughly 30 per cent were considered homeless. It was the homeless youth who carried most of the problems, bringing with them issues to do with domestic violence, substance abuse and, amongst other things, issues of self-harm. As problems accumulate and is-

sues to do with social exclusion are compounded, young females who are homeless are particularly at risk, with David estimating that roughly 20 per cent were victims of child sex abuse. What this demonstrates is that homelessness is an issue which is not confined to a particular demographic and that it requires a wide range of responses. David's experience over the last three decades speaks volumes. When you have a situation where there is acute disadvantage within an already disadvantaged sector of society, it is really difficult to try to arrive at a level at which these people are able to fully participate in that society.

In the Australian context it is home which serves as a basis for all other opportunities afforded to us all. E Qubed aims to create a stable environment from which to run its programs. It is, as David notes, what a home should be in terms of developing attitudes. It aims to provide a framework from which issues such as multigenerational unemployment and the lack of ambitious thinking are addressed within an environment reflective of the stability of a home. As David notes:

Housing targets will only be effective if they are complemented with other support programs—it is primarily an issue of social inclusion.

That is why I welcome the federal government's social inclusion agenda and the creation of new initiatives, programs and services to tackle issues of social inclusion surrounding the efforts aimed at tackling homelessness. Such a multifaceted approach will help Australia tackle this key question and will serve as an encouragement to people like David who have long been trying to grapple with this complex social problem.

Ms MARINO (Forrest) (8.07 pm)—I rise to speak on the motion moved by the member for Lindsay. I thank the member for Lindsay for bringing the issue of homelessness before the House and for the opportunity to participate in the debate. Homelessness is a very serious issue both in my electorate of Forrest and across Australia—that inadequate access to safe and secure housing that so many of us take for granted. Homelessness affects thousands of people both directly and indirectly. In 2008 it was estimated that there were 958 homeless people in the South West of WA, which equates to a rate of 52 homeless people per 10,000 head of population.

As we have heard, and are all aware, there is a very serious personal risk in living on the street, living in crisis or refuge accommodation or living in improvised accommodation. We know that domestic and family violence are the most common reasons for homelessness. Eviction and previous accommodation completion are other major contributors, as are relationship and family breakdown, usual accommodation being unavailable and financial difficulties—which is why the member for Cook was so right when he confirmed that the need for jobs is very important.

Participants at two recent Shelter WA housing forums expressed their belief that there was a hidden homelessness problem in the South West of WA. It has been confirmed that, at a rate of 52 per 10,000 head, the South West had a higher proportional rate of homelessness than the Perth metropolitan area. Furthermore, current figures indicate that around 105,000 Australians are homeless each night. In December, 16,000 Australians were classified as sleeping rough on the streets. The level of homelessness in Australia has remained constant for the past 12 years. In fact, youth homelessness has actually reduced over the last five years, and programs such as Reconnect have been very important in this process.

Homelessness is about more than just not having a house or a home to live in, and there are no easy answers as often each case is specific. The coalition is consistently giving bipartisan support to measures that address homelessness and believes that it is essential we achieve the correct policy balance. While building extra shelters is useful and necessary, they alone do not address the underlying causes of homelessness. We believe that an integrated outcomes-based policy is required that addresses many of the complexities of homelessness including mental health, employment services, substance abuse, family support, law enforcement and juvenile justice. A collaborative approach that not only houses the homeless, but also builds new economic growth—one of the keys to encouraging provision of private market housing that is affordable to as many Australians as possible.

Whilst in government, the coalition promoted a number of innovative approaches to housing finance, the acceleration of housing supply and reduction regulatory barriers. Public housing availability is an increasing issue in my electorate and I note that there are increasing numbers waiting for public housing. An article in the *Australian* on 6 November stated:

...while the Rudd government's multi-billion-dollar stimulus measures to boost the nation's social and community housing stock will eventually add 20,000 homes, it's a drop in the bucket given that 250,000 houses are needed to meet the immediate demand, ...

The *West Australian* reported increasing waiting lists for public houses in Western Australia. In an article in the *West Australian*, the Department of Housing and Works Director-General, Grahame Searle, stated that the median rental price in WA has soared \$50 a week in recent years from about \$160 a week four years ago, to about \$360 a week now.

In conclusion, the coalition gives bipartisan support for the homeless program, but we believe that we must look at permanent solutions and will continue to do so. I recognise the work and efforts of all of the groups and individuals in my electorate who assist with homeless people and work tirelessly to support them. The Collie Rotary Club recently held a 'sleep out with the homeless' campaign in an effort to not only raise the profile of people who are homeless in their community but to also raise funds for a range of initiatives to support them.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. DGH Adams)—Order! The time allotted for this debate has expired. The debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Australian Live Export Industry

Debate resumed, on motion by **Mr Haase**:

That the House:

- (1) recognises that the Australian live export industry:
 - (a) employs 13,000 Australians nationally across 30 separate business types;
 - (b) contributes AUD\$1.8 billion each year to Australia's Gross Domestic Product;
 - (c) pays AUD\$987 million a year in wages and salaries; and
 - (d) contributes AUD\$830 million to regional economies and underpins the economic and social wellbeing of large slices of rural and remote Australia, particularly in Western Australia;
- (2) notes that:
 - (a) Australia is regarded as the world leader in livestock export regulation and management;

- (b) if Australia stopped live export, the trade would go to less scrupulous countries than ours and put severe supply pressure on already struggling third world countries;
 - (c) it would cost the Australian economy AUD\$1 billion to phase out live trade;
 - (d) the cessation of live export would have a severe impact on domestic markets, particularly in the regions;
 - (e) many pastoralists in the electoral division of Kalgoorlie do not have the option to crop as an alternative industry as suggested by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) commissioned ACIL Tasman report; and
 - (f) the RSPCA and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) should focus on real and relevant animal cruelty issues; and
- (3) considers that the Australian Government should commit to a campaign countering RSPCA and PETA misinformation.

Mr HAASE (Kalgoorlie) (8.12 pm)—I rise this evening to encourage support for this motion tabled in my name. I tabled this motion in October after I had been approached by a number of constituents in my vast electorate of Kalgoorlie to protect jobs in my electorate. The concern of my constituents is that there is a steady stream of misguided information and bigotry coming from the RSPCA and PETA organisations' propaganda machines that impact directly on farmers and pastoralists in my patch, and of course Australia-wide in relation to the export of livestock. Many Australian stakeholders supporting the live export industry have similar ideologies to those that oppose it—both value the need for acceptable welfare standards. All producers have an interest in selling a beast in the very best of condition.

Under the Howard government, conditions on transport vessels improved. They are equal to or, in some cases, better than those in livestock production scenarios in Australia—fully shaded, clear water and cool air provided. We are now regarded as a world leader in welfare standards for livestock export. We raised the level of awareness worldwide for animal welfare standards. Live export is governed by the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock—the ASEL—and the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.

Now for some facts: the Australian livestock export industry equals \$1.8 billion per annum; it employs 13,000 Australians nationally; Australian livestock export pays \$987 million in wages and salaries per annum; Western Australian livestock export is worth \$471 million per annum; and cattle from the north-west alone is worth \$87 million a year and employs 1,045 people. There is no economically viable alternative market for remote pastoral leases product, and they currently export out of Derby, Wyndham, Broome and Port Hedland.

The high cost of transport to abattoirs in the south of the state is restrictive. And of course you need to consider that pastoralists, contrary to the view held by the RSPCA, do not have the luxury option of planting crops. The industry underpins economic and social wellbeing in large slices of Western Australia. The live trade contributes to Australia's social responsibility for food security in export markets and jobs in importing countries.

There are three clear market sectors for meat—frozen, chilled and fresh—and all present a strong and unique selling point in their particular niche. The Australian meat processing industry has been in long-term decline due to overcapacity and inefficient plants, plus difficulties in industrial relations and slow growth in domestic demand for meat. The RSPCA believe that live exports should be replaced with chilled and frozen products. This really is an arrogant nonsense when you consider that the wet markets in the importing countries do not have

refrigeration. They need to have a wet market where they do killing on site in order to provide the product that their customers want. Those who are not well aware of the drivers in these particular industries should consider that the customer is always right, and they need to have the product presented in a manner that they can consume and store. It is no good selling into a wet market a product that has been frozen. Rule No. 1 in animal husbandry and production is that you sell the product that the market wants and can handle. I have a quote provided by a constituent:

Live export accounts for about 55 per cent of our farm income. Even if we could send carcasses there would be not enough meatworkers or abattoirs in WA to do it. I wish the RSPCA would concentrate their efforts on real cruelty.

Now the RSPCA inspectors will be trained in how to spot suspected cases of child abuse in the backyards of Australian families. Now they are an authority on global warming, claiming that climate change is producing a boom in feral cats in Melbourne's leafy east. They tried to stop the race that stops a nation, with new whipping laws. They want mulesing ruled out by 2010. Where will it stop? The RSPCA were well respected, staffed by volunteers and supported by donations from the public, with a primary focus on domestic pets. Banishing Australian live exports will ruin my farmers and pastoralists—(*Time expired*)

Ms PARKE (Fremantle) (8.18 pm)—I welcome this motion from the member for Kalgoorlie on the subject of live animal exports, as it gives me an opportunity to speak on an issue that is of considerable interest and concern to the people of Fremantle. Around 80 per cent of Australia's live sheep exports, a total of approximately four million sheep annually, are shipped out through Fremantle Port. I have received and continue to receive a substantial amount of correspondence from my constituents on this issue, the overwhelming majority of whom want to see significant reform of the live sheep export industry.

The concerns raised by constituents fall into two main categories. First is the concern that WA is missing out on jobs and export income by sending live sheep offshore instead of value-adding by processing them in WA and exporting to the rapidly expanding overseas market for sheep meat. People are rightly interested in developing industries that make more of our primary products and our natural resources and that bring a healthy return to our farmers. Second, there is a concern for the welfare of the animals that are the basis of the live sheep export trade. In Fremantle this is not a concern formed at a distance, since Fremantle residents watch, smell and hear the trucks that contain sheep en route to the port. On the long sea journeys that follow, thousands of sheep die—some 40,000 last year—while many more suffer from conditions such as heat stress and salmonellosis. Those that survive the transport typically face an inhumane death, as they are slaughtered without pre-stunning.

These concerns about animal welfare are shared by organisations like the RSPCA and the World Society for the Protection of Animals and by an organisation in my electorate called Stop Live Exports, formerly known as People Against Cruelty in Animal Transport, or PACAT. I understand very well that the live sheep trade generates significant export income and is the foundation of thousands of jobs in Western Australia; however, it is misleading for those who support the unreformed maintenance of the current live export trade to suggest that proponents of reform advocate some kind of overnight change or that they regard jobs and economic activity as irrelevant. The RSPCA has said that it would like to see a phased and

appropriately supported shift from the live export trade to a 21st century on-shore processing industry.

The recent ACIL Tasman report titled *Australian live sheep exports: economic analysis of Australian live sheep and sheep meat trade* found not only that a very low-cost or cost-free transition is possible but also that greater economic benefits are to be gained from local processing of sheep in terms of Australian jobs and sheep meat exports. The report calculates that a sheep processed in WA is worth approximately \$20 more to gross state product than a sheep sent overseas for slaughter. Sheep meat exports contributed \$1.5 billion to the Australian economy last year compared to the live sheep trade's \$341 million. ACIL Tasman found that an additional 2,000 jobs would be created immediately if two million sheep that would otherwise be exported live were processed domestically. It also noted that the majority of jobs currently supported by live sheep exports would still exist if the trade were transitioned to a sheep meat export trade. The interests of my constituents in seeing a change of policy in this matter is premised on a careful and sensible transition to a more productive and humane use of sheep and an industry of equivalent or greater economic value to Australia.

The Labor Party is a party of progressive change, and earlier this year I was glad to be part of the effort that saw the following statement of principle added to the platform at the ALP national conference:

Labor believes that all animals should be treated humanely and will work to achieve better animal welfare through harmonisation of relevant State, Territory and Commonwealth laws and codes to ensure consistent application and enforcement of animal protection statutes.

I also welcome this government's initiatives to improve animal welfare within the live export trade—namely, the approved projects under the \$2.4 million Live Animal Trade Program and the \$3.2 million Live Trade Animal Welfare Partnership, which is to be jointly funded on a dollar-for-dollar basis with Australia's live export industry. These initiatives show that the old dichotomy that sets economic value against animal welfare is as misconceived as the dichotomy that sets economic value against the protection and conservation of our environment.

However, there is further progress to be made. In a recent letter to the Parliamentary Friends of the RSPCA, the RSPCA said that it is 'keen to have a positive discussion about new opportunities for Australia's sheep industry—Australian opportunities that will create jobs, boost the economy and markedly improve animal welfare'. I believe it is necessary to have this discussion and to give proper consideration to what would be involved in delivering an Australian industry that can provide better treatment for animals and better economic and productive outcomes.

Mr RAMSEY (Grey) (8.23 pm)—I rise to support the member for Kalgoorlie's motion. This motion supports the industry and acknowledges the significant contribution it makes to Australian farmers. It acknowledges that our non-participation in the trade will not lead to a cessation in the global sense, or even in its likely reduction. It recognises that many pastoralists do not have the opportunity to diversify and it also recognises the fact that there is a very high-level and not-so-truthful campaign run against the live sheep trade.

I must start by taking the member for Fremantle to task somewhat. The member for Fremantle represents a port, and ports survive by putting freight over their wharves. In fact, if the people of Fremantle do not particularly like ports perhaps they should not have chosen to live in the port area in the first place. It is a little along the lines of the right to farm: where an in-

dustry exists, those who enter that area enter it at their own peril. What I hope to bring to this debate this evening is a little of my background as a farmer, because I have produced sheep for most of my life and prepared them for domestic slaughter, for wool production and for export.

The live sheep trade in South Australia, unfortunately, is but a shadow of its former self. I can remember many years when I sold my livestock to live sheep exporters when in fact they were the only buyers in the market; they were the only people we could sell our livestock to. And it comes as no surprise to me, or to many farmers, that the national flock of Australian sheep has fallen from 190 million to 70 million. Many of us never thought we would see the day. In the end, farmers are a reflection of the economic environment, and they will and they must sell their livestock to the highest bidder. Anything else is a restraint on trade, which should be fully resisted.

I despair, particularly as one who has handled livestock, at the high-level heartstring campaigns and the scare campaigns that are run against this industry. To allege that someone of my ilk does not care for the animals that I rear for human consumption is an insult. I have spent most of my life caring for animals. In fact, there are times when I have had to put my sheep into a feedlot situation on the farm to ensure their survival. A feedlot is in fact very similar to a boat trip for sheep. They might be locked up for six weeks, eight weeks, even some months at a time. Try as we might, there are always some fatalities. Try as we might, when we bring sheep into a yard on any occasion there are often injuries and fatalities. It is not a bloodthirsty sport; it is just a fact of life that where you have livestock you will, in the end, inevitably, have dead stock. We do everything within our power to avoid that outcome.

As a former debater, I always think it pays to check the Oxford dictionary, because it always brings a little clarity to the situation. And when I see the word ‘cruelty’ used in relation to the live sheep trade—I will bring to your attention that ‘cruel’, as in ‘cruelty’, reads:

Disposed to inflict suffering; indifferent to or taking pleasure in the pain or distress of another; hard-heartedness and pitiless; causing or making by great pain or distress.

None of those clauses are relevant when it comes to people who care for the livestock in the live sheep trade—those who care for and raise animals in their paddocks and who deal with the shipping of animals overseas—because in the end every loss is a dead loss to the pocket. If Australia does not compete in the live sheep trade we will not see the end of it, we will just be replaced by other suppliers around the world. In fact, the way we raise our animals is a utopia compared with the way they are raised in many other parts of the world, so we should be encouraging these exporters. If indeed, as the RSPCA alleges, there is better money in slaughtering this livestock in Australia, let those people who wish to slaughter livestock in Australia pay the price that will buy them the stock and the privilege to do so.

Mr GEORGANAS (Hindmarsh) (8.28 pm)—This certainly is a contentious area. That is, it is contentious in terms of the comparative benefits—employment, income and the production of local jobs in abattoirs for local people—of this particular form of trade versus the costs incurred principally by the animals themselves but also, more broadly, by each and every one of us who wishes to avoid cruelty and the unnecessary suffering of the animals in our care.

As the motion reads, live exports have in the past and continue to represent a substantial portion of our nation’s primary production and contributions, not only to our economy but also to the lives of thousands of hardworking Australians. The live sheep export industry is

subject to ongoing scrutiny by animal welfare groups, the RSPCA among them, which have been deeply concerned by the conditions exported livestock have had to endure in transit, generally for weeks at a time, prior to being received by the trading country. Overcrowded pens aboard ships, lack of clean water and food, outbreak of disease, heat exhaustion, change in feed and a reluctance to feed, dehydration, starvation and a pretty miserable, prolonged death in transit: these are some of the concerns that have been raised for decades by those arguably most concerned with the welfare and the avoidance of suffering of the livestock exported.

The number of live cattle exported throughout this decade has averaged around 700,000 head per year. The number of live sheep exported through the same period has averaged around 4½ million head per year, down from approximately six million head per year through most of the 1980s and 1990s. Some opposition to livestock export has focused on the mortality rates of livestock in transit as a representation of the adverse conditions animals experience and perhaps manage to endure while being cooped up in transit. Mortality rates early this decade averaged around 0.2 per cent of beef cattle. That is two cows per 1,000 exported.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. DGH Adams)—Order! The time allotted for this debate has expired. The debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

Debate resumed from 26 October.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—The question is:

That grievances be noted.

Climate Change

Dr JENSEN (Tangney) (8.30 pm)—The Prime Minister is a coward. He is a leader who takes his shots at people from a protected position yet lacks the courage to actually debate people directly. A little over a week ago the Prime Minister delivered one of the most outlandish speeches ever uttered by a senior politician in Australia. In that speech he made all sorts of bizarre allegations that anthropogenic climate change sceptics were being driven by vested interests, were out to destroy the future of our children and grandchildren—the typical refrain of those who do not have the facts on their side and therefore resort to emotive terminology—had a lack of knowledge and were cowardly. On the question of cowardice, I will debate Kevin Rudd on the science of climate change anywhere, anytime. I am very confident that he will be too cowardly to accept the challenge. It is far easier to resort to invective.

The reason for his hysterical speech is that he is afraid. He can see that the viewpoint of the Australian population is changing rapidly as the costs of his emissions trading scheme, or ETS, become apparent. As more and more people are becoming acquainted with the fact that the predictions of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the IPCC, are diverging more and more from the observed reality, he fears that the coalition may well oppose the ETS and thus will not share responsibility for the massive costs that the ETS will burden the Australian economy with. He is afraid of the electoral ramifications of having the economic and social costs of his extreme tax system being put before the Australian people on a daily basis during an election campaign. I have asked on a few occasions how much his new tax system would lower global average temperatures. Funnily enough, I have received no response, as

that number would be close to an embarrassing zero even if the consensus position is accepted. The ETS will not save Kakadu or the Great Barrier Reef even if you accept the IPCC position. We will, however, lose industry and damage our industry's competitive position against our trading partners.

The Prime Minister also deliberately misrepresents the science on this. He speaks of 4,000 IPCC scientists all agreeing on the anthropogenic causes of climate change. The fact is that, within the IPCC, there is dissent from the consensus position. There are only about 2½ thousand scientists involved and many of them are reviewers whose comments and criticisms are frequently ignored. So much for the vaunted so-called peer review process. The reality is that there are only about 60 authors of the critical chapter 9 of the fourth assessment report, which is the chapter examining attribution to the causes of climate change—only 60 or so authors. Peer review is not an assurance of infallibility. Reviewers simply determine whether the research was conducted using proper scientific techniques. It does not mean that the results are correct; indeed, the reviewers by and large do not repeat experiments.

One need only look at Michael Mann, a previous lead author of the IPCC and now an expert reviewer. Not only is he infamous for using bad statistics for the infamous hockey stick graph used in the third assessment, but it now turns out it was a fraudulent misuse of data, as I outlined in a previous speech to the House. That means a paper, peer reviewed by the literature and then peer reviewed by the IPCC, was fraudulent. Not content to leave it there, Mann has, in a recent paper, deliberately inverted a graph from a Finnish paper on proxy data from the sediments in Lake Korttajarvi. This is to make it appear that the temperatures from the Finnish paper agree with his predisposition on global temperature history. This is the type of science and the type of scientists whom we are supposed to trust when it comes to making very significant and damaging changes to our economy. We even see such people as IPCC lead author David Karoly stating—this was on *Four Corners*:

Typically there would be one to 2,000 scientific papers published every year in the fields of climate change science contributing to the understanding of climate change science and none of those—

I reiterate: 'none of those'—

seriously contradict the conclusions of the IPCC.

When I challenged him on this, his response was:

I am aware of the peer-reviewed journal paper that you mention below, together with a small number of other peer-reviewed journal papers that seek to challenge some of the conclusions of the IPCC.

I am also aware of a number of flaws in such papers and therefore do not consider that they seriously contradict the conclusions of the IPCC.

So in one case at least for a lead author of the IPCC questions on the science that are inconvenient are ignored. It is a case of situating the appreciation rather than appreciating the situation.

Rather than looking at data contradicting an accepted paradigm and asking whether it means that the paradigm they accept could be wrong, the decision is made simply to look at other ways of attempting to explain the inconvenient data and facts in terms of the accepted paradigm. Consensus and appeal to authority even weaker propositions. With consensus you need only look at the fraud perpetrated with Piltdown Man, a fabrication accepted by the bulk

of palaeontologists for four decades, and Lysenkoism, a paradigm that was the consensus position of Soviet scientists and that resulted in the deaths by starvation of millions of Soviets.

Much is made of the 90 per cent figure, meaning very likely, the IPCC document attributes to certainty of anthropogenic causes. Problematically, the figure is completely unscientific and has no basis in statistical analysis. It is simply a number agreed to by some of the scientists and bureaucrats in the process.

The Prime Minister also talks about it being 30 years ago that the first world climate conference called on governments to guard against potential climate hazards. Ironically, given what was occurring at the time and the consensus position of climate scientists at the time, the assessed hazards would have been a coming ice age.

The Prime Minister asserts that if his ETS is not voted into law there can be no certainty in business. That is patently ridiculous. There is certainty in having no ETS at all. He maintains that a sceptical viewpoint—and scientists should be sceptical, not simply singing from the same songbook—is radical, risky and reckless. The reality is that his ETS is radical. It is a new tax and essentially a tax on air. It is risky because it will damage our industry, put people out of work and cost a nation dearly.

I spoke previously of the serious threat that the Copenhagen draft treaty presented to our national sovereignty. Fortunately, since that draft treaty was outed this issue has received international attention. That attention and a clear prospect of no binding treaty have meant that what we now have is a watered down ‘plan B’ document of no more than 15 pages with no binding targets or agreements. So why the desperate deadline of legislation before Copenhagen, Prime Minister?

As I have said, it is clear that the Prime Minister is concerned that we will oppose his ETS. If he were not concerned and wanted this as a double dissolution trigger he would simply have said ‘no deal’ on the amendments. His negotiation on and acquiescence to some of the amendments clearly indicate that he is in fact concerned about the electoral consequences of the opposition voting against the ETS. The politics—never mind anything else—of this issue have moved considerably. It is time for the Prime Minister to show some courage and debate me on the science of climate change. The Australian people deserve no less than a full justification of the science by the Prime Minister before embarking on a process of damaging our economy. How about it, Prime Minister? Do you accept the challenge?

Broadband

Ms REA (Bonner) (8.40 pm)—I rise tonight on behalf of the residents of Bonner who have expressed on many occasions a grievance to me about the lack of broadband services in that electorate. It is a shame and an indictment on the failings of past governments at all levels that the electorate of Bonner is so poorly serviced by internet access, in particular by broadband much less by high-speed broadband access.

It is a reality that governments have always been there to provide essential services for the community, services that support a community’s development and prosperity, whether they be social, community and recreational or economic. Ever since human beings have lived in communities, whether they be villages, towns or cities, there has always been an acknowledgement that governments or the management of those cities and towns provide the infrastructure needed for people to live and work together. It is a fairly basic assessment that when

we move into a house in a city we will have a footpath, we will have a road, we will have public transport, we will have all of those other services that we need to maintain our daily lives, whether it is schools for our children or hospitals for times when we are injured or sick. We take all of these things for granted, and quite rightly so.

It is the case that since the development of the internet it has become an essential tool of getting through our daily lives, but unfortunately we have not acknowledged the importance of the internet and broadband services to our communities. Whether it is the fact that local governments have ignored it—based on my previous experience as a local councillor I can speak of plenty of times when local councils have not given anything towards providing broadband access. Ratepayers provide water services, sewerage services, roads, footpaths—all of those essential things that we need to get around and do our daily business, whether it is working or simply providing for our families. However, we never took the next step to acknowledge that the next highway or the next footpath that needed to be provided was in fact the information highway. If you acknowledge that you need a footpath or a street to get to the bank because that is the way people used to conduct their financial transactions, then these days you would probably find that more people use the internet than walk along the footpath that leads to the bank door. Why then have governments in the past not acknowledged that it is important to provide the infrastructure for those people to conduct their banking in that more convenient, cost-effective way?

I am most aggrieved that we have had, for too long, a lack of commitment to providing broadband services in this country. I am particularly aggrieved for the residents of Bonner because we have the third-largest metropolitan city in the country—the fastest growing area in the country is south-east Queensland—but within the city of Brisbane you have people who do not have access to basic broadband services. Many people in my electorate are still using dial-up services to access the internet. Suburbs such as Wishart, Mansfield, Carindale, Belmont, parts of Wynnum West, parts of Manly West—areas that are only eight to 10 kilometres from the GPO—still only have access to dial-up services. Within those areas you have housing estates that are less than two years old that simply do not have the infrastructure—the fibre optic cable has not been laid for them to access broadband.

Once upon a time this was probably seen as a luxury, but these days anyone who has children knows how important the internet is for their educational opportunities. There are many suburbs in the electorate of Bonner where small businesses are finding it hard to compete with their rivals and to gain their fair share of the customer base because they simply cannot use broadband to run their businesses more effectively. This is not just about being denied a luxury anymore; this is about being denied the ability to get on with your daily life in a way that most other people now think is normal, not privileged.

That is why I am so pleased that the government has decided to address this very serious and important issue and is doing so in a couple of very significant ways. The first way is the establishment of the National Broadband Network, a massive investment of up to \$43 billion rolling out over eight years, with an initial investment by the government of \$4.7 billion to get this company rolling and provide these essential services. The other significant reform that the government is introducing is the proposed break up of Telstra. I emphasise this point because I believe it is possibly one of the major factors as to why residents in my electorate of Bonner,

and indeed many residents across the country, do not have the access to broadband that they should have had some years ago.

When Australia was first developing and its cities were growing, the government stepped in to provide those basic services that were needed for prosperity and growth, and telecommunications was of course a fundamental part of that. In its wisdom, the previous government decided that there was no need for the government to operate that particular company and to provide that service, and decided to privatise it. That is a debate that has been had, but I know it is still being had in many lounge rooms at this very minute. Unfortunately, when they did decide to privatise, they did so in a very poorly managed and ineffective way. They basically created a massive private monopoly that owns the fixed line copper network, owns the largest cable network, owns half of the largest pay TV provider and owns the largest mobile phone network in the country. In their wisdom, they required certain USOs—universal service obligations—around the provision of phone services to the country, but did not think that broadband and internet access was just as essential. Hence they created a private company operating on a commercial basis that was never going to invest in the infrastructure required to provide this essential service.

I am particularly pleased that the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy has put forward a way of breaking up Telstra so that its network and wholesale functions can be separated from its retail activities, which I believe will not only create more efficient areas of Telstra, but will also allow the competition that will bring down costs to consumers and provide the choice that residents in my electorate and in many electorates across the country are demanding.

I emphasise once again that it is important to support these reforms and to support the roll-out of the broadband network. It is the way that our children learn. It is the way the way that our small businesses do business. It is the way in which we provide and seek out essential services as well as conduct many other transactions—holidays, airlines, you name it; people use the internet for all sorts of reasons these days. We cannot be a modern, prosperous and growing country until we acknowledge and support the idea that the provision of broadband infrastructure is now just as, if not in some ways more, essential than providing all of those other things it is assumed we need, like roads, footpaths, water and sewerage services and the like. On behalf of my electorate, I simply want to urge support for broadband provision in this country.

Breast Cancer

Mr SCHULTZ (Hume) (8.50 pm)—I rise to talk about a very serious women's disease that was talked about in the last parliamentary sitting—I did not have the opportunity to contribute then—the issue of breast cancer and, more importantly, breast cancer research. Why do I do that? Not long after I was elected to the New South Wales parliament in 1988 a friend of my wife and me lost a breast to breast cancer. Within nine months of that occurring, her daughter, who was breastfeeding a child, was diagnosed with breast cancer and, sadly, she not long after that passed away. The point I am trying to make here is that this dreadful women's disease affects all of us at some stage in our lifetime. Whether it be through mothers, sisters, cousins or neighbours it affects us in some way, shape or form.

One thing that is not recognised in this country to some degree is the significant contribution made by our scientists and doctors who are dedicated to trying to find a cure for breast

cancer. I will go back into history a little more. I tried to talk about this as a male in the state parliament and then I went into the service club area and talked to the Apex, Rotary and Lions clubs in an endeavour to raise some money for mobile breast cancer-screening units for rural women. I did not get anywhere because I was a male talking about a very sensitive women's health issue, so I asked my wife to take the burden on, which she did. For approximately six years she did all the research as a novice and got involved with the professional people involved in breast cancer research. She went out into communities right across southern New South Wales, northern Victoria, here in Canberra and up to the Southern Highlands in New South Wales and talked to women and educated them about breast cancer and what they should be doing in terms of their own health.

My wife was successful in raising about \$800,000 and she put two mobile breast-screening mammography units on the road. At a later stage she was recognised for that and received an Australian honour. I am not here to talk about my wife; I am here to talk about how she became associated with an individual who was tied up with the Breast Cancer Institute of Australia. That individual was a fellow by the name of Professor John Forbes. He was instrumental in setting up a national research program conducted by the Australia New Zealand Breast Cancer Trials Group. This national program involves more than 40 institutions and over 200 research collaborators throughout Australia and New Zealand. The group also collaborates with specialised breast cancer researchers and institutions throughout the world. Our researchers have made major contributions to the breakthroughs already announced that represent an outstanding effort by hundreds of people dedicated to the control of breast cancer.

The ANZ BCTG is held in the highest regard right throughout the world. The person who drove this, Professor John Frederick Forbes, has shown a complete commitment to the support and advancement of breast cancer research and education for many decades. Since he matriculated in 1962 from the University of Melbourne with first class honours and the *dux* prize of the school to his present appointments, Professor Forbes has dedicated his life to help fight and better understand breast cancer in the interests of not only Australian women but women world wide. I am personally acutely aware of his perseverance and devotion to duty, often at expense to himself and to his beloved family. I recall visiting the professor on a Friday while he was attending to women in a clinic. I remarked that he looked tired and he just smiled. A nurse who was assisting him said, 'The professor flew to London on Monday to attend clinics, presented a paper at a worldwide conference on Wednesday and arrived back today to do this clinic.' When I expressed my concern, he replied, 'Women who are suffering from breast cancer need all the help I can give them.'

Professor Forbes is truly an inspiration to all Australians and a role model for young people entering medical research. To read the curriculum vitae of Professor Forbes is to read the professional history of an Australian who has unselfishly dedicated his entire life to breast cancer research and education to ensure that Australia is well advanced in and at the leading edge of breast cancer research. Without the commitment of Professor Forbes, well-known organisations such as the Breast Cancer Institute of Australia, the Peter MacCallum Hospital in Melbourne, the Hunter Area Health Service, the Newcastle Mater Misericordia Hospital and the University of Newcastle faculty of health—to name but a few—would not be the well-known breast cancer facilities that they are today. He has spent countless hours overseeing the Australian-New Zealand breast cancer trials and he has had the courage to set up a national re-

search program that involved 41 institutions, and over 300 people, consisting of breast cancer specialists, nurses and data managers.

He has also collaborated internationally to evaluate new treatment approaches as rapidly as possible so that these new treatments could be made available throughout the world. Women of the world owe a great debt to this man's unselfish, caring and personal dedication, which is totally focused on finding a cure for this debilitating and deadly disease so tragically cutting short the lives of thousands of Australian women. Professor Forbes has certainly shown that he is a truly remarkable Australian and one who has advanced breast cancer research and education not only in this country but throughout the world. I cannot think of another Australian who is more deserving of recognition for his significant contribution to alleviating the suffering of women and the associated trauma to their families.

Professor John Forbes has been recognised abroad at international level for his singular and significant contribution to breast cancer research and education. This wonderful Australian has recently been honoured as one of the world's top 10 clinical researchers by being included in the Thomson Scientific hottest researcher list. One of the attributes of this particular individual is that he quietly goes about doing what he is doing in the best interests of women's health. I am an Australian who understands that there are people like this right across this great country of ours. What is difficult for me to understand is why this man has not been recognised with an Australian award for the work that he has done. That is one of the reasons why I am rising in this grievance debate tonight.

In 2005, I wrote a letter of support on behalf of this man for a nomination, but it never went anywhere. I did that as a local federal member who has had some of my constituents—not many, thankfully—write to me or ring me up to talk to me about supporting the nomination of themselves for an Australian order. Some of those people have been successful in getting those Australian awards after nominating themselves. The point that I am making there is that I am a member of parliament who understands and sees some of the work that has been done by people such as Professor John Forbes. One wonders where our priorities are in terms of really acknowledging the people who make a very significant contribution to research and more specifically in this case to research on the issue of curing breast cancer for the many women who tragically succumb to this dreadful disease year by year.

I wanted to take the opportunity to raise this issue in the House because, as I said, a few weeks ago, at the last parliamentary sitting, I never got the opportunity to talk about it on that day on which we honour and pay homage to those women who have, sadly, passed away with breast cancer and the many who are still suffering with it. So I sought the indulgence of the House tonight, and I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, and my parliamentary colleagues from both sides of the chamber for your tolerance in listening to a mere male talking about the very significant contribution made by a very committed Australian to the health and wellbeing of our Australian women.

Digital Economy

Tasers

Ms SAFFIN (Page) (9.00 pm)—Before I speak about the two issues I want to speak about in the grievance debate, I want to say in response to the 'mere male', the honourable member for Hume, that I—as a president of North Coast BreastScreen, as it is now called—

wholeheartedly endorse the comments that he made about Professor John Forbes. I know his work very well. So thank you.

I rise to speak on two matters that cause me some grief—yes, that I am aggrieved about. One is the poor state of Australia's performance as a digital economy—inherited by the Rudd government, leftover from the Howard government. The second issue is tasers and their potentially lethal impact on vulnerable persons socially and physically. I will firstly talk about the digital economy. The OECD statistics indicate that Australia is 16th in terms of broadband penetration, 20th in terms of the average monthly subscription price for broadband and 3rd most expensive for fixed line services for SMEs. The World Economic Forum ranks Australia 14th for network readiness, 16th for the total number of broadband internet subscribers per 100 population, 20th for monthly high-speed broadband subscription charges, 25th for accessibility of digital content, 35th for the quality of competition in the internet service provider sector and 29th for the lowest cost of broadband. These statistics are available on the OECD and World Economic Forum websites and they are on the department's website as well.

It is really quite a disgrace that, in this day and age, we have this situation. There were many attempts at policies—well, not even policies, but various position or policy papers—by the previous government, but there was no national, overarching program about broadband and there were also longstanding problems with the telecommunications sector that were left by the previous government. The government's clear objective with the National Broadband Network is to connect 90 per cent of all homes, schools and workplaces with optical fibre—fibre to the premises. That will provide broadband services to Australians—those 90 per cent—with speeds of up to 100 megabits per second in urban and regional towns. The network will connect all other premises with Next Generation wireless and satellite technologies, able to deliver 12 megabits per second or better.

In my electorate and other places, the Leader of the Nationals, the honourable member for Wide Bay, has been telling people that the government had reneged on its commitment—that they would miss out, they would have low speeds et cetera, et cetera. In fact, the 2007 election commitment was pretty clear. It was about 98 per cent of Australians having broadband connected at speeds of 12 megabits per second. So the NBN, the \$43 billion investment in NBN, to be rolled out over eight years, will actually improve greatly on that election commitment. It is important that that gets put on the record.

At a local level I am working with and supporting local government and the Southern Cross University council to say that right across the whole North Coast we are ready to take up on the mainland the rollout that has happened in Tasmania. One statistic that I think some of us are not aware of is that 38 per cent of people used the internet for their last contact with government in 2008, which is double the number from 2004. Again, that is on the department's website. Turning back to my local area, I recently had the pleasure of hosting my colleague the federal Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Senator Stephen Conroy, during a visit to Grafton in the south of my electorate. The senator had made a promise during the 2007 election campaign to return to the city during its famous Jacaranda Festival and he was as good as his word. He came when the festival was on to see the beautiful jacarandas in bloom. We held a working lunch at the Grafton Regional Art Gallery which was attended by a capacity audience of local government representatives, business leaders, academics and health professionals from the Northern Rivers and Mid North Coast

regions. Participants included the Mayor of the Coffs Harbour City Council, Councillor Keith Rhoades, Lismore's mayor and the Chair of the Northern Rivers Regional Organisation of Councils, Councillor Jenny Dowell, the President of the Grafton Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Mr Jeremy Challacombe, and Summerland Credit Union Chief Executive Officer Margot Sweeny. The minister outlined future regional opportunities and benefits under the Rudd government's \$43 billion National Broadband Network rollout and took many questions from the floor. The NBN is our ambitious project to wire up Australia for high-speed broadband. As Senator Conroy indicated, it has been very well received in Tasmania, the first state to receive it. This network promises digital technology that will revolutionise our daily lives in the way that we do business, practise medicine and educate our young people in one of the fastest growing and most dynamic regions of Australia, which is where I live.

Southern Cross University's Executive Dean, Faculty of Business and Law, Professor Mike Evans, and its Professor of Information Technology, Peter Croll, have been building a strong case for the New South Wales North Coast to be a high-priority area for the mainland rollout. As of last year, an estimated 541,320 residents lived in the 13 local government areas from Greater Taree to the Tweed, and this prime sea- and tree-change destination is projected to grow faster than the state average over the next few decades. Southern Cross University, working in collaboration with Coffs Harbour City Council's Economic Development Office, believes that a robust telecommuting strategy will create resilient and connected communities in business, health care and education and in responding to natural disasters.

While the minister acknowledged that many regions around Australia would be competing for priority, he urged the university, local government and the private sector to keep working together to put forward a compelling business case. To this end a meeting is being held tomorrow, Tuesday 17 November, at Southern Cross University's Lismore campus to further develop what is called our resilient regional communities concept and to bring that into reality.

It was not all work and no play in Grafton. We gave Senator Conroy a quick drive—and it was a quick drive—down Jacaranda Avenue, which was in full purple bloom, before he had to catch a flight back to Sydney and Melbourne. I thank local government and also in particular Southern Cross University for taking the initiative in the area of making sure that we are ready. What we are saying is that we are ready to receive this rollout as we are well positioned. We want to be one of the first regions, as I am sure every honourable member here wants their region to be one of the first, so I am jumping in quickly and saying, 'Hands up as we're ready'—and we are ready because we have got the information, data and technical expertise and we have got local government onboard. Having local government onboard is a key issue, one that the minister impressed upon the local community.

I did say I wanted to talk about tasers. I have one minute left so I will devote one minute to them and come back to them in another debate. The first thing I want to say—this comes from the Braidwood inquiry, which was done in Canada—is that it has been clearly shown that people who have certain health conditions or a certain health status are really at risk. The Braidwood inquiry looked at the use of tasers. It was conducted in Canada after a death there. It showed that patients with cardiovascular disease were at a higher risk of ventricular fibrillation. The inquiry found that studies had been conducted under extremely controlled circumstances, and that is not how tasers are used on the street.

The second thing I would say is that 26 people have died in Canada since 2003, after stun weapons were used against them. That is from an Amnesty International report and Amnesty International—(*Time expired*)

Petition: Spencer Gulf and Outback Australian Technical College

Mr RAMSEY (Grey) (9.10 pm)—I would like to take this opportunity to place on the record the disbelief, the bewilderment and the anger of my constituents at the Deputy Prime Minister's decision to close the highly successful and acclaimed Spencer Gulf and Outback Australian Technical College in my electorate. I have with me this evening a petition with almost 4,000 signatures, strongly protesting against this move and asking the government to reinstate the funding for the college. The bulk of these signatures have been collected in the cities of Whyalla, Port Pirie and Port Augusta, which are home to the three campuses and represent more than 10 per cent of the voting population in those cities—which, by any gauge, is a very strong response. The petition was not instigated by me or my office but rather was a spontaneous response driven by parents of students who are being displaced at the end of the year. I would like to thank Lettesha Burt for her passion and commitment to the college in instigating this petition, but more particularly for her commitment to her son Rowan, who is being thrown out of college by this decision. I present the petition.

The petition read as follows—

To the honourable The Speaker and members of the House of Representatives

This petition of "citizens of Australia"

Draws to the attention of the House...that all Australian Technical Colleges across Australia, will no longer receive additional Federal Government Funding after December 2009. Current Year 11 students will not be able to complete their SACE with the ATC and have been advised to enrol with their former schools. Many subjects offered by these schools will not be available to these Year 12's as they have not completed the Year 11 prerequisite component. ATC students have chosen a Trade based SACE and will not be able to continue on this path. Considering there is a huge shortage of qualified Trades people in our country, it seems ridiculous that these Colleges aren't being encouraged. They provide valuable Trade relevant skills and experience which prepares students for work in their chosen field. This type of education is not available in the main stream schools and students who prefer a more "hands on approach" thrive in this environment.

We therefore ask the House to...continue funding the Australian Technical Colleges across Australia and allow trade students to receive the skills and training to pursue careers in their chosen field.

from 3,934 citizens

Petition received.

This college is unique. It has three campuses based, as I said, at Whyalla, Port Augusta and Port Pirie, and has been highly successful in engaging students who were at risk of abandoning or had abandoned the mainstream education process. This Australian Technical College has presented great value to the taxpayer. It has not wasted money on facilities, developing instead a partnership with TAFE and renting facilities in both Port Augusta and Whyalla. The college has excellent staff, the strong endorsement of local industry and a can-do approach.

In fact, there is a large irony in the fact that only three weeks ago Lisa Brock, who at that time worked as an SSO at the college, was indeed recognised as Australia's best support officer at the Teaching Excellence awards here in Parliament House. It was even more ironic that she was presented with her award by the Deputy Prime Minister—the same minister who is

closing the school. Lisa won her award for developing links with industry, including multinational companies, and government and training organisations. She designed and implemented a highly successful strategy to attract unemployed people back to school to complete their senior school certificate. This does not sound like a failing college to me; it sounds as if they were doing their job, and doing it well. Incidentally, as part of her award Lisa was given \$15,000 for use by the school—the same school the minister is closing. Unfortunately, like all the other staff at the college, Lisa has been given her marching orders.

The minister still maintains, publicly at least, that decisions about the future of this particular technical college have not been made; but in practice we know that the staff have retrenchment notices and the students have been told to make other arrangements for next year. Students are considering whether they will go back to the schools where they previously failed to connect or whether they will just give the whole idea of completing high school away altogether. What a tragedy for these young people! Parents and students are trying desperately to put packages together for next year but—as per one conversation I had just last week—they are finding it almost impossible to get cooperation about timetables between the schools and the local TAFE college, who will presumably provide the technical training to complete their trade studies.

Politics is always the art of the possible. While I was well aware early in the government's term that they intended to discontinue support for the Australian technical colleges, the minister did say she was keen to see the colleges find another way forward with other partners. So it was with some optimism that the board of the school sought throughout the best part of the last two years to engineer private partnerships to support the college. But when push came to shove the minister did nothing to assist them. We know that, contrary to public perception, much of the legislation that passes through the parliament enjoys the support of both major parties. So it was always my hope that common sense would eventually prevail and a way would be found for good ideas to flourish and for this particular college to survive.

As I kept in touch with the board members throughout the year and supported their efforts wherever I could, I always hoped—in fact I always believed—that in the end the government would not close something that was so successful and that had gone through the start-up cost and put their teething problems behind them. Enrolments were increasing, industry confidence was strong, parents were incredibly supportive and thankful, and the students were fully engaged. You would have to believe that the government would not shut down such a success story. We were wrong. In the end it seems that the government is driven by an ideological hatred of these colleges, largely because they were not their creation and because they were established to remedy state government neglect—in the main, Labor state government neglect.

This Australian technical college has presented great value for the taxpayer. It did not waste money on facilities, developing instead a partnership with TAFE and renting facilities in both Port Augusta and Whyalla. They had an excellent staff, strong endorsement of local industry and a can-do approach. Once again, in another one of those ironies which seem to emanate from the minister's office, the one piece of real estate the school does own, the Port Pirie campus, was awarded \$75,000 under Building the Education Revolution for a shed upgrade. It would seem that one arm of the minister's office should start sending emails to the other arm.

This tri-city campus has achieved the engagement of many disenfranchised students who have been left behind by the state school system. It encouraged them to complete their secondary education, to complete their SACE while indenturing them with employers so they could complete the first year of their trade qualifications while still attending school.

Industry has been extremely enthusiastic about the approach the technical college has taken—delivering apprentices with a year of their trade completed, equipped for an immediate start, with a work oriented attitude. And in many cases employers have already had the chance to observe them firsthand in the workplace. They cannot believe this college is being shut down. My office has received a steady stream of contacts from angry, disillusioned parents and employees who cannot believe that while the government talks about its skills training agenda it is closing this success story which has climbing enrolments and the strong support of local business and which in many cases has provided a new start for those who have dropped out of the secondary schooling system.

I commend this petition to the House. I support those who have instigated it and I will do all I can to support those who are most affected by the planned closure of the college. I call on the minister even at this late stage to throw the college a lifeline.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott)—The document will be forwarded to the petitions committee for consideration and will be accepted subject to confirmation by the committee that it conforms with the standing orders.

Climate Change

Mr CHEESEMAN (Corangamite) (9.19 pm)—I rise today to talk about an issue that I campaigned extensively on in the lead-up to the 2007 federal election. I am referring to the consequences of greenhouse gas emissions, the path that the previous government set us on and the inevitable impact which was sea level rise.

In 2007 I put together a comprehensive report to my electorate of Corangamite, spelling out the consequences of a one-metre sea level rise along with a one-metre storm surge. That report indicated that coastal community after coastal community along the more than 200 kilometres of coastline within the electorate of Corangamite would be inundated as a result of a rise in the sea level if we did not get on top of our greenhouse gas emissions. It was very pleasing that, through the course of 2007 and through the engagement I had with my electorate, community after community accepted that sea level rise is a consequence of greenhouse gas emissions and that my community wanted its strong view about the consequences taken to Canberra.

Corangamite is like many other coastal electorates. We have many thousands of dwellings within a few kilometres of the coastline. Many thousands of families live there and have done so for a significant period of time. Sea level rise is something they are particularly concerned about, not only in terms of potential inundation of their properties but also in terms of the fabulous coastline that the Great Ocean Road borders and the consequences on the environment—the ecosystem and bird and plant life along that coastline.

It was very pleasing that, over the weekend, the government released a comprehensive report identifying the Australian coastal areas most vulnerable to sea level rise. It was a report that built very strongly on the work of a parliamentary committee, chaired by Jennie George,

the member for Throsby. It was a very substantial report that contributed to our understanding of climate change and the risks of sea level rise along our coastline.

Mrs Irwin—And it was bipartisan.

Mr CHEESEMAM—Absolutely; it was a bipartisan report. We had agreement from both sides. It was an absolutely fantastic report.

The report that I am now referring to, the report that was released over the weekend which modelled a sea level rise of 1.1 metres, strongly reinforced the effort that I put in in 2007 in my electorate, identifying the substantial risks to my community. That report identified clearly that about 6,600 properties would be under threat if this scenario came to reality and that if we did not get on top of our greenhouse gas emissions this would be an inevitable consequence. Community after community along the coastline of Corangamite would be inundated. The report identified that somewhere between 157,000 and 247,600 existing residential buildings along the Great Ocean Road would be subject to inundation. My seat includes large parts of the city of Greater Geelong along with the Borough of Queenscliffe, the Surf Coast and the Colac Otway Shire, all of which have substantial parts of their economy derived from tourism. Tourism drives our part of the Australian economy. Community after community there would be subjected to climate change.

As part of my effort, in 2007 the federal government was able to secure \$100,000 for the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee to start that detailed analysis of what sea level rise might mean for coastal communities along the Great Ocean Road. In due course I look forward to the outcome of that. Over the weekend I worked very closely with the media to ensure the very clear message got out to my community about the consequences of sea level rise and what it might mean for my communities. Not surprisingly, I have had email after email and phone call after phone call raising the level of concern with where things are at and the hard work that will need to be undertaken by this parliament to get on top of a very daunting and very challenging issue within my electorate.

Very clearly, this parliament has a responsibility to act on greenhouse gas emissions. We have absolutely fabulous coastline. We have fabulous coastal ecosystems, fabulous beaches and fabulous salt marshes. We need to take meaningful steps in responding to this great challenge of climate change. We need to ensure that we protect what it is that makes Australia Australia and we need to act in a meaningful and very decisive way.

I will continue to campaign hard on this issue. I will continue to work hard on behalf of my constituency to ensure that we take the necessary and meaningful steps in response to this great challenge. I note the announcements made over the weekend by Senator Penny Wong, Minister for Climate Change and Water, that the government in good faith as a part of the bargaining process will omit agriculture from the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. But very clearly the view of this government is that agriculture can play a decisive role in this great challenge. Agriculture can play a positive role in locking up carbon. Our farming communities can take advantage of their agricultural output by planting trees and by selling the carbon permits on the open market that they are able to generate from their properties. This will be a great outcome for my farming community and a great outcome for the Australian farming community. I note the NFF's comments praising the government for such strong leadership on this matter. In conclusion, we have a lot of work still to do on this question and I wish the

minister all the best with her negotiations in the Senate and look forward to a very strong and decisive outcome that can be taken to Copenhagen later this year.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott)—Order! The time for the grievance debate has expired. The debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 192B. The debate is adjourned, and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Main Committee adjourned at 9.29 pm

QUESTIONS IN WRITING**Body Corporate Management Contracts****(Question No. 854)**

Mr Robert asked the Treasurer, in writing, on 11 August 2009:

Does the Trade Practices Amendment (Australian Consumer Law) Bill 2009 apply to body corporate management contracts; if not, why are such contracts excluded?

Mr Swan—The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

The unfair contract terms provisions in the Trade Practices Amendment (Australian Consumer Law) Bill 2009 apply to consumer contracts in a standard form between a business and a consumer for a supply of goods or services or a sale or grant of an interest in land where the acquisition of the goods, services or interest is wholly or predominantly for personal, domestic or household use of consumption. The provisions exclude certain shipping contracts and contracts representing the constitution of a company, managed investment scheme or other kind of body. The unfair contract terms provisions would apply to particular body corporate management contracts to the extent that such contracts meet these criteria.

Innovation, Industry, Science and Research: Staff**(Question No. 891)**

Mr Ciobo asked the Minister representing the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, in writing, on 12 August 2009:

- (1) As at 11 August 2009, how many staff were employed in the (a) Industry and Small Business Policy Group, (b) Industry, Policy and Economic Analysis Branch, (c) Business Conditions Branch, (d) Business Registration and Licensing Branch, and (e) Small Business and Deregulation Branch, of his department.
- (2) In respect of the (a) Industry, Policy and Economic Analysis, (b) Business Conditions, (c) Business Registration and Licensing, and (d) Small Business and Deregulation, branches of his department, (i) what is the total budgeted funding for salaries and wages for the 2009-10 financial year, and (ii) what are the titles and roles of each staff member

Dr Emerson—The Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

- (1) (a) 88
(b) 27
(c) 17
(d) 14
(e) 16
- (2) (a) (i) \$3.062m
(ii) SES Band 1 – General Manager x1
EL2 – Manager x4
EL1 - Assistant Manager x13
APS6 - Senior Policy Officer x5
APS5 - Policy Officer x3
Graduates x1

QUESTIONS IN WRITING

- (b) (i) \$2.207m
- (ii) SES Band 1 – General Manager x1
- EL2 – Manager x3
- EL1 - Assistant Manager x7
- APS6 - Senior Policy Officer x5
- APS5 - Policy Officer x1
- (c) (i) \$1.420m
- (ii) SES Band 1 – General Manager x1
- EL2 – Manager x4
- EL1 - Assistant Manager x5
- APS6 - Senior Policy Officer x1
- APS5 - Policy Officer x1
- APS4 - Policy Officer x1
- Graduate x1
- (d) (i) \$1.995m
- (ii) SES Band 1 – General Manager x1
- EL2 – Manager x3
- EL1 - Assistant Manager x9
- APS6 - Senior Policy Officer x2
- Graduate x1

Innovation, Industry, Science and Research: Staff

(Question No. 892)

Mr Ciobo asked the Minister representing the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, in writing, on 12 August 2009:

- (1) As at 11 August 2009, how many staff were employed in the (a) AusIndustry Group, (b) Research, Development and Venture Capital Branch, (c) Innovation Branch, (d) Business Development and Commercialisation Branch, and (e) Customer Services Branch, of his department.
- (2) In respect of the (a) Research, Development and Venture Capital, (b) Innovation, (c) Business Development and Commercialisation, and (d) Customer Services, branches of his department, (i) what is the total budgeted funding for salaries and wages for the 2009-10 financial year, and (ii) what are the titles and roles of each staff member.

Dr Emerson—The Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

- (1) (a) 397
- (b) 41
- (c) 35
- (d) 95
- (e) 223
- (2) (a) (i) \$4.779m
- (ii) SES Band 1 – General Manager x1
- EL2 – Manager x5

EL1 – Asst Manager/Customer Service Manager x10
APS6 – Customer Service Manager/Project Officer x12
APS5 – Customer Service Manager/Project Officer x4
ASP3 – Project Officer x4
APS2 Project Officer x2
Graduate x3

(b) (i) \$3.482m
(ii) EL2 – Manager x4
EL1 – Asst Manager/Customer Service Manager x12
APS6 – Customer Service Manager/Project Officer x7
APS5 – Customer Service Manager/Project Officer x4
APS4 – Project Officer x5
APS3 Project Officer x1
APS2 Officers x1
Graduate x1

(c) (i) \$8.115m
(ii) SES Band 1 – General Manager x1
EL2 Manager x7
EL1 – Asst Manager/Customer Service Manager x 33
APS6 – Customer Service Manager/Project Officer x25
APS5 – Customer Service Manager/Project Officer x11
APS4 – Project Officer x7
ASP3 – Project Officer x9
Graduate x2

(d) (i) \$20.341m
(ii) SES Band 1 – General Manager x2
EL2 – Manager x15
EL1 – Asst Manager/Customer Service Manager x50
APS6 – Customer Service Manager/Project Officer x114
APS5 – Customer Service Manager/Project Officer x20
APS4 – Project Officer x13
ASP3 – Project Officer x9

Innovation, Industry, Science and Research: Staff

(Question No. 893)

Mr Ciobo asked the Minister representing the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, in writing, on 12 August 2009:

- (1) As at 11 August 2009, how many staff were employed in the (a) eBusiness Group, (b) Online eBusiness Services Branch, (c) ICT Operations Branch, and (d) ICT Systems Branch, of his department.

- (2) In respect of the (a) Online eBusiness Services, (b) ICT Operations, and (c) ICT Systems, branches of his department, (i) what is the total budgeted funding for salaries and wages for the 2009-10 financial year, and (ii) what are the titles and roles of each staff member.

Dr Emerson—The Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

- (1) (a) 207
(b) 54
(c) 61
(d) 76
- (2) (a) (i) \$5.451m
(ii) SES Band 1 – General Manager x1
EL2 Officer x6
Senior Information Technology Officer Grade B x1
EL1 Officer x 17
Senior Information Technology Officer Grade C x3
APS6 Officer x14
Information Technology Officer Grade 2 x4
APS5 Officer x2
Information Technology Officer Grade 1 x1
APS4 Officer x3
APS3 Officer x1
APS1 Officer x1
- (b) (i) \$5.643m
(ii) SES Band 1 – General Manager x1
EL2 Officer x5
Senior Information Technology Officer Grade B x1
EL1 Officer x8
Senior Information Technology Officer Grade C x3
National Measurement Institute Officer Grade 7 x1
APS6 Officer x9
Information Technology Officer Grade 2 x5
APS5 Officer x7
APS4 Officer x 12
National Measurement Institute Officer Level 4 x1
APS1 Officer x 8
- (c) (i) \$6.248m
(ii) SES Band 1 – General Manager x1
EL2 Officer x8
Senior Information Technology Officer Grade B x1
EL1 Officer x28

Senior Information Technology Officer Grade C x4
APS6 Officer x17
Information Technology Officer Grade 2 x 1
APS5 Officer x9
APS4 Officer x5
APS3 Officer x1
Information and Communications Technology Graduate x1

Innovation, Industry, Science and Research: Staff

(Question No. 894)

Mr Ciobo asked the Minister representing the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, in writing, on 12 August 2009:

- (1) As at 11 August 2009, how many staff were employed in the (a) Enterprise Connect Group, (b) Enterprise Connect Branch, and (c) Trade and International Branch, of his department.
- (2) In respect of the (a) Enterprise Connect, and (b) Trade and International, branches of his department, (i) what is the total budgeted funding for salaries and wages for the 2009-10 financial year, and (ii) what are the titles and roles of each staff member.

Dr Emerson—The Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

- (1) (a) 136
(b) 108
(c) 14
- (2) (a) (i) \$13.646m
(a) (ii) SES Band 1 – General Manager x1
EL2 Business Adviser
EL2 Centre Director
EL 2 Regional Facilitator
EL2 Section Manager =EL2s x 40
EL1 Deputy State Director
EL1 Assistant Section Manager = EL1s x 26
APS6 Policy/Project Officers x23
APS5 Staff Project Officers x7
APS4 Administrative Support Officers x9
Graduates x2
(b) (i) \$1.691m
(ii) SES Band 1 – General Manager x1
EL2 Section Manager x3
EL1 Assistant Manager x6
APS6 Policy Officer x3
APS5 Project Officer x1

Green Loans Program**(Question No. 953)**

Mr Billson asked the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, in writing, on 18 August 2009:

As at 18 August 2009:

- (1) How many applications for assistance under the Government's Green Loans Program (GLP) have been received and provided for (a) Home Sustainability Assessments (HSA), and (b) Interest Free Green Loans.
- (2) What level of financial assistance has been provided for interest free Green Loans through the GLP.
- (3) How many of the successful applicants for interest free Green Loans received the maximum sum of \$10,000.
- (4) What metrics are used to calculate HSA; what is the 'sophisticated assessment software tool to allow environmental impact calculations'; and who undertakes the physical inspection of dwellings.
- (5) By electorate, what is the breakdown of applications for assistance received and provided under the GLP.

Mr Garrett—The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

As at 18 August 2009:

- (1) (a) 3,025 Home Sustainability Assessments have been completed.
(b) No interest free Green Loans had been provided as of 18 August 2009. The Green Loans Program commenced on 1 July 2009 and participating households first had to have a Home Sustainability Assessment conducted before applying for a Green Loan. Now that households have begun receiving their assessment reports, partnering financial institutions will begin receiving applications for loans from householders.
- (2) The Green Loans funding of \$175 million will support up to 360,000 Home Sustainability Assessments and up to 75,000 Green Loans.
- (3) No interest free Green Loans had been provided as of 18 August 2009.
- (4) The Home Sustainability Assessments are derived from an Assessment Calculator developed by the Centre for Design at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. The Home Sustainability Assessment report identifies estimated greenhouse gas emissions savings and estimated energy and water cost savings associated with the various energy and water efficiency measures recommended as a result of the assessment.

Home Sustainability Assessments are undertaken by Assessors who have:

- Completed specific training (the Professional Household Assessment Course) and a police check;
 - been accredited through the Association of Building Sustainability Assessors;
 - obtained the appropriate insurances; and
 - entered into a contract with the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts.
- (5) This information is not available.

Medicare: Cataract Surgery**(Question No. 974)**

Mr Ramsey asked the Minister for Health and Ageing, in writing, on 7 September 2009:

- (1) Is she aware that none of the specialist ophthalmologists who supply cataract services in the electorate of Grey are likely to continue to provide this service if the Government persists with its plan to halve the Medicare Operating Fee (MOF) for cataract surgery.
- (2) Does she realise that this will mean the discontinuation of specialist ophthalmologist services in Port Lincoln, Port Augusta, Whyalla and Port Pirie, the centres which service 92 per cent of South Australia (SA) which is the Grey electorate.
- (3) What is the likely impact of the loss of these services in SA on (a) the regional community, (b) the State funded Patient Assisted Transport Scheme, and (c) metropolitan hospitals.
- (4) Did she consult with any ophthalmologists providing visiting services to regional Australia before making the decision to halve the MOF for cataract surgery?

Ms Roxon—The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

- (1) No. As announced in the 2009-10 Budget, the Government is amending the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) fees for cataract surgery, which is now able to be performed more quickly and safely due to improvements in technology.
- (2) Medicare is a universal scheme offering equality of access to all Australians, with the same level of rebate regardless of location. It is a matter for individual ophthalmologists to determine where they choose to provide their services.

In recognition of the costs associated with providing specialist services in rural and remote Australia, assistance is provided to improve access to eye services through the Medical Specialist Outreach Assistance Program (MSOAP) which complements any specialist outreach services provided by state and Northern Territory governments to improve the access to medical specialist services. MSOAP funds are accessed by ophthalmologists providing outreach to the Grey Electorate.

Additionally, many ophthalmologists travelling to rural and remote areas receive further financial assistance from the state and territory governments which covers travel and accommodation costs, and loss of earnings at the practitioner's normal practice location.

- (3) I recognise and commend the efforts of those dedicated ophthalmologists who provide a range of services, including cataract surgery, in rural and remote communities, where those services would otherwise not be available. It is noted that the majority of services are performed in the capital city and 9% of services are performed in rural and remote areas of South Australia.

In reference to the potential impact on state-funded patient assistance transport schemes and metropolitan hospitals, it is not possible to predict the impact as we cannot predict the charging and practice behaviour of doctors.

- (4) The amendments to the cataract surgery items were announced as part of a budget measure. Such measures are regarded as 'Budget-In-Confidence'.

Collins Class Submarines**(Question No. 976)**

Mr Baldwin asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence in writing, on 7 September 2009.

- (1) As at 7 September 2009, how many Collins Class submarines (a) were able to be deployed on operations, (b) could the Royal Australian Navy (Navy) crew, and (c) were undergoing maintenance.
- (2) On what date will the Collins Class submarines undergoing maintenance be operationally ready.

- (3) In the 12 months from 7 September 2009, how many Collins Class submarines will be (a) available for operations, and (b) required to undergo maintenance, and for what length of time.
- (4) What is the minimum number of personnel required to man a Collins Class submarine.
- (5) As at 7 September 2009, how many Navy personnel manned each Collins Class submarine and was this number of personnel sufficient; if not, how many extra personnel does the Navy require to adequately man the Collins Class fleet.

Mr Combet—The Minister for Defence has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

- (1) (a) The Government does not comment on certain aspects of submarine availability for security reasons. However, the Navy continues to meet operational requirements.
(b) Three submarines are presently crewed and in various stages of their operating and maintenance cycles.
(c) The remaining three are in or awaiting longer term maintenance cycles.
- (2) The Government has, for security reasons, a long standing policy of not commenting on the operational aspects or detailed capabilities of the Navy's Submarine Force. Submarine availability and maintenance are carefully managed to ensure operational availability.
- (3) (a) Due to security concerns, Defence does not comment on the specifics of submarine operational availability.
(b) The force structure of six submarines is designed to allow submarines to undergo maintenance; this is known as force rotation. In a 12 month period, all submarines will undergo maintenance for varying lengths of time.
- (4) The minimum number of personnel required to safely take a *Collins* Class submarine to sea is 35, however this number does not enable sustained operations.
- (5) The three crewed *Collins* Class submarines are sufficiently manned with 155 qualified submariners.

Visas

(Question No. 990)

Dr Stone asked the Minister representing the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, in writing, on 10 September 2009:

- (1) How many international students currently on 485 category bridging visas are awaiting resolution of their application for permanent residency.
- (2) How long, on average, have these students been waiting for a decision on their applications.
- (3) From what countries are these students, and in what proportions.

Mr McClelland—The Minister for Immigration and Citizenship has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

- (1) As at 31 August 2009 there were 5 621 former holders of a Skilled – Graduate (*Temporary*) visa (*subclass 485*) awaiting a decision on their application for a permanent General Skilled Migration (GSM) visa.
- (2) On average former holders of a Skilled – Graduate (Temporary) visa (*subclass 485*) have been waiting 156 days for a decision on their application for a permanent residence GSM visa.

Visa application processing times vary significantly depending on the circumstances of the client and as a result of the Minister's Direction No. 42 – Order of consideration of certain Skilled Migra-

tion visas. This Direction gives priority to GSM applicants whose nominated occupation is on the Critical Skills List.

- (3) As at 31 August 2009 former holders of a Skilled – Graduate (Temporary) visa (*subclass 485*) from 85 countries were awaiting a decision on their application for a permanent GSM visa. The table below indicates the top ten countries of these applicants:

Country	Persons on hand	Percentage (%)
1.India	1 593	28.3
2.China	1 371	24.4
3.Korea	376	6.7
4.Bangladesh	240	4.3
5.Malaysia	228	4.0
6.Indonesia	212	3.8
7. Hong Kong Special Administrative Region	156	2.8
8.Sri Lanka	133	2.4
9.Pakistan	120	2.1
10.Nepal	115	2.0
Total	4 544	80.8
Other	1 077	19.2
Grand Total	5 621	100

Asylum Seekers

(Question No. 994)

Dr Stone asked the Minister representing the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, in writing, on 10 September 2009:

In respect of unauthorised arrival of people on Christmas Island: how many for 2008 - 09 have (a) been registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Indonesia, and (b) previously held a Temporary Protection Visa in Australia.

Mr McClelland—The Minister for Immigration and Citizenship has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

- The Department does not have any aggregated statistics on this. It would be highly resource intensive to review all individual client files in order to compile this data.
- During 2008-2009, four Irregular Maritime Arrivals have been identified as having previously held Temporary Protection visas (TPV) in Australia.

Minister for Foreign Affairs: Egypt, Malta and Hungary Meetings

(Question No. 1007)

Ms Julie Bishop asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in writing, on 15 September 2009:

- What was his purpose for attending the Non-Aligned Movement Summit in Egypt on 15 and 16 July 2009.
- How many staff and officials attended the summit with him.
- How many staff and officials travelled with him to (a) Malta, and (b) Hungary.
- What are the names of the hotels that he and any staff or officials accompanying him stayed at in (a) Egypt, (b) Malta, and (c) Hungary.
- What was the total cost to the Government associated with the attendance of all staff and officials accompanying him to this summit.
- What was the total cost to the Government of the trip, including his travel to Malta and Hungary.

- (7) What are the names, titles and nationalities of the people with whom he met whilst on this trip, and on what date(s) were the meeting(s) held, and what was discussed at each.
- (8) Was Australia's bid for a temporary United Nations Security Council seat discussed at any meetings; if so, what were the (a) names of all attendees at, (b) date(s) of, and (c) location(s) of, these meeting(s).
- (9) Did he meet any representatives from the People's Republic of China at the summit; if so, what were their names, and the date(s) and location(s) of these meetings.
- (10) Did he request anything from any Chinese officials regarding Mr Stern Hu; if so, what.
- (11) Were any undertakings given by any Chinese officials regarding Mr Stern Hu; if so, what were they.
- (12) Are all of Australia's rights under the 'Agreement on Consular Relations between Australia and the People's Republic of China', effective from 15 September 2000, being respected; if not, which ones, and has the Government raised this with the People's Republic of China.

Mr Stephen Smith—The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

Notes:

In relation to those parts of the question that request information on the cost of my overseas travel and that of my personal staff, please refer to the report *Parliamentarians' travel costs paid for by the Department of Finance and Deregulation* (DoFD), which is tabled biannually giving details of dates, purpose of travel, countries of destination and costs of visits. The response to questions (5) and (6) covers those costs incurred by the Foreign Affairs and Trade portfolio.

- (1) I attended the Non-Aligned Movement Summit in order to meet with a range of my Foreign Ministerial counterparts to discuss Australia's multilateral and foreign policy priorities and important global challenges, such as disarmament, food security, the global recession and climate change. The Non-Aligned Movement includes almost two-thirds of the members of the United Nations and over half of the world's population. Its Summit is the largest regular gathering of world leaders outside of the United Nations General Assembly.
- (2) Six staff and officials attended the NAM Leaders summit with me. Although they did not attend the summit, another thirteen staff and officials were in Sharm El-Sheikh to provide support for my attendance at the summit. Of the thirteen, seven were from the Australian Embassy in Cairo, including five locally-engaged staff.
- (3) (a) Two staff members from the Office of the Minister for Foreign Affairs travelled with me to Malta.
(b) Two staff members from the Office of the Minister for Foreign Affairs travelled with me to Hungary.
- (4) (a) While in Sharm El-Sheikh I stayed at the Grand Rotana Resort and Spa. Accompanying staff and officials stayed in the Grand Rotana Resort and Spa, and the Coral Beach Rotana Resort.
(b) While in Malta, the accompanying staff and I stayed at the High Commissioner's residence.
(c) No hotel accommodation was required in Budapest as I transited only.
- (5) The total cost to the portfolio associated with the attendance of all staff and officials at this summit was \$117,765.00.
- (6) The total cost to the portfolio associated with the trip, including my travel to Malta and Hungary, was \$120,017.39.
- (7) While on this trip I met formally or informally with the following people to discuss issues of mutual interest.

Malta (13 July 2009):

1. Tonio Borg, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Malta

Malta (14 July 2009):

2. George Abela, President, Malta
3. Lawrence Gonzi, Prime Minister, Malta
4. Michael Frendo, MP, Malta

Hungary (14 July 2009):

5. Peter Balazs, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hungary

Cairo (14 July 2009):

6. Jean Ping, Chair, African Union, Gabon

Sharm El-Sheikh (15 July 2009):

7. Carlos Morales Troncoso, Foreign Minister, Dominican Republic
8. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Foreign Minister, Egypt
9. Bernard Membe, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Tanzania
10. Francisco Santos, Vice President, Colombia
11. Assuncao Afonso Dos Anjos, Foreign Minister, Angola
12. Soubanh Srithirath, Minister to the President, Laos
13. Amre Moussa, Secretary-General, League of Arab States
14. Anwar Gargash, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, United Arab Emirates
15. Sam Kahamba Kutsea, Foreign Minister, Uganda
16. Osman Saleh Mohammed, Foreign Minister, Eritrea
17. Leonel Fernandes Reyna, President, Dominican Republic
18. Augustin Nsanze, Foreign Minister, Burundi
19. Sujata Koirala, Foreign Minister, Nepal
20. Ahmed Shaheed, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Maldives
21. Arvin Boolell, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mauritius
22. Zacarias Albano da Costa, Minister of Foreign Affairs, East Timor
23. Peter David, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Tourism, Grenada
24. Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and International Cooperation, Guyana
25. Robert Aisi, Permanent Representative to the UN, PNG
26. Christopher Hackett, Permanent Representative to the UN, Barbados
27. Raymond Wolfe, Permanent Representative to the UN, Jamaica
28. Marina Valere, Permanent Representative to the UN, Trinidad and Tobago
29. Donatus St Aimee, Permanent Representative to the UN, St Lucia
30. John Ashe, Permanent Representative to the UN, Antigua and Barbuda
31. Yousef bin Alawi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Oman
32. George Yeo, Foreign Minister, Singapore
33. Riyad al-Malki, Foreign Minister, Palestinian Authority

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34. Rohitha Bogollagama, Foreign Minister, Sri Lanka
 35. Alberto Romulo, Foreign Secretary, Philippines
 36. Ato Seyoum Mesfin, Foreign Minister, Ethiopia
 37. Lyn Pascoe, Undersecretary for Political Affairs, United Nations
 38. Kasit Piromya, Foreign Minister, Thailand
 39. Dato' Sri Najib Razak, Prime Minister, Malaysia
 40. Rangin Dadfar Spanta, Foreign Minister, Afghanistan
 41. Somanahalli Krishna, Foreign Minister, India
 42. Nur Hassan Wirajuda, Foreign Minister, Indonesia
 43. Datuk Anifah Aman, Foreign Minister, Malaysia
 44. Bernard Kamillius Membe, Foreign Minister, Tanzania
 45. Vuk Draskovic, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Serbia
 46. Tibor Toth, Executive Secretary, Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organisation
 47. Markos Kyprianou, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cyprus
 48. Sujata Koirala, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Nepal
 49. Paul Toungui, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, Francophonie and Regional Integration, Gabon
 50. U Nyan Win, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Burma
 51. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General, United Nations
 52. Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Pakistan
 53. Samuel Santos López, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Nicaragua
 54. Rosemary Museminali, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rwanda
 55. Benita Ferrero-Waldner Commissioner, External Relations and European Neighborhood Policy, European Union (Austrian)
 56. Oldemiro Baloi, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Mozambique
 57. Dipu Moni, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh
 58. Frank Belfrage, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Sweden
 59. Mahmoud Abbas, President, Palestinian Authority
 60. Henry Ayissi, Minister of External Relations, Cameroon
 61. Fawzi Salloukh, Minister for Foreign and Emigrants' Affairs, Lebanon
 62. Sheikh Sabah, Emir, Kuwait
 63. Matti Vanhanen, Prime Minister, Finland
 64. Hamid Karzai, President, Afghanistan
 65. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister, India
 66. Ahmed Ben Said Jaffar, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Comoros
 67. Mahinda Rajapaksa, President, Sri Lanka
 68. Patrick Pillay, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Seychelles
 69. King Mswati III of Swaziland
 70. Gloria Arroyo, President, Philippines
 71. Hosni Mubarak, President of Egypt and Chair of the NAM
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QUESTIONS IN WRITING

Sharm El-Sheikh (16 July 2009):

72. Alexis Thambwe Mwamba, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Democratic Republic of Congo
 73. Gambi Antoine, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Central African Republic
 74. Abbas el Fassi, Prime Minister, Morocco
 75. Alrich Nicolas, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship, Haiti
 76. Alhaji Mumuni, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, Ghana
 77. Fayssel Mekdad, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Syria
 78. He Yafei, Vice Minister, China
 79. Mohlabi Tsekoa, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations, Lesotho
 80. Manouchehr Mottaki, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Iran
 81. Kabinga Pande, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Zambia
 82. Abu Bakr Al-Qirbi, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yemen
 83. Tariq al Hashimi, Vice President, Iraq
 84. George Kunda, Vice President, Zambia
 85. Zelho Komsic, Chairman of the Presidency, Bosnia Herzegovina
- (8) During my visit, I discussed Australia's United Nations Security Council bid directly or indirectly in the context of Australia's commitment to the multilateral system.
- (9) Yes. I met Mr He Yafei (Chinese Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs) on 16 July in Sharm el Sheikh, in the margins of the Non-Aligned Movement Summit.
- (10) Yes. I raised the Stern Hu consular case with Mr He. I asked for more information on the circumstances surrounding the case and said that the matter needed to be handled expeditiously.
- (11) Vice Minister He Yafei provided me with additional information. Mr He said that the investigation was continuing on allegations that included allegations of receiving bribes and improperly obtaining commercial secrets. Mr He said that when it was brought to a conclusion a decision would be made to charge Mr Hu. When Mr Hu was charged, the precise details would be there for all to see. Mr He made it clear that the Chinese regarded this as an individual criminal matter, and were not treating it as a more general matter. They wanted the matter to be treated in the context of Chinese law and procedures.
- (12) Yes.

Residential Mortgage-Backed Securities**(Question No. 1020)**

Mr Morrison asked the Treasurer, in writing, on 15 September 2009:

In respect of the Australian Office of Financial Management's purchase of Residential Mortgage-backed Securities (RMBS)—

- (1) Will he confirm the statement on the Australian Office of Financial Management (AOFM) website that \$7.382 billion has been invested in RMBS; if not, why not.
- (2) As at 15 September 2009, what was the split of this investment between (a) authorised deposit-taking institutions, and (b) non-authorised deposit-taking institutions.
- (3) As at 15 September 2009, had all of the RMBS subject to investment by the AOFM met with the AAA credit rating requirement; if not, why not.
- (4) Have any loans subject to the securities in part (3) failed to comply with the AOFM minimum requirements, including the 95 per cent maximum loan to value ratio; if so, how many.

- (5) Have all securities subject to AOFM investment continued to conform to AOFM minimum requirements; if not, why not.
- (6) Does he expect any future need for the AOFM to invest in RMBS after the completion of the current AOFM Request for Proposals for investment in RMBS; if so, why; if not, why not.
- (7) What has been the impact of the Government's investment of \$8 billion in RMBS on competition in Australia's mortgage markets.
- (8) Is there greater or less competition in the Australian mortgage market as a consequence of the Government's investment in part (7).

Mr Swan—The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

- (1) Yes as at 15 September 2009 \$7.382 billion had been invested in RMBS.
- (2) As at 15 September 2009, the amount invested in securities of issuers that are authorised deposit-taking institutions was \$3.929 billion and the amount invested in securities of issuers that are non-authorised deposit-taking institutions was \$3.453 billion.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) No, as far as the AOFM is aware all loans associated with its RMBS securities met the minimum requirements as at the time of issuance.
- (5) Yes, all RMBS invested in have met the minimum requirements that apply at the time that the RMBS are issued. Importantly, all AOFM RMBS investments remain rated AAA. While the majority of the securities are expected to continue to meet AOFM minimum eligibility criteria, certain minimum requirements applicable at the time of issue may not be maintained. The key example of this is the requirement at the time the security is issued that a payment on any loan subject to the security must not be more than 30 days in arrears. Whereas this requirement is imposed at the issue date, loans subject to the security may go into arrears for more than 30 days at any subsequent date.
No. The minimum requirements apply at the time that the RMBS are issued, and while the majority of the securities are expected to continue to meet AOFM minimum eligibility criteria, certain minimum requirements applicable at the time of issue may not be maintained. The key example of this is the requirement at the time the security is issued that a payment on any loan subject to the security must not be more than 30 days in arrears. Whereas this requirement is imposed at the issue date, loans subject to the security may go into arrears for more than 30 days at any subsequent date.
- (6) On the 11 October 2009, I announced that an extension to the Government's investment in Australian RMBS to further support competition in Australia's mortgage market. The Government will direct the AOFM to provide up to a further \$8 billion of support to new issuances of high-quality RMBS, depending on market conditions. This investment will provide a major boost to smaller lenders and promote competition in the mortgage market, helping to put downward pressure on borrowing rates over time. The RMBS market continues to be affected by the fallout from the global financial crisis so this temporary extension will help smaller lenders to continue to issue RMBS in the short term as the market recovers.
- (7) The initiative has enabled 13 smaller mortgage lenders to raise an average of around \$838 million each to fund new mortgage loans. As at 29 October 2009, the private sector had purchased \$3.4 billion of the AOFM sponsored deals, or about 31 per cent of the funds raised through the program. The private sector has predominantly bought short-term securities, but in some recent transactions have purchased long-term securities. The AOFM has purchased about \$7.5 billion and is expected to deploy the remaining funds by the end of October or early November 2009.

This funding has enabled these lenders to maintain competitive interest rates, higher lending volumes and higher market shares than would otherwise be the case, and may have prevented some smaller lenders from withdrawing from mortgage lending. The initiative has maintained the opera-

tional infrastructure of the RMBS market, which will help to facilitate a faster recovery once conditions in financial markets normalise.

- (8) There is more competition that would otherwise have been the case.

Swine Influenza Vaccine

(Question No. 1046)

Mr Slipper asked the Minister for Health and Ageing, in writing, on 21 October 2009:

Given the Government has purchased 21 million doses of the H1N1 Influenza 09 (Human Swine Flu) vaccine, is it the intention of the Government, now or in the future, to make vaccinations for Human Swine Flu compulsory.

Ms Roxon—The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

No. Vaccination in Australia is voluntary.

Productivity Places Program

(Question No. 1083)

Dr Southcott asked the Minister for Education, in writing, on 29 October 2009:

In respect of the 2008–09 Annual Report for the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (page 104), was the figure stated for job seekers assisted under the Productivity Places Program based on (a) enrolments, (b) commencements, or (c) completions.

Ms Gillard—The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

The figure reported in the 2008–09 Annual Report for the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations is based on commencements.