



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

# House of Representatives

## Hansard

**WEDNESDAY, 17 OCTOBER 2018**

### **CORRECTIONS**

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**Wednesday, 24 October 2018**

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BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

# **PROOF**

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### SITTING DAYS—2018

Month	Date
February	5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 26, 27, 28
March	1, 26, 27, 28
May	8, 9, 10, 21, 22, 23, 24, 29, 30, 31
June	18, 19, 20, 21, 25, 26, 27, 28
August	13, 14, 15, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23
September	10, 11, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19, 20
October	15, 16, 17, 18, 22, 23, 24, 25
November	26, 27, 28, 29
December	3, 4, 5, 6

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

**Governor-General**

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

**House of Representatives Office Holders**

*Speaker*—Hon. Anthony David Hawthorn Smith MP

*Deputy Speaker*—Mr Kevin John Hogan MP

*Second Deputy Speaker*—Mr Robert George Mitchell MP

*Members of the Speaker's Panel*—

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

*Leader of the House*—Hon. Christopher Pyne MP

*Deputy Leader of the House*—Hon. Darren Chester MP

*Manager of Opposition Business*—Hon. Anthony Stephen Burke MP

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

**Party Leaders and Whips**

Liberal Party of Australia

*Leader*—Hon. Scott John Morrison MP

*Deputy Leader*—Hon. Joshua Anthony Frydenburg MP

*Chief Government Whip*—Ms Nola Bethwyn Marino MP

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

The Nationals

*Leader*—Hon. Michael Francis McCormack MP

*Deputy Leader*—Senator Hon. Bridget McKenzie

*Chief Whip*—Hon. Damien Kevin Drum MP

*Deputy Whip*—Mr Kenneth Desmond O'Dowd MP

Australian Labor Party

*Leader*—Hon. William Richard Shorten MP

*Deputy Leader*—Hon. Tanya Joan Plibersek MP

*Chief Opposition Whip*—Mr Christopher Patrick Hayes MP

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

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### Members of the House of Representatives

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

### Members of the House of Representatives

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

### Members of the House of Representatives

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

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

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

**Heads of Parliamentary Departments**

Clerk of the Senate—R Pye  
Clerk of the House of Representatives—D Elder  
Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services—R Stefanic  
Parliamentary Budget Officer—J Wilkinson

## MORRISON MINISTRY

Title	Minister
<b>Prime Minister</b>	Hon. Scott Morrison MP
<b>Minister for Indigenous Affairs</b>	Senator the Hon. Nigel Scullion
<b>Minister for Women</b>	Hon. Kelly O'Dwyer MP
<i>Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister</i>	<i>Hon. Steve Irons MP</i>
<b>Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development</b>	Hon. Michael McCormack MP
<b>Minister for Regional Services, Sport, Local Government and Decentralisation</b>	Senator the Hon. Bridget McKenzie
Minister for Cities, Urban Infrastructure and Population	Hon. Alan Tudge MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Regional Development and Territories</i>	<i>Hon. Sussan Ley MP</i>
<i>Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister</i>	<i>Hon. Andrew Broad MP</i>
<i>Assistant Minister for Roads and Transport</i>	<i>Hon. Scott Buchholz MP</i>
<b>Treasurer</b>	Hon. Josh Frydenburg MP
Assistant Treasurer	Hon. Stuart Robert MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Treasury and Finance</i>	<i>Hon. Scott Buchholz MP</i>
<b>Minister for Finance and the Public Service</b> (Vice-President of the Executive Council) (Leader of the Government in the Senate)	Senator the Hon. Mathias Cormann
<b>Special Minister of State</b>	Hon. Alex Hawke MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Treasury and Finance</i>	<i>Senator the Hon. Zed Seselja</i>
<b>Minister for Defence</b> (Leader of the House)	Hon. Christopher Pyne MP
<b>Minister for Defence Industry</b>	Hon. Steven Ciobo MP
Minister for Veterans' Affairs	Hon. Darren Chester MP
Minister for Defence Personnel (Deputy Leader of the House)	Hon. Darren Chester MP
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC	Hon. Darren Chester MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Defence</i>	<i>Senator the Hon. David Fawcett</i>
<b>Minister for Foreign Affairs</b>	Senator the Hon. Marise Payne
<b>Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment</b> (Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate)	Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham
<i>Assistant Minister for International Development and the Pacific</i>	Senator the Hon. Concetta Fierravanti-Wells
<i>Assistant Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment</i>	<i>Hon. Mark Coulton MP</i>
<b>Attorney-General</b>	Hon. Christian Porter MP
<b>Minister for Home Affairs</b>	Hon. Peter Dutton MP
Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs	Hon. David Coleman MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Home Affairs</i>	<i>Hon. Alex Hawke MP</i>
<b>Minister for Communications and the Arts</b> (Manager of Government Business in the Senate)	Senator the Hon. Mitch Fifield

Title	Minister
<b>Minister for Jobs and Industrial Relations</b>	Hon. Kelly O'Dwyer MP
<b>Minister for Small and Family Business, Skills and Vocational Education</b>	Senator the Hon. Michaelia Cash
<b>Minister for Resources and Northern Australia</b>	Senator the Hon. Matthew Canavan
<b>Minister for Industry, Science and Technology</b>	Hon. Karen Andrews MP
<b>Minister for Education</b>	Hon. Dan Tehan MP
<b>Minister for Health</b>	Hon. Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care	Hon. Ken Wyatt AM MP
Minister for Indigenous Health	Hon. Ken Wyatt AM MP
<b>Minister for Families and Social Services</b>	Hon. Paul Fletcher MP
Minister for Human Services and Digital Transformation	Hon. Michael Keenan MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Social Services, Housing and Disability Services</i>	<i>Hon. Sarah Henderson MP</i>
<i>Assistant Minister for Children and Families</i>	<i>Hon. Michelle Landry MP</i>
<b>Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources</b>	Hon. David Littleproud MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources</i>	<i>Senator the Hon. Richard Colbeck</i>
<b>Minister for the Environment</b>	Hon. Melissa Price MP
<b>Minister for Energy</b>	Hon. Angus Taylor MP

Each box represents a portfolio. **Cabinet Ministers are shown in bold type.** As a general rule, there is one department in each portfolio. However, there is a Department of Human Services in the Social Services portfolio and a Department of Veterans' Affairs in the Defence portfolio. The title of a department does not necessarily reflect the title of a minister in all cases. Assistant Ministers in italics are designated as Parliamentary Secretaries under the *Ministers of State Act 1952*.

## SHADOW MINISTRY

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

Title	Shadow Minister
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Australia</i>	<i>Julie Owens MP</i>
<b>Shadow Minister for Families and Social Services</b>	Hon. Linda Burney MP
Shadow Minister for Housing and Homelessness	Senator the Hon. Doug Cameron
Shadow Minister for Human Services	Ed Husic MP
Shadow Minister for Disability and Carers	Senator Carol Brown
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Families and Communities</i>	<i>Senator Jenny McAllister</i>
<b>Shadow Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development</b>	Hon. Anthony Albanese MP
<b>Shadow Minister for Tourism</b>	Hon. Anthony Albanese MP
Shadow Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government	Stephen Jones MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Infrastructure</i>	<i>Pat Conroy MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for External Territories</i>	<i>Hon. Warren Snowdon MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Road Safety</i>	<i>Senator Glenn Sterle</i>
<b>Shadow Attorney-General</b>	Hon. Mark Dreyfus QC MP
<b>Shadow Minister for National Security</b>	Hon. Mark Dreyfus QC MP
Deputy Manager of Opposition Business in the House of Representatives	Hon. Mark Dreyfus QC MP
Shadow Minister for Justice	Clare O'Neil MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for an Australian Head of State</i>	<i>Hon. Matt Thistlethwaite MP</i>
<b>Shadow Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations</b>	Hon. Brendan O'Connor MP
Shadow Minister for Employment Services, Workforce Participation and Future of Work	Terri Butler MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Workplace Relations</i>	<i>Lisa Chesters MP</i>
<b>Shadow Minister for Climate Change and Energy</b>	Hon. Mark Butler MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Climate Change and Energy</i>	<i>Pat Conroy MP</i>
<b>Shadow Minister for Defence</b>	Hon. Richard Marles MP
<b>Shadow Minister for Veterans' Affairs</b>	Hon. Amanda Rishworth MP
<b>Shadow Minister for Defence Personnel</b>	Hon. Amanda Rishworth MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC</i>	<i>Hon. Warren Snowdon MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Cyber Security and Defence</i>	<i>Gai Brodtmann MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Defence Industry and Support</i>	<i>Hon. Mike Kelly AM MP</i>
<b>Shadow Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research</b>	Senator the Hon. Kim Carr
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Manufacturing and Science</i>	<i>Hon. Nick Champion MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Innovation</i>	<i>Senator Deborah O'Neill</i>
<b>Shadow Minister for Health and Medicare</b>	Hon. Catherine King MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Medicare</i>	<i>Tony Zappia MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Indigenous Health</i>	<i>Hon. Warren Snowdon MP</i>
<b>Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry</b>	Hon. Joel Fitzgibbon MP
<b>Shadow Minister for Rural and Regional Australia</b>	Hon. Joel Fitzgibbon MP

Title	Shadow Minister
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Australia</i>	<i>Lisa Chesters MP</i>
<b>Shadow Minister for Resources and Northern Australia</b>	Hon. Jason Clare MP
<b>Shadow Minister for Trade and Investment</b>	Hon. Jason Clare MP
Shadow Minister for Trade in Services	Hon. Dr Andrew Leigh MP
Shadow Minister Assisting for Resources	Madeleine King MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Northern Australia</i>	<i>Hon. Warren Snowdon MP</i>
<b>Shadow Minister for Immigration and Border Protection</b>	Hon. Shayne Neumann MP
<b>Shadow Minister for Finance</b>	Dr Jim Chalmers MP
<b>Shadow Minister for Communications</b>	Hon. Michelle Rowland MP
Shadow Minister for Regional Communications	Stephen Jones MP
<b>Shadow Minister for Ageing and Mental Health</b> <sup>(2)</sup>	Hon. Julie Collins MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Ageing</i>	<i>Senator Helen Polley</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Mental Health</i>	<i>Senator Deborah O'Neill</i>
<b>Shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education and Development</b> <sup>(1)</sup>	Hon. Amanda Rishworth MP

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

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*Wednesday, 17 October 2018*

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

## COMMITTEES

### Selection Committee

#### Report

The **SPEAKER** (09:31): I present report No. 32 of the Selection Committee, relating to the consideration of committee and delegation business and private members' business on Monday, 22, and Tuesday, 23 October 2018. The report will be printed in the *Hansard* for today, and the committee's determinations will appear on tomorrow's *Notice Paper*. Copies of the report have been placed on the table.

*The report read as follows—*

Report relating to the consideration of committee and delegation business and of private Members' business

1. The committee met in private session on Tuesday, 16 October 2018.
2. The Committee deliberated on items of committee and delegation business that had been notified, private Members' business items listed on the Notice Paper and notices lodged on Tuesday, 16 October 2018, and determined the order of precedence and times on Monday, 22 October 2018, as follows:

#### Items for House of Representatives Chamber (10.10 am to 11 am)

#### COMMITTEE AND DELEGATION BUSINESS

##### Presentation and statements

##### 1 Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport:

*Report on the inquiry into the quality of care in aged care facilities in Australia.*

*The Committee determined that statements on the report may be made—all statements to conclude by 10.20 am.*

*Speech time limits—*

*Mr Zimmerman—5 minutes.*

*Next Member speaking—5 minutes.*

[Minimum number of proposed Members speaking = 2 x 5 mins]

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

##### Notices

**1 Ms McGowan:** To present a Bill for an Act to effect by Act of the Parliament the posthumous promotion of Sir John Monash from the rank of General to the rank of Field Marshal. (*Defence (Honour General Sir John Monash) Amendment Bill 2018*)

*(Notice given 15 October 2018.)*

*Presenter may speak to the second reading for a period not exceeding 10 minutes—pursuant to standing order 41. Debate must be adjourned pursuant to standing order 142.*

**2 Mr Wilkie:** To present a Bill for an Act to amend the *Migration Act 1958*, and for related purposes. (*Migration Amendment (Kids Off Nauru) Bill 2018*)

*(Notice given 16 October 2018.)*

*Presenter may speak to the second reading for a period not exceeding 10 minutes—pursuant to standing order 41. Debate must be adjourned pursuant to standing order 142.*

**3 Ms Sharkie:** To present a Bill for an Act to require timely publication of emissions, and for related purposes. (*National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Amendment (Timely Publication of Emissions) Bill 2018*)

*(Notice given 16 October 2018.)*

*Presenter may speak to the second reading for a period not exceeding 10 minutes—pursuant to standing order 41. Debate must be adjourned pursuant to standing order 142.*

**4 Ms McGowan:** To present a Bill for an Act to amend the *National Consumer Credit Protection Act 2009*, and for related purposes. (*National Consumer Credit Protection Amendment (Small Amount Credit Contract and Consumer Lease Reforms) Bill 2018*)

*(Notice given 16 October 2018.)*

*Presenter may speak to the second reading for a period not exceeding 10 minutes—pursuant to standing order 41. Debate must be adjourned pursuant to standing order 142.*

**Items for Federation Chamber (4.45 pm to 7.30 pm)****PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS****Notices****1 Mr Hill:** To move:

That this House:

- (1) notes Australia's proud legacy of working for peace and democracy in Cambodia, led by the work of the former Labor Foreign Minister the Hon. Gareth Evans QC in fostering the Paris Peace Accords in 1991;
- (2) reiterates that as a longstanding friend of Cambodia and the Cambodian people, Australia must continue to urge the Cambodian Government to take steps to allow free and open political debate without violence and intimidation;
- (3) condemns the sham election in Cambodia last month and expresses grave concern that:
  - (a) the illegitimate election may sound the death knell of democracy, reversing more than 25 years of work to establish and strengthen democracy in Cambodia; and
  - (b) Prime Minister Hun Sen's 'victory' is a sham and cannot truly be said to represent the will of the Cambodian people because freedom of expression and association underpin democratic societies, yet in Cambodia the:
    - (i) main opposition party, the Cambodian National Rescue Party, has been banned;
    - (ii) opposition leader Kem Sokha remains in jail on politically motivated charges;
    - (iii) media and civil society have been silenced and harassed, with Hun Sen publicly threatening a civil war if he lost the election;
    - (iv) National Election Committee is not credible nor independent; and
    - (v) official 82 per cent turnout figures are not credible, noting the opposition boycotted the election and international media reported that election day was quiet in many places;
- (4) calls on the Cambodian Government to immediately release Kem Sokha from jail and guarantee his safety;
- (5) considers that Australia must now consider stronger measures and calls on the Australian Government to:
  - (a) review Australia's international development assistance to Cambodia to ensure the program is focused on humanitarian and civil society support rather than broader cooperation with Hun Sen's regime;
  - (b) examine the introduction of targeted sanctions such as visa restrictions and asset freezes for members of Hun Sen's regime and their families, given the reported strong links between the regime's key officials and Australia;
  - (c) lead and support multilateral efforts with other nations, starting with signatories of the 1991 Paris Peace Accords, to develop coordinated measures to increase pressure on Hun Sen's regime to allow free and open political debate without violence and intimidation;
  - (d) fully investigate allegations of illicit activities, including money laundering, by members of the Cambodian People's Party in Australia; and
  - (e) guarantee the rights of Australians of Cambodian heritage to live safely and free from intimidation, and determine whether the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme may apply to expose community groups which may be operating covertly in Australia in support of Hun Sen's regime;
- (6) calls on the Australian Government to:
  - (a) withdraw from the refugee resettlement deal; and
  - (b) promise not to enter into any further such deals with Cambodia; and
- (7) acknowledge the tireless advocacy of the Australian Cambodian community in support of democracy and human rights in Cambodia.

*(Notice given 13 August 2018.)*

*Time allotted—40 minutes.*

*Speech time limits—*

*Mr Hill—5 minutes.*

*Other Members—5 minutes. each.*

[Minimum number of proposed Members speaking = 8 x 5 mins]

*The Committee determined that consideration of this should continue on a future day.*

**2 Mr Drum:** To move:

That this House:

- (1) acknowledges the importance of irrigated agriculture to the Australian economy;
- (2) notes that:
  - (a) irrigated agricultural enterprises in 2016-17 contributed \$15.5 billion to the Australian economy and accounts for 25 per cent of total Australian agricultural production; and

- (b) in 2016-17 there were 22,103 agricultural businesses that farmed 2,244,000 hectares of irrigated land in Australia;
- (3) recognises that of the \$15.5 billion contributed to the economy in 2016-17, the major commodities included:
- (a) fruit and nuts \$3.5 billion;
  - (b) vegetables \$3.3 billion;
  - (c) dairy \$1.6 billion;
  - (d) cotton \$1.5 billion;
  - (e) grapes \$1.3 billion;
  - (f) nurseries and turf \$1.3 billion;
  - (g) sugar cane \$836 million;
  - (h) beef cattle \$684 million;
  - (i) cereals \$308 million; and
  - (j) rice \$252 million; and
- (4) acknowledges the commitment, hard work and investment of irrigators in every state and territory in Australia and the contribution they make to our economy.

*(Notice given 16 October 2018.)*

*Time allotted—40 minutes.*

*Speech time limits—*

*Mr Drum—5 minutes.*

*Other Members—5 minutes. each.*

[Minimum number of proposed Members speaking = 8 x 5 mins]

*The Committee determined that consideration of this should continue on a future day.*

**3 Ms Vamvakinou:** To move:

That this House:

(1) notes that:

- (a) 7 to 13 October 2018 is Bleeding Disorders Awareness Week;
- (b) haemophilia, the most common bleeding disorder, affects more than 2,700 Australians, almost all of them boys and men;
- (c) haemophilia is a genetic disease where a lack of a protein in the blood needed for clotting leads to excessive bleeding, often into joints and muscles;
- (d) haemophilia impacts every aspect of day-to-day life—activities we all take for granted—as a result of hospitalisations, pain, accumulated disability and psychological impacts;
- (e) treatment for bleeding disorders is delivered through specialised haemophilia treatment centres across the country and is jointly funded by the Commonwealth, state and territory governments through the National Blood Agreement; and
- (f) the Haemophilia Foundation of Australia delivers vital support to Australians with bleeding disorders through advocacy, education and promotion of research;

(2) recognises that:

- (a) while haemophilia treatment has improved significantly in recent years, there is still a significant need for improved treatments to deliver a better quality of life;
- (b) reforms to the Therapeutic Goods Administration process to evaluate new medicines now allows for expedited priority review of new treatments for serious conditions such as haemophilia; and
- (c) however, the road to fund new bleeding disorder treatments remains complex; and

(3) calls on the Government to continue working constructively with state and territory governments to ensure all Australians with bleeding disorders receive timely access to the treatments they need.

*(Notice given 19 September 2018.)*

*Time allotted—20 minutes.*

*Speech time limits—*

*Ms Vamvakinou—5 minutes.*

*Other Members—5 minutes. each.*

[Minimum number of proposed Members speaking = 4 x 5 mins]

*The Committee determined that consideration of this should continue on a future day.*

**Orders of the day**

**1 Stronger economy:** Resumption of debate (from 25 June 2018—Ms Banks) on the motion of Ms Banks—That this House:

(1) recognises the positive effect of the Government's measures for a stronger economy mean that essential services are guaranteed including the Government's:

- (a) support for education and childcare; and
- (b) measures to support more choices for Australians to live longer, healthier lives; and

(2) notes with deep concern that the Opposition has no plan for a stronger economy that will deliver essential services to Australians.

*Time allotted—40 minutes.*

*Speech time limits—*

All Members—5 minutes. each.

[Minimum number of proposed Members speaking = 8 x 5 mins]

*The Committee determined that consideration of this should continue on a future day.*

#### **Notices—continued**

**4 Ms Brodtmann:** To move:

That this House:

(1) notes that:

- (a) the Bahá'í community in Iran is subject to a widespread and systematic campaign of persecution;
- (b) in 2012 and 2015, the House condemned the persecution and treatment of Bahá'ís in Iran;
- (c) the discriminatory and unjust persecution continues, despite Iranian President Hassan Rouhani promising justice and equal opportunity for all Iranians;
- (d) Australia was a co-sponsor of the December 2017 resolution by the General Assembly of the United Nations which expressed 'serious concern about ongoing severe limitations and restrictions on the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief in Iran'; and
- (e) persecution of Bahá'ís has recently spread to Yemen where a death sentence was passed against Mr Hamed bin Haydara in January 2018 due to his religion; and

(2) calls for:

- (a) the immediate release of all Bahá'ís currently imprisoned in Iran for their religion, including the remaining Bahá'í leaders imprisoned since 2008;
- (b) the Iranian Government to repeal all discriminatory legislation and practices, including the 1991 Bahá'í Question memorandum of the Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council;
- (c) respect for the right of freedom of religion and belief for all and an end to the persecution of the Bahá'ís in Iran; and
- (d) the repeal of the death sentence against Mr bin Haydara and the immediate release of all Bahá'ís currently imprisoned in Yemen for their religion.

*(Notice given 25 June 2018.)*

*Time allotted—remaining private Members' business time prior to 7.30 pm*

*Speech time limits—*

*Ms Brodtmann—5 minutes.*

*Other Members—5 minutes. each.*

[Minimum number of proposed Members speaking = 5 x 5 mins]

*The Committee determined that consideration of this should continue on a future day.*

3. Pursuant to the resolution of the House of 20 September 2018, the committee determined the order of precedence and times to be allotted for consideration of committee and delegation business and private Members' business in the Federation Chamber, on Tuesday, 23 October 2018, as follows:

#### **Items for Federation Chamber (4.30 pm to 5.30 pm)**

#### **PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

#### **Notices**

**1 Mr Hayes:** To move:

That this House:

(1) notes:

- (a) that 10 October 2018 was World Day Against the Death Penalty;
- (b) the bi-partisan position of Australian governments over many years in their continued opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances for all people and their commitment to pursuing the universal abolition of the death penalty through all avenues available; and

(c) that the theme of the 2018 World Day Against the Death Penalty is to raise awareness of the inhumane living conditions of people sentenced to death;

(2) acknowledges the Australian Government's Strategy for Abolition of the Death Penalty, which details Australia's reasons for opposing the death penalty because:

(a) it is irrevocable, miscarriages of justice cannot be rectified, and no legal system is safe from error;

(b) it denies any possibility of rehabilitation to the convicted individual;

(c) there is no convincing evidence that it is a more effective deterrent than long term or life imprisonment; and

(d) it is unfair—it is used disproportionately against the poor, people with intellectual or mental disabilities and minority groups; and

(3) notes that on World Day Against the Death Penalty, the Australian film *Guilty*, which documents the final 72 hours in the life of Myuran Sukumaran, the Bali Nine convicted criminal who, along with Andrew Chan was executed by a firing squad in Indonesia on 29 April 2015, was screened in every state and territory in Australia.

*(Notice given 19 September 2018.)*

*Time allotted—30 minutes.*

*Speech time limits—*

*Mr Hayes—5 minutes.*

*Other Members—5 minutes. each.*

[Minimum number of proposed Members speaking = 6 x 5 mins]

*The Committee determined that consideration of this should continue on a future day.*

#### **Orders of the day**

**1 Economic management:** Resumption of debate (from 17 September 2018) on the motion of Mr van Manen—That this House:

(1) notes that over the year, the economy grew 3.4 per cent, which is the fastest rate of growth since the 2012 September quarter during the height of the mining investment boom, and the 27th year of consecutive economic growth;

(2) recognises that strong employment outcomes have been accompanied by an elevated rate of labour force participation, particularly for women, and that wages can be expected to rise if economic growth remains strong; and

(3) calls on the Government to remain resolute in its effective economic management to ensure funding for the essential services we need.

*Time allotted—30 minutes.*

*Speech time limits—*

All Members—5 minutes. each.

[Minimum number of proposed Members speaking = 6 x 5 mins]

*The Committee determined that consideration of this should continue on a future day.*

### **Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport**

#### **Report**

**Mr ZIMMERMAN** (North Sydney) (09:31): On behalf of the Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport I present the committee's report on the inquiry into biotoxin related illness in Australia together with the minutes of proceedings.

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

**Mr ZIMMERMAN:** by leave—Mould is a naturally occurring part of the environment and is harmless to most people. For some, mould may cause an allergic reaction that is usually temporary. In rare cases an infection can occur. In addition, some individuals have described experiencing a range of often-debilitating cognitive and physical symptoms which they have linked to being exposed to mould or a water damaged building. This experience has been described as chronic inflammatory response syndrome, or CIRS. This report outlines seven recommendations which pertain to mould, CIRS-like symptoms and unexplained and complex illness more broadly.

Firstly, the committee has recommended the Australian government produce and publish information on and conduct further research into dampness and mould in the built environment. Specifically, this research should cover the health impacts, prevalence and effective methods of prevention and remediation of dampness and mould. To ensure quality and consistency of method, the committee has recommended greater regulatory oversight of the mould testing and remediation industries. In addition to helping prevent buildings becoming significantly damp or mouldy in the first instance, the committee has recommended a review of the adequacy of existing building standards and codes. A number of individuals provided personal accounts of living in a rental

property with mould or water damage and also experiencing significant health issues. To enable prospective tenants to make an informed decision about their living arrangements, the committee has recommended they be provided with information about disclosure and rectification of any previous or existing mould or water damage in a property before entering into a residential leasing agreement.

Throughout this inquiry, the committee heard that people presenting with numerous symptoms that are seemingly unrelated have had difficulty in finding a diagnosis and treatment. Consequently, many of these people spend considerable time, money and effort consulting multiple doctors without success. To help address this issue, the committee has recommended the Department of Health conduct a review into the treatment of patients who present with complex illness that is difficult to diagnose. This review should consider issues including how to provide these patients with effective and timely treatment and what further support for medical professionals is needed so they can effectively assist these patients.

The committee has recommended research be commissioned into CIRS-like symptoms in order to assist in the diagnosis, treatment and management of CIRS and also examine any links CIRS may have with mould and biotoxins. In addition, the committee recommended the development of clinical guidelines for general practitioners for CIRS-like conditions to help ensure a consistent and evidence based approach to the diagnosis and treatment of patients presenting with these symptoms. Developing clinical guidelines in consultation with patient groups, medical practitioners and health bodies will ensure they are effective and targeted.

This report has tackled a difficult area of health and public policy. CIRS is not a syndrome broadly recognised by health experts in Australia. Yet the committee heard heartbreaking evidence from individuals who suffer from multiple and often severely debilitating symptoms which they link to mould exposure. Often those symptoms have ruined lives, making employment and normal social interaction near impossible. We owe it to those Australians to do more to ensure their very real health needs are better understood and treated.

I want to thank my fellow committee members, particularly the member for Robertson, for their collective work in the preparation of this report. I also extend my thanks to the many experts and patients that gave of their time to provide testimony, often about very personal stories which were hard to talk about in a committee environment. Finally, the committee has been well served, as usual, by the committee staff, who perform their roles with great dedication and professionalism. I commend the report to the House.

**Mrs WICKS** (Robertson) (09:35): by leave—I too rise to endorse the seven recommendations of the report into the inquiry into biotoxin related illness in Australia as part of the work of the Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport. I would really like to thank committee members, the chair and the secretariat for their work on this inquiry and for this report. May I also thank the Minister for Health for his referral of this particular issue to the committee. Throughout the inquiry, the committee received nearly 142 submissions and 39 exhibits, and heard from countless professionals in the medical, construction and mould remediation spaces at our public hearings.

There is so much that can actually be said about this report and the recommendations, but, to be honest, it's the stories behind each and every submission that was received that are the real reason this report is being tabled and the reason that the committee has made such strong recommendations. After sharing my story regarding my own experience of biotoxin related illness last year, I was contacted by hundreds of Australians, sharing their own stories. Certainly, that continued even after the announcement of this inquiry. Many people along the way shared with me their doubts and their concerns that an inquiry of this type would not validate their experiences of suffering with CIRS-like illness. Yet the committee heard story after story of people who are suffering. As the chair has just indicated, some really heartbreaking stories were heard. We also heard of their struggle in being believed and we heard of their challenging road towards a diagnosis. Many people recounted their experience of bouncing from doctor to doctor, with no answers and yet with a debilitating, complex condition. This was really a common theme, and I'm pleased to be able to say that I really believe this report validates those experiences. I think it does let people who are suffering and who are really struggling with this particular condition know that they are being heard and that they are being listened to.

I'm so pleased about two recommendations in response to the hearing of the committee and the submissions received in particular. Recommendation 5 of the report recommends that the Department of Health review current processes around treatment and consider guidelines relating to the treatment of complex conditions such as CIRS. Recommendation 7, particularly, goes further, recommending that the Department of Health work with patient groups, health bodies and medical professionals to develop clinical guidelines for GPs around the diagnosis, treatment and management of conditions such as CIRS-like illnesses. This is a strong recommendation and I'm pleased, because I really do believe that having clear guidelines for treatment will benefit so many who are struggling with this condition.

It's certainly my hope that through the work of this inquiry those people who currently are suffering can be assured that not only will they be believed but that there will be a plan for diagnosis and treatment. This is certainly the first step, but one of the things that the report also found was that many professionals in the medical space appearing before the committee agreed that there was a lack of evidence and research. There was also a consensus that there was need for further research. That's why I also endorse recommendation 6, outlining a recommendation that the Australian government commission the National Health and Medical Research Council to conduct further research into CIRS and related symptoms, with a view to better inform medical professionals and to support the work outlined in recommendation 7.

A number of submissions were made in relation to the challenge of remediation, about water-damaged buildings and a lack of consensus and clarity on a consistent approach to that. That is why I believe that recommendations 2, 3 and 4 go some way towards helping address those issues. I recognise that a lot of these issues are state and territory responsibilities, but this report points to that and particularly looks at further research into the adequacy of building codes and standards related to the prevention and remediation of dampness and mould in buildings.

Finally, I again place on record my thanks to the Minister for Health for his reference to the committee, and for his ongoing personal support in relation to my own journey, and for his work in the health space. We don't know the exact number of Australians living with CIRS, but I do hope that as a result of the recommendations included in this report we might have a greater understanding of this illness and of those who are suffering so that they can be well.

I would encourage and urge the government to consider very carefully these recommendations and support them, particularly those recommendations around developing guidelines for GPs and the need for greater research into this issue. I commend the report to the House.

Debate adjourned.

#### Reference to Federation Chamber

**Mr ZIMMERMAN** (North Sydney) (09:41): I move:

That the order of the day be referred to the Federation Chamber for further consideration.

Question agreed to.

### BILLS

#### Treasury Laws Amendment (Gift Cards) Bill 2018

##### Second Reading

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

to which the following amendment was moved:

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

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

(1) notes the Government's lack of support for, and failure to protect, Australian consumers; and

(2) calls on the Government to reinvigorate the national Consumer Affairs Forum process, to enable the much-needed reform of Australian Consumer Law"—

**The SPEAKER** (09:42): The original question was that this bill be read a second time. To this the honourable member for Brand has moved that all words after 'That' be omitted with a view to substituting other words. The question now is that the amendment be agreed to.

**Mr ZAPPIA** (Makin) (09:42): In continuing my remarks on the Treasury Laws Amendment (Gift Cards) Bill 2018 I'll pick up where I left off last night. I was making the point that gift cards are not always redeemed. Perhaps it's because there is not, at the time, an appropriate gift in the store that the holder of the gift card wants to purchase. On other occasions it may be that the time elapses unintentionally and the gift card is never used. There are also occasions whereby the gift card is redeemed but not to its full value; there might be a small amount left over. Again, time elapses and that small amount is never taken up by the holder of the card. Whatever the case, we know there are gift cards that are never cashed in and that the value of those cards, ultimately, is lost.

I raised this concern only a couple of months ago, in this place, when I spoke of lost gift cards that were issued by Toys R Us. Toys R Us went into liquidation, and the stores closed. The holders of those cards lost their gift cards because the stores closed. Holders of gift cards, in the weeks leading up to the closure of those stores, were even told by the administrator that if they wanted to cash in their gift cards they could only do so if they purchased an equivalent amount of new product from the store. This was adding a condition that was not part of what would

have been the understanding of the person who purchased the gift card. That was of serious concern to me because it effectively said to people who had a gift card, 'You have a gift card, but from now on the terms and conditions under which you can use it have changed dramatically.'

I made the point at the time that I also believed that, given that that was the case, it was not good enough to simply say to those people who had lost the value of those gift cards because the store went into liquidation that they were unsecured creditors to an entity that might not have any credit when all the financials had been sorted out. It might have been also appropriate that, in the issuing of gift cards, the funds that the stores take in from those gift cards should be put into a separate account perhaps a trust account or something similar that was therefore secured and always available for those people who had purchased gift cards. I make that suggestion on the basis that I still have concerns about the holders of gift cards losing the value when a business closes down or, even worse, goes into bankruptcy, because under those circumstances the value is lost, and there is no product ever issued. I believe that we could perhaps do a little better.

The other matter relating to the gift cards is this. As other speakers have noted—and I made the comments myself earlier in this discussion—both New South Wales and South Australia have now enacted legislation to ensure that there is a three-year time limit on gift cards. I think that that's appropriate and sensible. However, we now have legislation in South Australia and New South Wales, and we're about to have legislation in the federal parliament. That means we will have national legislation and state legislation. That immediately begs the question: which legislation supersedes the other when a breach of the conditions and perhaps the three-year time limit occurs? I don't know. I'd hate to think that, because there might be two sets of legislation, one at national and one at state level, there'll also be buck-passing between the two as to who is responsible for ensuring that the intent of this legislation is carried through at the time. It would seem to me that, from a consumer's point of view, they wouldn't necessarily know where to go.

Indeed, if we have national legislation, will that supersede and make obsolete the state legislation? I really don't know. My understanding of the legislation that went through in New South Wales and South Australia is that it is very, very similar to what is being proposed under this bill. Given that, it would seem to me that we might reach a point where there is duplication. Indeed, that even begs the question: can a person be prosecuted for a breach under both state and national legislation and therefore incur two sets of penalties? Again, those are matters on which I would be interested in getting a response from the minister.

Lastly, I make this point. As a result of the issuing of gift cards and the community concerns that have been raised, and now the legislation in New South Wales and South Australia, I note that many of the stores, particularly in the retail sector, and others, have already moved to a three-year time limit on their cards. Indeed, there's no restriction on the limit extending further than three years, and some stores in fact leave their gift cards open ended, which I think is a good thing to do. But I notice that many of the stores are already moving in that direction and many of the businesses across Australia are already moving in that direction, clearly in anticipation that, if they didn't, they would be forced to anyway. Nevertheless, I think that that is a good thing.

I think this legislation is very much a step in the right direction. It will close off many of the loopholes relating to the issuing of gift cards. Of course, it doesn't close all of them off, because, as we know, there are some types of cards—for example, a gift voucher that might be issued by a local business to a community organisation as part of a raffle or something like that—that I understand are not covered by this legislation, and nor should they be. There will be exemptions to the general term of gift cards when it comes to being protected by this legislation. It is a step in the right direction. I guess time will tell just how effective it will be.

**Mr FALINSKI** (Mackellar) (09:49): Like many Australians at Christmas or on birthdays, Father's Day or Mother's Day, I have received and given gift cards as presents. A gift card is one of the simplest and easiest gifts for loved ones or for an office Kris Kringle. There is nothing worse than going to David Jones, JB Hi-Fi or Bunnings, picking the thing you want or need and, once at the counter, realising the gift card has expired. It is essentially lost money. After all, there is no expiration date on money. That is why I'm happy to see the Treasury Laws Amendment (Gift Cards) Bill 2018 before the parliament. It will make things fairer for consumers and give the certainty that consumers and businesses need. No longer will people wake up on Christmas Day, unwrap a gift from their loved ones, perhaps an uncle, see a gift card and worry about onerous terms and conditions, which can be viewed only through a microscope or with the aid of a magnifying glass, and worry about the expiry time frame.

When we talk in this place about economic reform, we normally talk about the importance of creating greater wealth for our community and the people who live in Australia, whether that's more job opportunities or whether that's lower taxes, more innovation or whatever. But this too is economic reform, because it's going to benefit the lives of so many Australians, providing them with opportunities to use gift cards that previously they couldn't use because the expiry date had passed. This is major economic reform. This is what a government that governs for

the many, not the few, looks like. We Liberals in the past have taken on big oil and big tobacco and today we will take on the big gift card industry.

The previous speaker said that he was worried about the difference between state laws and the federal law. Well, the reason this law is so important is that the government has become aware there are some people, in places like Tasmania, who have been considering setting up what are effectively call centres to sell gift cards into New South Wales and South Australia, where unsuspecting consumers don't realise they're not covered by the laws introduced by the excellent state minister Matt Kean, the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation. As Mr Kean has pointed out, sometimes better regulation is more regulation, but today we are here to praise smarter regulation, because under this law the gift card boiler rooms that we feared might be established in places like Tasmania, selling to the unsuspecting consumers of New South Wales, will not be possible. Under this law, nowhere now will you be able to take advantage of Australian consumers.

When this government talks about putting people before profit, it knows that you can't have profit without people. That is why Minister Robert, who has introduced this excellent piece of legislation, says that as he walks past stores and shopping malls in Brisbane and the Gold Coast people come up and hug him. It is no longer just because of his rugged good looks; it's because he's introduced a piece of legislation that the people of Australia love. And he is a beloved minister of this government. It's an example of how we are responding to the needs of consumers, not just in New South Wales and in Australia but right around Australia.

Therefore, it is disappointing to see that the Labor Party felt it necessary to move amendments to this incredibly good piece of legislation. What is Minister Robert to say to people when they come and hug him in the street, unsuspecting as they may be? Is he to say, 'Well, we're trying to get this done but the Labor Party has moved amendments to it?' Hopefully, they will see that this piece of legislation is critical economic reform. It is critical to advancing the needs of and, indeed, the importance of, what all consumers need in this country, because when we make the lives of one consumer better we make the lives of all Australians better. Thank you.

**Mr BRIAN MITCHELL** (Lyons) (09:54): It wasn't quite 'fight them on the beaches', member for Mackellar, but anyway! Labor is happy to support this Treasury Laws Amendment (Gift Cards) Bill 2018. It is in the interests of consumers, and Labor will always be on the side of consumers. But I must point out that we do have the second reading amendment that the member for Brand moved, which I do support—mainly that we note the government's lack of support for and failure to protect Australian consumers to date. That is partly because this legislation has been so long in coming, and I'll come to that. And it calls on the government to reinvigorate the national consumer affairs forum process to enable the much-needed reform of Australian Consumer Law. That's a very important process that the current minister has allowed to languish, which is a great shame for consumers. That's a very important protection measure, and we very much look forward to seeing that consumer affairs forum re-established.

This principle behind this bill is that, essentially, it contains a schedule which will allow gift cards to have an expiry date of three years, which is a great improvement on the current system. But I know that the cry across Australia will be: 'Why have any expiry date at all? Obviously, you pay cash—\$50 or \$100—for a gift card. Why doesn't the card have the same expiry date as cash, which is none?' That's a very good question, and the answer is, of course, that small business can't carry liabilities forever. Small business has to balance the books, so this is a good compromise, I think, between having no expiry date on a gift card and meeting the needs of small business—three years.

If you get a gift card for Christmas or your birthday—and I would counsel any husband in this place not to buy their wife a gift card for their anniversary; I think that is a recipe for disaster! I'll just say that—

**An opposition member:** Shame!

**Mr BRIAN MITCHELL:** Shame indeed, for those who are foolish enough to try! So I think that three years is a good compromise between those competing needs.

I'm pleased to say that there are a number of retailers—the big retailers—who can afford to carry the liability of gift cards with no expiry date on them into perpetuity, and that's good to see. The big retailers can do that, so, hopefully, you can use your gift card; you can dig it out of the bottom drawer, dust off the grunge and spend it five, six or seven years down the track.

The schedule in this bill also increases transparency requirements for gift cards to be fully legible. The member for Makin made reference to the unintended consequences when the conditions of gift cards are not entirely clear. It's unacceptable that somebody can pay cash for a gift card and think that they're giving this lovely gift to somebody but that when they try to spend that gift card at a shop, the shop says, 'Well, yes, you can use the gift card, but only if you spend some money with us as well.' That is unacceptable, and this legislation will make it clear that conditions like that will have to be spelt out very clearly.

It's sad to say that this legislation has been far too long in coming. This bill had to be approved by the Commonwealth, state and territory consumer affairs ministers by a tortuous circular process, not helped by the fact the forum scheduled for 31 August was cancelled and later deferred to 31 October due to the well-known machinations within the government and the problems they had with their leadership over the last few months.

I'd like to come briefly to the issue of small-amount credit contracts, which are part of the consumer affairs portfolio and go to the second reading amendment—about the failures of the government in relation to consumer affairs. I'm pleased to see that the assistant minister has joined us, because this goes directly to his failures as minister. The country is plagued by payday lending; loan sharks. There is a crisis underway. I must say that, led by the shadow consumer affairs minister, and particularly by the member for Oxley, we have shone a light on this disgraceful state of affairs with payday loan sharks and the number of people they affect.

There's been legislation on the books in this place for a long time which the government has failed to enact. The government has refused to bring forward its own legislation to a vote. Labor brought forward a private member's bill using exactly the same words as the government's bill, and the government voted it down. The government effectively voted down its own bill which would protect people from the effects of payday loan sharks. That's a disgrace.

The legislation would reform small-amount credit contracts; impose a ceiling on the total payments that can be made under a rent-to-buy scheme; require payday loans to have equal repayments at equal payment intervals; remove the ability for small-amount credit contract providers to charge monthly fees on residual terms of a loan where a consumer fully repays the loan early; ban unsolicited sales of the schemes; and introduce broad anti-avoidance protections to prevent payday lenders and rent-to-buy companies from circumventing the rules. These are all very good reforms. They should happen. But under this assistant minister they're sitting in a bottom drawer somewhere not happening, because the parliamentary friends of payday lending have control of the government. Those opposite are in the pockets of the loan sharks. They're refusing to bring on their own bill. They've voted down Labor's bill, which is identical to their own—a bill that will protect consumers. It's a disgrace.

Here are some payday lending facts and figures. These figures are from a recent report from the Consumer Action Law Centre and they go directly to the second reading amendment about this government's failure to protect Australian consumers. The rate of vulnerable Australian families being taken advantage of by payday lenders has almost doubled over the past decade, with 650,000 financially stressed households now holding a payday loan. The number of borrowers taking out more than one payday loan in the preceding 12 months has grown from 17.2 per cent in 2005 to 38 per cent in 2015. That means the average number of payday loans per borrower is 3.64. Forty per cent of people who entered into a small-amount credit contract loan are unemployed, so they're not in the best position to repay these high-interest loans. A quarter of those who took out payday loans received more than half their income from Centrelink. We're talking about interest rates as high as 884 per cent on these loans. Can you imagine an interest rate of 884 per cent? And this government does nothing about addressing this issue, despite having legislation ready to go that this side will support. We're talking about payday loans that affect 1.8 million financially distressed Australians, who are also struggling with all sorts of other cost-of-living increases. It's an absolute failure of this government to look after the interests of Australian consumers.

Recent data shows there are now 800,000 Australian households which have fallen victim to payday lending. It's more than doubled in the past decade. In the last 18 months alone, 150,000 new households have signed up for payday loans. There is a crisis out there. What this signals is that people can't afford to get credit by the usual means; they're already stretched, so in desperation they're going to these loan sharks—150,000 households in the past 18 months alone. That's a staggering number. And this government is doing nothing to address this consumer crisis across Australia. It's now been 1,168 days since the government itself started a review into payday loans, and it has done nothing. Those opposite have been so obsessed by their own internal machinations, their own problems inside their own party, that they're not looking after Australian consumers. Stop looking after yourselves and start looking after Australian consumers. What has been going on is a disgrace.

I'd like to come briefly to the issue which goes to the second reading amendment about honey laundering. It's a great term, invented, I think, by the shadow minister. Well done, Shadow Minister! Honey laundering is a funny term for a serious subject. As the member for Lyons in Tasmania, I do have honey producers in my electorate, quite a number of them. They are aghast to learn that Tasmania has been caught up in this adulteration of Australian honey. It's a serious issue because Tasmania, as anybody who went to the fantastic event last night—the Flavours of Tasmania—knows, Tasmania trades on its well-deserved reputation as a place of exceptional quality and exceptional integrity when it comes to produce. So, for Tasmania to be caught up in this honey-laundering scandal, where honey has been adulterated with sugars that are not pure honey, it is very distressing for a number of quality honey producers across my electorate.

This is right in the assistant minister's remit. He could be and should be doing something about this. I mean, he's using plenty of internet. There is the \$38,000 worth of internet he's using at home. There's plenty that the assistant minister could be doing. He could get on to Google, at least, to check out what is happening. He could be phoning people and finding out what's going on. He's using plenty of data. I'm not sure what data he's using to rack up \$38,000 worth of bills to the taxpayer but he's certainly not doing it to look after the honey producers of Tasmania or the honey producers across Australia or those many hundreds of thousands of Australians affected by payday loan sharks.

We on this side are happy to support this bill but we do move these very important second reading amendments. We hope those opposite can see themselves fit to support the second reading amendments because they are important amendments in the interests of Australian consumers. It is in the interests of Australian consumers to extend the life of gift cards. It is an important bill and I commend it to the House.

**Mr ROBERT** (Fadden—Assistant Treasurer) (10:06): Firstly, can I thank all those members who have contributed to the debate. The bill introduces reforms to ensure a nationally consistent and uniform regime for gift cards in Australia. It introduces a minimum three-year expiry period, requires expiry date information to be displayed predominantly on the card and bans the charging of post-supply fees. The reforms put to the parliament will provide consumers with greater confidence and make gift cards fairer for all consumers.

Well-informed and confident consumers are essential to the functioning of an efficient economy. However, many consumers experience loss and disappointment from expired gift cards due to a wide variance in terms and conditions. This makes it difficult for consumers to understand their rights and obligations. It is equally important that businesses are supported in meeting their obligations and do not face any unnecessary compliance burden in complying with different laws.

The implementation of nationally consistent gift card reforms will provide greater clarity for Australian businesses. New South Wales and South Australia have moved to address the detriment consumers experience from expired gift cards, with reforms to introduce a minimum three-year expiry period for gift cards sold in their respective states. Still, there is currently no uniform regulation for minimum expiry periods and post-supply fees, with different rules applying across jurisdictions. The inconsistencies have created uncertainty for consumers and a regulatory burden for businesses.

The bill imposes a three-year minimum expiry period nationally, balancing consumer rights and business compliance. The reforms will also require the expiry date information to be prominently displayed on the card itself. Enhanced disclosure of the expiry date on gift cards will ensure consumers are able to make informed purchasing decisions by having clear access to expiry date information at the time it's needed and on the card itself. The disclosure requirements in this bill provide clarity for consumers, whilst providing businesses with the needed flexibility in the way the date is displayed.

Further, under the national regime, the charging of post-supply fees—that is, inactivity and balance-checking fees—will be prohibited. Consumers will have the full benefit of the gift cards they receive. To ensure flexibility and to provide support to industry, regulatory-making powers contained in the bill allow for certain gift cards supplied in particular circumstances to be exempt from all or some of the requirements imposed by the reform. This will allow the law to adapt to changes in tech and business activities, to ensure that essential activities involving gift cards are not unnecessarily curtailed to the detriment of businesses and consumers. The government is comprehensively considering feedback from stakeholders on the nature and scope of the exemptions and post-supply fees to ensure the business gift card activities are not curtailed.

It's an offence to contravene the reforms contained in the bill. This will act as a strong deterrent against misconduct that can have serious detriment for consumers, thereby enhancing the integrity of the regulatory regime. The penalties that can be imposed for contravening the regime are similar or consistent with the consumer protections in the ACL—the Australian Consumer Law. Compliance with these reforms will be monitored and enforced by the ACCC.

The government has consulted widely on the reforms. Consumers and business support the reforms as they improve consumer outcomes, provide consistency and are workable for business. The states and territories have also shown their support for a national regime. In August this year, Commonwealth, state and territory consumer affairs ministers formally agreed to amend the Australian Consumer Law, as required by the Intergovernmental Agreement for the Australian Consumer Law. The reform will take effect from 1 November next year, after providing industry with around a 12-month transition period to adapt to the new regime. This will ensure that these important protections for consumers are in place for the 2019 Christmas period. I commend the bill to the House.

**The SPEAKER:** The original question was that this bill be now read a second time. To this the honourable member for Brand has moved as an amendment that all words after 'That' be omitted with a view to substituting other words, so the immediate question is that the amendment moved by the member for Brand be agreed to.

The House divided. [10:15]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .....67  
 Noes .....72  
 Majority.....5

AYES

Albanese, AN  
 Bandt, AP  
 Bowen, CE  
 Burke, AS  
 Butler, MC  
 Chalmers, JE  
 Chesters, LM  
 Claydon, SC  
 Danby, M  
 Dreyfus, MA  
 Ellis, KM  
 Freeland, MR  
 Giles, AJ  
 Gosling, LJ  
 Hayes, CP  
 Husar, E  
 Jones, SP  
 Keay, JT  
 Keogh, MJ  
 King, CF  
 Lamb, S  
 Marles, RD  
 Mitchell, BK  
 Neumann, SK  
 O'Neil, CE  
 Owens, JA  
 Plibersek, TJ  
 Rowland, MA  
 Shorten, WR  
 Stanley, AM  
 Swanson, MJ  
 Thistlethwaite, MJ  
 Watts, TG  
 Zappia, A

Aly, A  
 Bird, SL  
 Brodtmann, G  
 Burney, LJ  
 Byrne, AM  
 Champion, ND  
 Clare, JD  
 Collins, JM  
 Dick, MD  
 Elliot, MJ  
 Fitzgibbon, JA  
 Georganas, S  
 Gorman, P  
 Hart, RA  
 Hill, JC  
 Husic, EN  
 Kearney, GM  
 Kelly, MJ  
 Khalil, P  
 King, MMH  
 Leigh, AK  
 McBride, EM  
 Mitchell, RG  
 O'Connor, BPJ  
 O'Toole, C  
 Perrett, GD (teller)  
 Rishworth, AL  
 Ryan, JC (teller)  
 Snowdon, WE  
 Swan, WM  
 Templeman, SR  
 Vamvakinou, M  
 Wilkie, AD

NOES

Abbott, AJ  
 Andrews, KJ  
 Banks, J  
 Broad, AJ  
 Chester, D  
 Ciobo, SM  
 Coulton, M  
 Drum, DK (teller)  
 Entsch, WG  
 Falinski, J  
 Flint, NJ  
 Gee, AR  
 Goodenough, IR  
 Hastie, AW  
 Henderson, SM  
 Howarth, LR  
 Irons, SJ  
 Kelly, C  
 Landry, ML  
 Leeser, J  
 Littleproud, D

Alexander, JG  
 Andrews, KL  
 Bishop, JI  
 Buchholz, S  
 Christensen, GR  
 Coleman, DB  
 Crewther, CJ  
 Dutton, PC  
 Evans, TM  
 Fletcher, PW  
 Frydenberg, JA  
 Gillespie, DA  
 Hartsuyker, L  
 Hawke, AG  
 Hogan, KJ  
 Hunt, GA  
 Keenan, M  
 Laming, A  
 Laundry, C  
 Ley, SP  
 Marino, NB

## NOES

McCormack, MF  
 McVeigh, JJ  
 Morton, B  
 O'Brien, T  
 O'Dwyer, KM  
 Pitt, KJ  
 Price, ML  
 Ramsey, RE (teller)  
 Sharkie, RCC  
 Taylor, AJ  
 Tudge, AE  
 Vasta, RX  
 Wicks, LE  
 Wilson, TR  
 Wyatt, KG

McGowan, C  
 Morrison, SJ  
 O'Brien, LS  
 O'Dowd, KD  
 Pasin, A  
 Porter, CC  
 Pyne, CM  
 Robert, SR  
 Sukkar, MS  
 Tehan, DT  
 Van Manen, AJ  
 Wallace, AB  
 Wilson, RJ  
 Wood, JP  
 Zimmerman, T

Question negatived.

Original question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

**Third Reading**

**Mr ROBERT** (Fadden—Assistant Treasurer) (10:20): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

**Customs Amendment (Collecting Tobacco Duties at the Border) Bill 2018****Second Reading**

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

**Mr NEUMANN** (Blair) (10:21): I rise to speak on the Customs Amendment (Collecting Tobacco Duties at the Border) Bill 2018. This piece of legislation is part of a range of measures to crack down on the proliferation of illicit tobacco in Australia. This bill, along with two others debated this week, implements measures announced in the 2018-19 budget under the banner of the black economy package.

Labor is supporting the passage of this bill through the House to stop illicit tobacco and, ultimately, improve health outcomes for all Australians. Our commitment on this side of the House to stop the scourge of tobacco speaks for itself. Smoking is the single most important preventable cause of ill health and death in Australia, accounting for more than 15,000 deaths each year. Labor governments have led the way and made significant advancements towards drastically reducing that number. It was Labor who introduced and fought for world-leading plain-packaging legislation which, complemented with other policies, has seen adolescent smoking rates drop to a record low. A strong, principled stance on reducing society's exposure to tobacco products has significantly improved the overall health of all Australians.

The Customs Amendment (Collecting Tobacco Duties at the Border) Bill 2018 amends the Customs Act 1901. It will require tobacco importers to pay import duty on tobacco products on importation into Australia from 1 July 2019. So, duty will be paid on tobacco products upon importation into Australia. This removes the option of imported tobacco products entering Australia in a licenced warehouse without the payment of import duties. That's really critical: there will be payment at the point of it being imported. From 1 July 2019, it will no longer be possible for duty to be paid on tobacco products on a weekly or monthly basis in accordance with permissions granted under section 69 of the Customs Act. Movement permissions to allow the movement of tobacco products to or from warehouses will cease on the same day.

The bill also includes transitional arrangements for the treatment of tobacco products that are still in warehouses on 1 July 2019. Owners of these tobacco products will be required to pay outstanding duties, unless they enter into an arrangement to pay the outstanding duty over the following 12 months and provide security for doing so. Owners of tobacco products who do neither of these things may have their tobacco products sold, or otherwise disposed of, by the government.

Labor supports these measures to tackle the black economy and stop illicit tobacco entering the supply chain. 'Illicit tobacco' refers to tobacco sold to Australian consumers without payment of relevant taxes. I think there wouldn't be a person in this chamber who hasn't had complaints by legitimate and lawful sellers of tobacco concerning illicit operations in their electorates.

Contraband tobacco is manufactured legally outside Australia and then smuggled into our country or into the supply chain without paying relevant taxes. When illicit tobacco enters the market without paying excise, it means that tax or duties aren't being collected by the government to pay for the services that we expect in our society, such as health, education or indeed infrastructure. It's reported that close to a quarter of the illegal tobacco sold in Australia is 'leakage' from licensed warehouses. By applying duties at the border rather than when the tobacco leaves warehouses, we're closing this loophole and the potential for illicit tobacco to be spread in Australia.

Illicit tobacco is one of the many branches that criminal networks use to fund their nefarious operations. Profits from illicit tobacco help fund other branches of criminal activity, including human trafficking, people smuggling, illegal firearms and drug smuggling. This is one of the many reasons we must take every step possible to crack down on illicit tobacco and the people who run these illegal operations.

The change in timing of when tobacco is charged is an important measure to reduce the importation of illicit tobacco. However, the sneakiest thing about this measure is that it sees the budget, on the budget papers, return to surplus a year ahead of time. This measure alone will boost tax receipts once and once only by \$3.27 billion in the 2019-20 financial year. So the Liberal government are relying on a one-off tobacco-taxation-collection-timing trick to help them reach a budget surplus.

In the 2018-19 budget, the government miraculously announced that they were going to reach a surplus in the 2019-20 financial year, a year earlier than previously anticipated. This measure means that, instead of duty being collected in later years, when it leaves a warehouse, the revenue—as I say, over \$3 billion—will be collected once, in the 2019-20 financial year. And 2019-20 just happens to be the year that the government, on the budget papers, will reach a surplus. How surprising! What a miracle! The Red Sea has parted. The water has turned into wine, and all of a sudden a surplus is created by the government by a tax-timing trick.

The government are using the risk of illegal tobacco entering the market to reach a surplus a year ahead of when they would expect to achieve it. It's clear that, without this one-off tobacco-tax-collection-timing trick, the very much out-of-touch government would not be achieving the surplus in the year they say, on their own budget papers. Without this timing trick, the return to surplus would be pushed back another year—and all this from a government which have doubled the debt on their watch.

Labor have consistently shown our commitment to policies which reduce the scourge of illegal tobacco in Australia as well as tobacco related illness and disease in Australia. That's why Labor supports the proposed measures in the bill today and the other measures to tackle the black economy. It's just important that the government's trick be called out in speeches that we make.

**Mr CRAIG KELLY** (Hughes) (10:28): I am pleased to rise to speak on the Customs Amendment (Collecting Tobacco Duties at the Border) Bill 2018. It was very interesting to hear the member for Blair giving us a lecture about budget surpluses, especially when we are coming up to the 30th anniversary of when Labor last delivered a budget surplus. We have to go back all the way to 1989—

*Mr Tim Wilson interjecting—*

**Mr CRAIG KELLY:** That's right. The good member for Goldstein, in front of me here, wasn't born.

*Mr Tim Wilson interjecting—*

**Mr CRAIG KELLY:** Well, he was probably still in primary school. The Minister for Defence Industry, at the dispatch box, may have been also in primary school back then, 30 years ago. Is that correct?

*Dr Leigh interjecting—*

**Mr CRAIG KELLY:** The member for Fenner over there was obviously giving these lectures back then, 30 years ago, telling us how wonderful the free market is, before he decided to get his insights into the Labor Party and realised that those ideas that he wrote so well about in so many of those publications no longer fit into the modern Labor Party and that if he wanted to sit over there he had to disown all those rules.

Then, of course, we have to remember that they did get close. The member for Blair was right: they did get close. I can remember sitting in this chamber and having the then Treasurer, the now member for Lilley, stand up and say, 'Those four budget surpluses that we're announcing tonight—' It was completely mythical. Yet we have Labor members coming into the chamber trying to lecture this coalition on budget surplus. We have done the hard work. The budget surplus is within months of being achieved. Then we have the long, hard haul back to try to pay

down that debt that has been run up over recent years and which first started with that unfortunate decision of the Australian public to elect the Rudd government, when everything started to go pear-shaped.

Back to the specifics of the bill: years ago, when we had much higher levels of import duty in this country, licensed bond stores were very common across a wide range of goods. That was where an importer, when the goods entered the country, rather than paying the duty at whatever the rate was on that particular commodity, rather than paying that duty up-front to the Australian customs agency on the importation of goods, would place those goods in a licensed bond store. They would defer the payment of the duty until they took the goods out of the bond store.

Over the years, as duties have come down across the economy, those bond stores are no longer as prevalent as they were in the past. One area where they are still prevalent is tobacco. If a tobacco importer were to import those goods, rather than paying the excise duty at the time of the importation, they would go into a licensed bond store. That licensed bond store has to have additional security. There are additional costs and paperwork. Setting aside the additional capital required to pay that money out and the cost of the interest, it is far more efficient for that duty to be paid upon importation. As the Black Economy Taskforce pointed out, there is also the risk of goods disappearing from that bond store and entering the market without that duty being paid. Therefore I agree with this recommendation of the Black Economy Taskforce that we close that possibility and ensure that when tobacco goods are imported into this country the duty is paid at the time of importation.

But in doing that we are adding to the cost—we need to be up-front about this—of the companies that lawfully import tobacco products. The problem we have created by attempts to decrease the rate of smoking—which I fully agree with—is that as we've increased the price of cigarettes we have gone down a route of de facto prohibition by price. It's a problem we have. You can buy a packet of cigarettes overseas in many markets in South-East Asia for around a dollar a packet. They are lawfully made. I can remember about 12 months ago I was going through the duty-free airport at Dubai and having a look out of interest—I'm not a smoker and I don't buy cigarettes—just to see what the price was. I could buy a packet of Benson & Hedges, with about 30 in the packet, for the equivalent of \$1.60 a packet, lawfully, from a retail establishment. We know the wholesale price is a dollar.

We've created this huge opportunity for black market operators in the space of illegal tobacco importation. So, every time this parliament puts legislation in to increase the costs of lawfully sold tobacco, we have to admit that we are creating more opportunities and incentives in the black market. We need to ensure that we are adequately financing our law enforcement officials and border protection agencies to crack down on illegal tobacco imports; because, as has been proven many times throughout history, when you go down the track of prohibition, the unintended consequences cause more problems than what you're trying to solve.

I will leave my remarks there, today, on the issue of illicit tobacco. I would like to note that I am a fervent antismoker. I'd like to see cigarettes completely abolished from the Australian landscape. But I understand you need to be very careful when you try to do that by prohibition. We've got to continue to work on education programs, because, ultimately, that is the only way to change habits. And we've got to continue to ensure that we give the resources to our law enforcement officials to crack down on illicit and illegal tobacco being sold, as it is being sold across our nation in almost plague proportions. I thank the House.

**Mr TIM WILSON** (Goldstein) (10:36): I want to begin by following up exactly where the previous speaker spoke, in regard to a willingness, a wish and an aspiration that people be free to choose to consume, and choose not to consume, tobacco based products, that people will make informed decisions about their health and welfare, that they will be in a position to make informed judgements and that they will choose to put their health at the fore. It's a pretty simple principle at the heart of a liberal democracy. More critically, in a society that has to deal with the complex nature of health needs, it's a wish that people will make the right choices.

The task before this parliament is always in knowing how to get those laws right and in making sure that people are free to do so. There are complications, always, in making sure that we preserve people's freedom to choose and in achieving the ambitions, shall we say, or the collective interests of the whole of the nation. That's why I'm supporting this amendment today, the Customs Amendment (Collecting Tobacco Duties at the Border) Bill 2018. It's pretty prescriptive in its title about what its objective and purpose is. It's a relatively straightforward exercise in making sure that duties for tobacco are paid at the border, so the government gets the revenue. It simplifies the process and, hopefully, reduces costs. Ultimately, it guarantees the revenue supply for the government to offset the consequences of people who consume tobacco based products, including funding the health and welfare system to support those consequences, which is fundamentally a good thing.

Like the previous speaker, I have concerns about how we find this right balance in law. One of the concerns I've had, and I've spoken about it in this place before, is some of the consequences of past policies. The great Milton Friedman always argued that we should judge a policy by its consequences not merely its intentions.

We've seen policies that have made tobacco based products interchangeable. That's called plain packaging. They all look the same. They're all treated the same. It's very hard to distinguish between products anymore. We've also had more tax increases on the products. Unsurprisingly, as soon as you increase the cost of the products, the gap between production and consumption—price—is considerable. We know what happens when you do that. It's not just in tobacco products. The attractiveness for illegal activity increases as well, because people can make nefarious profits easily by providing counterfeit goods. We say this against a backdrop where reduction in tobacco consumption is not going down, in historical trends, in Australia. What we know is that more and more people, because of that gap between production and consumption, are looking for alternative avenues. Because we have an interchangeable product now, they find it easy to do so—as do those who would seek to take advantage of that environment by providing products that are counterfeit.

We always have to factor in the consequences of going down this path: in the end, the government loses because we don't collect the tax revenue when people sell counterfeit products, but we carry all of the costs and the consequences. But, of course, we also face a problem where people have alternative options and turn to essentially criminal behaviour because of the consequences of the decisions the government has made. I have to say I have a real problem with that—when the government seeks to actively promote an environment where people want to flout the law. I don't want people flouting the law; I want people complying with the law. I want people to think that they should be doing the right thing by this community and their country, as well as, of course, choosing to do the right thing for their own health.

That's been one of the critical problems we've had in much of this space, particularly when people are also denied pathways to end their addiction to combustible tobacco products, because we make it illegal to access nicotine tablets and electronic vaping. It's on the public record that I believe that, while I don't think it is a perfect solution and I fully accept there may be health consequences associated with it, when you have a product which actually directly reduces harm and people wish to reduce their harm, then a legal pathway for people to do so is a sensible course of action. We see this in other areas where we regularly talk about harm reduction, because we put people's health and welfare first, ahead of the ideological objectives of others.

I will continue to be guided by that, because when I have gone to the United States or Europe, where they now have vaping fully legally available, one of the things I see is how many people who used to smoke cigarettes have switched. It's not perfect. There are people who shouldn't have ever taken up vaping who have—of course, some of those people may very well have taken up tobacco consumption had they not had that pathway. But the number of dogged serial smokers who were given a choice and chose the path of least harm is quite considerable. You see it in the streets. It's not like it's something that happens in marginal communities away from the prying eyes of the public. It's naked. It's obvious—so much so that you have the National Health Service in the United Kingdom recommending people take it as a pathway because of the potential reduction in harm. It's not just harm reduction in terms of people's immediate health consequences, though there are those; there is potential reduction in harm which then obviously has to be addressed through the health system. I would rather see fewer people with emphysema and fewer people dealing with the health consequences and going through our hospital systems, so that those services can be reprioritised towards helping other people. I make no apology about that; I think it's a fundamental good.

When we are looking at policies in this space, whether it's about how we collect the tax or whether it's about how we design logos, branding, advertising and compulsory labelling, when it comes down to the tax regimes that are applied and the incentives that drive them, the one thing we should always look at is: what is the actual consequence of what we're doing? It's not the intent and it's not whether we're going to get the applause of the health sociology community and their agendas, because they're fighting wars from years past and are looking constantly for new ways to seek grants to continue their research and work. What's the actual consequence for Australians? They should be at the forefront of our minds. They're the people that I represent and that everybody else in this place represents. They're the people that I would have thought the Australian people want us to be thinking about—not ourselves, not the government and government first, and not the objectives of bureaucratically-designed health systems. It's them: the Australian people. It's whether we are going to put their health and welfare first, or whether we're going to create incentives for them to do the wrong thing, and, more critically, incentives for those who don't wish any of us well and actually have the nefarious intent to take advantage of the decisions that are made in this place.

**Mr CIOBO** (Moncrieff—Minister for Defence Industry) (10:45): I would like to thank members for their contributions to the debate on the Customs Amendment (Collecting Tobacco Duties at the Border) Bill 2018. From 1 July 2019, the measures in this bill will establish a framework that requires importers to pay all import duties on tobacco when it enters the country, thereby denying criminal groups the opportunity to obtain tobacco on which duty has not been paid. The bill is complemented by the Treasury Laws Amendment (Black Economy

Taskforce Measures No. 2) Bill 2018 and the Excise Tariff Amendment (Collecting Tobacco Duties at Manufacture) Bill 2018. They provide a framework to make excise duty on tobacco due at the time of domestic manufacture. Full details of the measure are contained in the explanatory memorandum. I commend the bill to the House.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

### Third Reading

**Mr CIOBO** (Moncrieff—Minister for Defence Industry) (10:46): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

## Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Omnibus) Bill 2018

### Second Reading

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

**Ms RISHWORTH** (Kingston) (10:46): Today I rise to speak on the Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Omnibus) Bill 2018. This bill is designed to streamline several internal processes which will assist both the Department of Veterans' Affairs and individual veterans in accessing entitlements. Of course, Labor is always supportive of improvements which make it easier for veterans to interact with the department, and of changes which improve the timeliness of claims. When it comes to delivering public services and public goods, we need to constantly look at how we can improve the experience of those we seek to serve. When I talk with veterans around this country, what I hear is that many veterans, especially those who have been clients of the Department of Veterans' Affairs for some time, are very happy with the service that is provided. But it's clear that, for some of the veterans trying to put in a claim or be part of the new system, it is not always easy. They find it difficult at times. Anything that we can do to make this process easier for them is critically important.

The need to focus on continuous improvement has been highlighted by a recent report by the Australian National Audit Office: *Efficiency of veterans service delivery by the Department of Veterans' Affairs*. This report, released in June, highlighted a number of concerns about the Department of Veterans Affairs' processing times. The report found that veterans are still facing, in some cases, excessive wait times and inefficient service from the department. In addition, the report determined that, while the majority of services is delivered within time frames, a minority of claims still takes an excessively long period to process, due to inefficient handling by the department. I really want to be clear: the report found that it is not the veterans' or the advocates' errors in not providing information; the report found that systems within the department could be improved to reduce the wait time for veterans.

The ANAO report observed that one claim was effectively lost for 183 days between its registration and its assignment to the relevant processing area, and it wasn't detected by the department. This means that for six months the claim wasn't processed and for six months a veteran waited for a response to their application for support, and the application wasn't even being assessed. Sadly, this wasn't picked up by government processes or by the department, meaning that the ANAO had not recognised that it had not been reviewed and did not know how long it would have taken for this to be noticed. There was another case highlighted by the ANAO which detailed a situation where a claim took an extra 148 days longer to process because of inactivity in the department.

These are issues we need to seek to address. I recognise the work by the department to address some of these issues and the effort that is going into ensuring they are addressed. But we must not take our eye off the ball. Our veterans absolutely deserve world-class care and support. Continuous improvement is critical. The parliament, the government and the department must continue to focus on continuous improvement to ensure that every veteran is able to get their claim processed in a timely manner and that there are not hold-ups as a result of inefficient or ineffective systems within the department.

This bill is a small step but a step towards improving the experience of veterans. Schedule 1 of this bill is designed to enable the Chief of the Defence Force to make a claim for liability on behalf of current serving ADF members where they have given their consent. Currently, a person affected by injury or disease must make a claim; however, in some circumstances, a claim can be made by another person on their behalf. This amendment will provide another avenue for claiming, which may streamline the claims process and, in some instances, potentially facilitate earlier acceptance of liability.

In addition, schedule 1 has the potential to be beneficial to veterans seeking services some time after injury or disease, with a claim having been established at the time of injury or disease. Labor certainly supports this, with the caveat that obviously the consent of the veteran for the CDF to make a claim on their behalf is very important. We have certainly been assured that this is the case. I can see circumstances, particularly in the area of catastrophic injury, where this could facilitate a speedy claims process in which an ADF member is able to get very timely acceptance of their claim.

The second schedule would align the information-obtaining powers under the Safety Rehabilitation and Compensation Act with the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act, enabling the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission to request information from third parties and impose penalties if it is delayed. This is important because, under these changes, if the commission requires information from, for example, a bank which a client can no longer access, this provision would enable the commission to request this information directly from the bank. Labor is supportive of this measure because we believe it will improve the timeliness of claims. Often, if a client, a veteran, cannot get information from the relevant third party, then their claim is held up. Of course, that is not the fault of the veteran and it is not the fault of the Department of Veterans' Affairs but it has an impact nonetheless. So anything which, as I said, improves or streamlines the claims process—that is not a detriment to the veteran, that can ensure that a claim is either accepted or that incapacity payments or other such payments can be assessed in a timely manner—is critically important.

The final schedule in this bill will ensure that lump sum determinations made by the Department of Social Services will apply as exempt lump sums for income tests for DVA income support clients, where the determination is consistent with DVA legislation and policies. As a good example, this looks at such payments that veterans may receive under the new National Redress Scheme or under drought assistance payments. Currently, if a new lump sum payment like drought assistance comes online and the Department of Social Services lodges an instrument to exempt it from income testing, the Department of Veterans' Affairs is required to implement a separate yet identical instrument to the parliament to exempt the lump sum payment from income testing for DVA clients. This change makes sense and ensures that there are no administrative errors that would lead to Department of Veterans' Affairs clients not being exempt. This will automatically connect that exemption to the Department of Veterans' Affairs and will mean that only one instrument will need to be lodged—by the Department of Social Services. The Department of Veterans' Affairs will be able to make exemptions where appropriate, but veterans will not have to wait for DVA to lodge an instrument to gain the benefit of an exemption.

I think it's important to recognise the point that I just made—that this will not exclude the Department of Veterans' Affairs from making its own exemptions. There could well be circumstances that are unique to veterans when it comes to lump sum payments, and those lump sum payments should rightly be exempt from income support payments such as the service pension. Therefore it is important that the Department of Veterans' Affairs still have the ability to introduce an instrument that would make those exemptions; this just makes sense when it comes to more general exemptions that are applicable to both the Department of Social Services and the Department of Veterans' Affairs. This is a pretty logical change and it probably doesn't have much practical effect except to perhaps reduce the need to introduce an identical instrument into the parliament and probably to alleviate any confusion—not that there have been any examples of that confusion, but there may be in the future. Given that those changes are pretty logical, we support the bill.

We do think that we must continually be working to send a clear message to our veterans that we value their service and that we are on their side. Anything that seeks to improve the processes within the Department of Veterans' Affairs, even if they be small and practical processes, is an important part of sending the message: we value the service that you've given to the country and we continue to value it. That is an important message that the parliament can give and indeed the community can give when it comes to valuing our veterans, and that is partly why Labor, from opposition—though we understand the government has some intent to do this—wants to see the signing of a military covenant if elected. We envisage that a covenant would formalise and make explicit that promise that I was talking about, a promise that's long been implicit—the commitment that we will look after those who are serving or have served and their loved ones. Our serving men and women deserve to know in no uncertain terms that we value their service and will look after them.

Labor has announced that we will work with the Australian Defence Force, the Department of Veterans' Affairs and ex-service organisations to develop relevant wording for the covenant, based on the United Kingdom model, that will be signed by the Chief of the Defence Force and the Prime Minister of the day. As I said, similar to the nature of the United Kingdom's Armed Forces Covenant, our military covenant will be accompanied by legislation which will ensure regular reporting to the parliament on how we are meeting our commitment to those who have served. The accompanying legislation is an important component as it introduces an accountability

measure that is critical for this parliament and subsequent parliaments to have. It provides an opportunity to reflect on a regular basis on the range of services and supports available and whether we are meeting expectations but also, importantly, to identify emerging issues for our veterans community that may not have been present or may not have been as critical five, 10 or 20 years ago. While a covenant won't address all the issues, it will act as a guiding principle, and accompanying legislation will add, as I said, to the important accountability measure. Members of the ex-service community have been calling for a covenant for some time, and they have that support from Labor.

As I said at the beginning, we do support this bill. Any steps to ensure that veterans have a smooth and streamlined process, where they get the support they need and when they need it, is critical to ensuring that we send the message, 'We value your service, we continue to value your service and we will continue to support you in the years to come.' I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr VAN MANEN** (Forde—Government Whip) (11:00): It is with great pleasure that I rise to speak today on the Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Omnibus) Bill 2018. As I think the member for Kingston has rightly pointed out, all of us in this House have great regard and deep admiration for the service of our veterans to this country over more than the past 100 years.

I would like to take this opportunity also to commend my colleague, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Darren Chester, for the work that he's continuing to undertake to ensure that our veterans, and their relationships with the Department of Veterans' Affairs, are the best they could be. This will ensure that our veterans get the services, support and, importantly, the access to the compensation they so rightly deserve.

In my local electorate of Forde I have a great number of ex-service organisations which provide tremendous support and assistance to the veteran and ex-service community. It's important that they do so, because these people do need support. Every year across the nation, at services for both Anzac Day and Remembrance Day—and at other events—we see their service to our country marked. I would like to acknowledge the work of the Beenleigh RSL, the Greenbank RSL and North Gold Coast RSL Sub-Branch for the time and effort that they give to engage with and support our local veteran and ex-service communities. The work that they do to support people, sometimes in very difficult circumstances, cannot be underestimated, and I want to commend them for their work. There are people like Alan Hendy, who has for many years been a veterans' advocate at the Beenleigh RSL in particular. He is a regular correspondent to me, and is always more than happy to share with me the issues that they are having with the department on various matters. I appreciate the fact that he takes the time to represent his community to me so that I have the opportunity to represent their concerns to my colleagues here.

As we recognise our veterans' service, the importance of this bill is that it's aimed at improving the outcomes not only for our veterans and ex-service men and women but also those serving today. It's designed to ensure that essential services are available to them when they need them most. The proposed reforms seek to achieve several things, with the focus on streamlining the claims process and providing veterans with certainty about their entitlements.

At present, a serving member who sustains an injury or illness in service may make a claim with the Department of Veterans' Affairs. This bill contains three schedules which introduce several new initiatives to improve the efficiency of the claims process, making it simpler and easier—to truly make a difference to the lives of our veterans and their families. It also aims to increase the availability of information to the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission in order to make a determination on claims, streamlining the DSS and DVA approaches to exempting certain payments from the income test.

This bill makes it easier for incidents and injuries to be reported to the Department of Veterans' Affairs at the time of the injury by enabling the Chief of the Defence Force to make a claim for compensation on behalf of the serving member, improving the information the DVA holds and enhancing the ability to analyse future trends and conditions in service to further streamline the claims process.

I know from the discussions I have had with Alan and others at my local RSL organisations that this particular issue is one of the great causes of angst and concern for veterans, in that if they have suffered an injury or illness during their service the transfer of those records from the military to the DVA has not been efficient or timely. If they are chasing around for records it can actually take a significant period of time, and that delays the capacity of the veteran to receive the compensation or support that is rightly due to them. This provision, importantly, helps the department address time-sensitive cases involving serious injury or disease, where the CDF can step in and exercise their power to lodge a claim on behalf of a member who has a reduced capacity to do so themselves.

As I've just outlined, one of the obstacles in determining claims has been establishing that the contributing incident actually happened, especially where a claim is first lodged many years after an injury. There's already in place a system for the DVA to seek records from Defence, but, as I've just said, this can take time and can be very

frustrating for the veteran involved. I see this as one of the most important aspects of this bill, in that the transfer of records will occur in a much more timely and efficient manner, so that if a veteran does have to make a claim, or an ex-service person does have to make a claim in future, DVA should already have those records. Because those records are created at the time of the incident or the illness, they'll have much more clarity, and it will be much easier for DVA to make a quick decision to ensure that the support and/or compensation that is due to the veteran is paid in a timely manner. The amendments will also improve the DVA's ability to request information, enabling claims to be determined in the quickest possible time. It's important to note that the privacy rights of individual DVA clients will not be impacted or altered by this measure.

The last schedule of the bill will amend the Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986 to allow certain exempt lump sum determinations made by the secretary of the Department of Social Services to apply to DVA income support clients when applying the income test. Currently, the commission often implements separate yet identical exempt lump sum determinations for payments that have already been exempted under the Social Security Act by the secretary of the Department of Social Services. Currently some lump sums received by people on Commonwealth income support payments are exempt from the income test for income support payments. The Veterans' Entitlements Act and the Social Security Act have identical provisions allowing for these exemptions. Again, this is a commonsense measure which simplifies the ability of the department to make these exemptions or recognise exemptions that are already in place without having to make a separate determination. This, again, is designed to make the process easier for veterans, which is what we should always be looking to do. It will mean that the DVA can rely on an exemption made under the Social Security Act, rather than having to make their own separate identical determination. The current practice of redrafting and registering identical lump sum exemptions is an unnecessary regulatory burden on the DVA that this bill seeks to remove.

I know all in this place support and recognise the service of our veterans. The value of this bill is that it goes a little bit further towards ensuring that our veterans get the support and services they need. With DVA undertaking reforms to improve the efficiency of claims for veterans and their families, it's important that across this chamber we support their work with the amendments to the law necessary to make a real difference to the lives of thousands of Australian veterans and ex-service men and women. I believe this bill provides some important changes that better support the DVA to ensure that, in a timely and efficient manner, they take care of and provide support to our veterans and ex-service men and women.

In concluding my remarks, I want again to thank those men and women who have served our country so wonderfully over so many years. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr ROB MITCHELL** (McEwen) (11:10): I rise to speak about the Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Omnibus) Bill 2018, which proposes three schedules that will assist DVA internally in giving veterans their entitlements. We are talking about the men and women who have put on Defence Force uniforms to protect our nation—people who have been prepared to put their lives on the line for this country for our benefit, so that we can have the freedoms and the lifestyle that we enjoy. So I think it is more than critical for us to ensure that we give them the support and help that they need and that we welcome them back to society and give them every opportunity to get back into everyday society and have a fulfilling life after they have returned.

In McEwen, we're no strangers to veterans. We have a very strong sense of military history through places like Puckapunyal, Light Horse Memorial Park and the wonderful Vietnam Veterans Commemorative Walk, which a group of veterans got together with us to build. It is a magnificent structure and it's a magnificent place for Vietnam veterans. The key part of it is that it was built by veterans for veterans and their families. It doesn't matter what day of the week or what time of day you go past; there is always someone there looking at the 62,100 names that are on the DigiGlass walls. Many of those veterans returned to our area to spend the rest of their life. There are some 5,800 veterans in McEwen alone. They are out there working in all different facets of our community. Whether it be in the CFA or whether it be in shops, farming or whatever, they are out there contributing very strongly to our community. In seeking the support and services that they deserve, they shouldn't be put through a lengthy and complicated claims process. We should be making it easier for veterans and their families to access what they need, rather than making them jump through hoops and rather than duplicating red tape.

That is why we on this side of the chamber support this bill. It makes changes to streamline the claims process and removes some of the red tape that veterans currently face. The bill doesn't fix every issue in the claims process—not by a long shot—but we're pleased to see measures being taken to improve outcomes for currently serving members, veterans and their families.

I particularly want to note the member for Kingston's dedication and hard work over her time as shadow minister in supporting veterans, particularly in facing the challenges of a government in chaos. She has had to deal with three different ministers this year. I know that's a problem, because veterans themselves tell me that when

they've tried to contact the minister they find suddenly the minister's changed and everything seems to have been forgotten. It's not right and it's not fair.

Schedule 1 of the bill will help facilitate earlier acceptance of liability by allowing the CDF, the Chief of the Defence Force, to make a claim for liability for any serving ADF member who has consented to the CDF doing that on their behalf. What does that mean? It means that the person affected by the service injury or disease will no longer be the only person in a position to make that claim, particularly if they're incapacitated or have other issues.

Schedule 2 of the bill would align the powers of the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission to obtain the information they need to process claims from an array of departments under the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988. The commission can already require information from the Department of Defence and DVA and the CDF, but these proposed changes would mean that the MRCC could require information from any Commonwealth, state or territory department—say, from the Australian Taxation Office or Centrelink or Medicare. Again, this is an example of the critical streamlining improvements that this bill proposes for veterans' claim processes.

The third schedule of the bill would make sure that the lump sum determinations made by the secretary of DSS will apply as exempt lump sums from the income test that applies to DVA income support clients—so, like lump sum payments under the National Redress Scheme or drought assistance, for example. As it stands, the commission implements separate yet identical lump sum determinations for payments that have already been exempted by the DSS. At the moment, this places more burdens on DVA which could easily be removed by improving consistency between the departments—between DSS and DVA income support. So DVA will still be able to make the exemptions where appropriate, but it's a necessary measure in removing some of the bureaucratic hurdles that have arisen where DSS has already granted an exemption. This will mean that veterans won't have to wait for DVA to make an instrument in order to gain benefit from the lump sum exemptions. We strongly support preventing unnecessary delays with the creation of additional instruments in order to improve access to integral services for our veterans and their families.

There are many things that we have seen with veterans, and I think you've just got to spend time with them to realise just what great people they are. I think about people who we see across our community. At the moment, we are currently dealing with Matthew Blunt, a disabled veteran who is in the Invictus Games, who is getting absolutely screwed over by the RACV not paying out on an insurance claim. Matthew is dealing with trying to be the best that he can as an athlete and trying to be the best that he can as a person—he's dealing with these issues—and the RACV have flatly rejected to support this bloke by doing the right thing and fixing his house when it should be done. This complicates things. This puts pressure on people. Matthew hasn't got a kitchen or a lounge room in his house because the ceiling has fallen down; yet the RACV refuses to support him.

I think of people like Ian Goss, a Nashos vet, who got together with a few mates who wanted to have the Nashos be part of the whole Anzac experience. Through the work of Ian, the local Nashos are getting together and keeping veterans in our community engaged—going out there, talking to them, helping them, bringing them in and giving them opportunities. Through the work of Gossie, Sunbury now has a dawn service—a very moving and powerful ceremony that has been run by Nashos for the wider community and is one of the great drawcards that we have locally.

We have people like Keith Murphy. Sadly for Keith, he's going to be moved into the seat of Nicholls, and he accepts that he's not going to get the great support that he has now. But hopefully Drummie will look after him. Keith's a top bloke. Keith's the kind of bloke who goes out and garnishes support; where we find veterans' graves in disrepair, Keith goes out and gets the businesses and the people behind to help. They help because the Commonwealth graves guidelines are, frankly, rubbish. For people who died from injuries, if you can't 100 per cent say that that happened during the war, you can't get a Commonwealth war grave. These are people who had come back with injuries.

I think of Private Herbert Speirs, whose grave we did last week. Private Speirs was on the Western Front in the First World War. He was buried under rubble for three days. When he came back from war, he suffered with lung and stomach issues. He can't get a Commonwealth war grave. But the good people of Seymour—the people you'd better look after, because we love them—got together gardening services, engravers, the RSL and my great friend the padre, Don Kaus, and we rededicated that grave to give Private Speirs a grave that befits someone who served his country.

Of course the Vietnam veterans, the Mitchell sub-branch of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia—I don't know what you say about the Rosses and Hanks of the world—are all great people who built the magnificent Vietnam Veterans Commemorative Walk. It is the place, as I said, where veterans go, where their families go and

where they can be together and have a commemoration of the 62,100 people who went to Vietnam. But they're not finished. They're preparing now. We've got to do one for Korea. We've got to do one for our Middle East veterans. These guys are bringing our younger Middle East veterans, who we are seeing more and more in our community, who have been disengaged, together to help.

One thing I'm very proud of is my friend Des Callaghan. He is now the vice-president of RSL Victoria. Des was a local councillor, but he's one of the first on the phone. When you ring him and say, 'Mate, I've just spoken to a veteran; they're having a lot of problems,' Des is on the phone straightaway. He's into it. He gets in there and he helps them. He delivers.

These are just a handful of the people that we get the pleasure of dealing with. Doug Bishop in Sunbury is secretary of the RAR Association. Doug has introduced me to a lot of people and given a lot of support for working with veterans to help them.

I know that these people are going to welcome this bill if it makes it easier for veterans to get the support they need where they need it and when they need it. That's the important thing.

As I said, this doesn't go a long way to fixing everything, but it is a good, positive step forward. And that's why when we look—I mentioned the member for Kingston for her absolute dedication to our veterans—at the policies Labor is putting forward, one is a clear agreement between government and the military, not lip-service but a clear agreement that says: 'You served for us. We will be there to help you.' It's not lip-service. It's not wrapping ourselves in the flag. It's standing there and saying, 'When you have to go and have a cup of tea with someone, when they need the help and the support, the government will be there because you were there for Australia.'

I'm always proud to support our veterans, and I'm proud to stand with Labor, who will always support measures that improve the processes for veterans and their families. We can never forget their families. For that reason, I support this bill, and I want to see more being done to give back to those who sacrificed so much for our nation and have come back and suffered. We as a collective have a responsibility to look after them and to make sure that we repay them for what they've done for us.

**Mr DRUM** (Murray—Nationals Whip) (11:23): I acknowledge the previous speaker for the work that he's been doing in that Seymour-Puckapunyal area through his parliamentary term, because of the enormity of the role that that area plays within our veterans community but also in our current serving community as well. Everybody who has been in the service at one stage or other would have spent some time at Puckapunyal, and anybody who has had anything to do with Vietnam would have taken the time to go off the Hume Highway and visit the amazing wall that has been built in the last few years. It's fantastic asset to the Vietnam veterans and their legacy.

I think I must have been about seven or eight when my cousin stood on the railway station at Euroa and headed off to Vietnam. I thought, when I saw the wall there, I'd go and find his name. I looked through the Army and the hundreds and hundreds of people who were in the Army and I couldn't find him, so I thought he must have been in the Air Force. I went and had a look at the Air Force, and I couldn't see his name there. I went to the Navy. I still couldn't find this John Drum anywhere. It wasn't until I actually got on the phone and said, 'Mate, they've left your name off the Vietnam wall,' that he said to me that he served in Malaysia, so he actually was in a different conflict altogether. If you talk to any of the Vietnam veterans, they know exactly where that wall is. They have all been there, they have taken their families there and they are incredibly proud of the way that community has acknowledged them.

This bill puts the veterans at the top of the list. We're looking at ways we can make it easier for them to show the commitment the government has to helping them with their needs later in life. This bill has been designed to help improve the outcomes not only for serving Australian Defence Force members but also for veterans and their families and will ensure that the essential services are available to veterans when they need them. The bill will extend claim avenues to include the Chief of the Defence Force. It's also going to resolve veterans' claims more quickly by strengthening the ability of the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission to obtain information from third parties where applicable and by expediting lump sum exemptions for veterans by simplifying DVA and Department of Human Services processes.

Schedule 1 of the bill amends the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004 to enable the Chief of the Defence Force to make a claim for liability on behalf of a current serving Australian Defence Force member, where the member suffers a service injury or disease and agrees to the Chief of the Defence Force or his delegate making the claim. This amendment will provide an alternative way a claim for a liability may be made. At the moment, there is an obstacle to establishing the claim that a contributing incident actually happened as part of a claimant's ADF service, especially where a claim is first lodged many years after the injury. This measure is aimed at making it easier for incidents and injuries to be reported to DVA at the time of the injury. Receiving claims for conditions and injuries at the time of the injury will improve both the information DVA holds and its

ability to analyse future trends and future needs in the conditions and service to follow, streamlining the claims process at a later date. Veterans will benefit by having future claims for diseases and conditions that manifest well after the service and those claims are going to be more easily accepted.

Schedule 2 of the bill will enable the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission to obtain information in determining a claim for compensation under the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988. Veterans can be adversely affected when information critical to their claim is not provided by third parties. These provisions in this bill are going to enable these veterans and their families to have easier access to that third-party data and that will also likely help with these compensation claims. DVA can currently request information from a third party using powers under the Veterans' Entitlements Act 1988 and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004. They can do that now to assist with gathering material to determine claims. But these powers are going to be particularly useful when requesting information from third parties, potentially banks, where the claimant does not have easy access to that information. The privacy rights of individual DVA clients will not be impacted or altered in any way by this measure—that's also a very important part. This change is going to hopefully streamline the claims process, providing veterans with certainty about their entitlements much more quickly.

Schedule 3 is going to improve administrative practices in the Department of Veterans' Affairs concerning income support clients and the exempting of certain lump sum payments from the income test. Currently, some lump sums received by people on Commonwealth income support payments are exempted from the income test for income support payments. The Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986 and the Social Security Act 1991 have identical provisions allowing for these exemptions. So, currently, for a lump sum to be exempt a determination has to be made by both departments separately in respect of these same exemptions. This amendment will streamline the administrative process, which means DVA can rely on the exemptions made under the Social Security Act rather than having to make a separate identical determination. The current practice of redrafting and registering identical lump-sum-exemption determinations is an unnecessary regulatory burden on DVA, and it is just good common-sense that we would have one test cater for both processes. This amendment is also likely to remove any risk that a gap in time would exist between the two areas.

Last week I had the opportunity to visit Afghanistan. It was an amazing experience to be thrown into the Australian Defence Force Parliamentary Program. It certainly was an eye-opener for myself and Justine Keay, who was also on that trip. When I was in the state parliament many years ago—well, not that many years ago—I had a term as Minister for Veterans' Affairs. The role of the state Minister for Veterans' Affairs is relatively narrow: effectively, we look after the memorial services and the memorials, and we also look after the commemorative events. Everything else within the DVA portfolio rests with the federal government.

But, in this state role, I was able to work closely with the RSL in looking at some of the projects they were desperate to fund. We were able to partner with the RSL to build a special facility for veterans struggling in the medium to short term—anywhere from two or three weeks when they would need to come to Melbourne to escape their current environment. That might mean coming as an individual, coming to the city and into the apartments we built. We built those in the Richmond area, near the banks of the Yarra River, to enable these returned soldiers—these veterans—to receive the treatment they needed. We even built one apartment that was able to cater for an entire family in the event that a veteran would best be served in this recovery period by having their family with them.

It gave me and those in the RSL a great insight into the types of different services that all our veterans require from time to time. No one veteran is the same. People often refer to all of our veterans in one category, but there couldn't be anything further from the truth; and it's irrespective of where they served. For instance, many of our Vietnam veterans who went overseas came back and didn't miss a beat. They didn't miss a day of work and haven't had an issue with their relationships. And we have people who have had their whole lives turned upside down by their experiences in Vietnam. The trauma that they've brought home with them, the trauma that they experienced in Vietnam, has impacted on nearly every aspect of their lives. And we have everywhere between those two extremes.

We must be very cognisant of the fact that there is no specific military veteran who can actually be pigeonholed into one category of having any type of issue: PTSD, depression or anxiety. Everybody is entirely different, every case is totally different and every case needs to be treated for those different variations. That is why, effectively, this bill is going to create that opportunity for these claims to be less impactful and to be processed in a quicker manner.

I also want to touch quickly on what I was able to experience last week. Many of our amazing currently serving members of the ADF are married, with family back home. I don't know why I'm saying this, but I was staggered by the calibre of the troops. Never before have I been put into a cohort of such intelligent, respectful, humble,

well-trained and great-conditioned people who were able to have such incredible strength and resilience. The heat at the airbase where we stayed in the Middle East is around 40 to 42 degrees each day. When we mentioned how hot it was, they said, 'No, at the moment it's quite nice.' Two months ago, it was in the low fifties and their shoes were starting to stick to the roads as they were doing their daily drills. Their ability to be so disciplined and their ability to apply themselves to given tasks was quite staggering, and yet they were amazingly open and humble troops.

They certainly have an enormous role over there on our behalf and we need to be incredibly respectful of them. It gives me, and it should give everybody in the House, the sense that we are doing our role to make it easier for them, because they're doing their role for us now over there. When they come back and they need help, we should be able to look them in the eye and say, 'We're doing everything we can to put in place a process that will give you the support and the resources you need so that you can live the rest of your life to the absolute maximum of your capabilities.' As I said earlier, all those abilities are going to be completely different.

We should look after our veterans for no other reason than their ability to consume all of the acronyms that they do. When you spend any time in the ADF, you learn a different language. They have acronym after acronym. It's a different language that people in the defence forces understand. Each of the forces is a little bit different in relation to their acronyms. The Navy is different to the Air Force, which is different to the Army. The first thing you realise is that they all speak a different language and, the sooner you understand the acronym soup that they serve up each day, the easier you will understand what everyone is saying about you!

I also want to touch on a dear friend of mine, Barry Gracey. Barry is President of the Pozieres Remembrance Association. He is trying to push the impact that Pozieres had on our society and on our war history. We tend to commemorate the Western Front by Villers-Bretonneux and the Sir John Monash Centre that we built over there, which is fantastic, but at Pozieres we lost over 7,000 young Australians. Four thousand of them were so badly blown up that we weren't able to retrieve their bodies to put into the war graves; they still lie in the fields of Pozieres. I think 23 July should be well and truly established as Pozieres Day here in Australia. We need to look after the township of Pozieres the best way we can.

**Ms O'TOOLE** (Herbert) (11:38): I am both honoured and proud to stand in this place to represent the largest garrison city in the nation. I represent the brave men and women who give or have given selflessly of their lives to ensure that we live in one of the greatest democracies in the world. I also pay my respect to their families, who make great sacrifices whilst their loved ones are serving either at home or overseas.

I have spoken on every piece of veterans legislation that has been raised in this place since I was elected in 2016. In my first speech in this place, I made a commitment to the ADF members, veterans and their families in my electorate that I would stand up and fight for them in this place at every possible opportunity because they deserve no less. ADF members sign up to serve our country and they fight for us and for our freedom. It is my job to be the someone fighting in their corner and supporting them. I have made no secret about the fact that I am honoured and proud to represent the largest garrison city in this country, as I have said many times. I take my support for the defence communities beyond the confines of veterans bills in Canberra. I am continuously working in my electorate of Herbert with serving personnel, veterans and their families.

We have collectively formed a highly active and successful collaborative relationship. This ensures that my voice in Canberra is articulating the right message—that is, the message that reflects their needs. That is why I created the Townsville Defence Community Reference Group, the first of its kind in Australia. The reference group includes currently serving and ex-serving personnel, veterans, ESOs, family representatives and other relevant stakeholders. This approach enables me to determine what they want. This is their opportunity to make a valuable contribution to policy development rather than simply be told what the government wants to tell them.

My work with the reference group has significantly supported the formation and work of Operation Compass. Operation Compass is the name given to the veterans and families suicide prevention trial funded by the Northern Queensland Primary Health Network. I would like to take the time to congratulate Operation Compass and the team, the Northern Queensland PHN and the steering committee for the amazing work that they have been doing in Townsville to address veteran suicide prevention. I particularly want to acknowledge the hard work of retired Colonel Ray Martin, the project manager; Therese Cotter, Northern Queensland PHN regional manager; retired Lieutenant General John Caligari, the chair of the steering committee; and Padre Brooks, the padre at Lavarack Barracks; and the other many hardworking members of the steering committee. Operation Compass is achieving national recognition as one of the outstanding 12 suicide trials across the nation. The Operation Compass team have gone above and beyond the norm of their work of identifying suicide prevention strategies. The Operation Compass team, in collaboration with the steering committee, have a vision of 'going beyond keeping the black dog away'. They want to keep it out of the house and out of Townsville.

Last week Operation Compass awarded their first small grants to 10 community organisations that will provide support for veterans and families to reduce suicide. These are 10 fantastic local organisations, all with new and innovative ideas and strategies to support veterans young and old, male and female, and their families. The work of Operation Compass does not stop there. During the Christmas period, in order to acknowledge that this is a very tough time for some, they are launching the campaign, Check Your Mate. It is an excellent initiative, especially in the Christmas period, when many people are feeling isolated and lonely.

The Christmas season is also a difficult time for the men and women who are serving overseas and for their families. It must be very difficult to be away from your family and loved ones at this time of year. That is why last week I launched my annual deployed soldiers appeal. This is an opportunity for the wider Townsville community to donate non-perishable items that can be packaged up and sent to the men and women who are serving overseas. Although this might be a small token, it is nonetheless a token that lets our deployed ADF members know that the people of Townsville are thinking of them and thank them for their service. It is important that we recognise and value the commitment of those men and women deployed overseas. Whilst we are lucky enough to be at home with our families on Christmas Day, eating prawns and turkey and opening presents, we are able to do so freely and without fear because of their commitment.

Representing our ADF personnel is not about a one-day-a-year job. It is about every day. Those in this place must think about their impact on veterans beyond a bill that may be titled 'veterans' or 'Defence'. Bills and policies regarding health and education also have an impact on our ADF communities because they are embedded in our broader communities. ADF members make a significant social and economic contribution to the electorate of Herbert. Their children go to preschool, school, TAFE and/or university. They and their families use our health services.

I wonder if this LNP government even thinks about that when they are making policy. It appears that this government has no understanding about how the Medicare freeze has meant that doctors are unable to afford to see veterans without a co-payment and, as a result, veterans are either choosing not to see a doctor or specialist or are being turned away. They have no understanding of the impact of cutting funding to schools or the individual attention and support a child may need when his or her mother or father is away on tour in Afghanistan, for example. Reducing teachers, teacher aides and other supports is not the answer to helping these children, or any other children for that matter. It's about making sure that every bill is considered in the context of the impact on our ADF and veteran community. We must ensure that our veterans and their families have the support that they require as they transition from Defence into civilian life.

So once again I rise to speak on the Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Omnibus) Bill 2018 on behalf of the ex-serving personnel and veterans in the Herbert electorate. This bill has three schedules designed to internally streamline processes that will assist both the DVA and veterans to access entitlements. The issues within the Department of Veterans' Affairs are often discussed in the veteran and ex-serving communities. They have been discussed at large in Townsville. I'm happy to support any legislation that assists our veterans in this process.

Generally speaking, the feedback we receive is that once veterans have their claims approved they are happy with the level of service they are provided. However, the frustration and issues of major concern appear to stem from the early stages of the claim process. Overwhelmingly, the complaints made by veterans and families about the Department of Veterans' Affairs tend to relate to the lengthy, complicated and sometimes adversarial claims process. Two of the schedules seek to make changes that will assist in streamlining the claims process, and it is for this reason that I fully support this bill. While they won't address all of the issues in the claims process, I support any changes that will improve outcomes for current serving members, veterans and their families.

Schedule 1 will enable the Chief of the Defence Force to make a claim for liability for a current serving Australian Defence Force member where they have consented for the Chief of the Defence Force to make the claim on their behalf. As it stands, generally the person affected by the service injury or disease must make the claim. However, in certain limited circumstances a claim may be made by another person on their behalf. This change will provide another avenue for claiming that may streamline the claims process and in some instances will help facilitate an earlier acceptance of liability.

Schedule 2 would align the powers of the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission to obtain information under the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988, commonly known as DRCA. Currently the MRCC can require information only from the Department of Defence, the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the CDF. These changes would enable the MRCC to require information from any Commonwealth, state or territory departments and authorities. This includes agencies such as the ATO, Centrelink or Medicare. These powers already exist for claims made under the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004. By way of an example, under these changes, if the MRCC requires information from a

bank that the client can no longer access on their own, this provision enables the MRCC to request it directly from the bank and also to impose a penalty if the bank fails to comply. Both of these schedules seek to streamline processes and improve the claims process broadly and the process of obtaining information for DRCA clients. It is for this reason that I am supportive of these measures.

The final schedule would ensure that lump sum determinations made by the secretary of the Department of Social Services will apply as exempt lump sums from the income test that applies to DVA income support clients, where appropriate. For example, this could include payments like lump sums received under the National Redress Scheme or drought assistance. Currently the Repatriation Commission often implements separate yet identical exempt lump sum determinations for payments that have already been exempted by DSS. This places an unnecessary additional burden on DVA, which could be removed by allowing exempt lump sum determinations made by DSS to apply to DVA income support clients where the exemption is consistent. DVA will still be able to make exemptions where appropriate, but this will smooth those instances where the DSS has already determined it is appropriate to make an exemption. This schedule will streamline the process for making lump sum exemptions and will ensure that impacted veterans won't have to wait for DVA to make an instrument in order to gain the benefit of the exemption.

This bill seeks to streamline the claims process, make it easier for the MRCC to obtain information for DRCA clients, and prevent unnecessary delays with the creation of additional instruments. I will always support measures that seek to improve processes for veterans and their families. I will always support any policy or bill that is in the best interests of our ADF communities. This bill supports our veterans, and that is why I am happy to stand here in this place and support this bill, especially on behalf of the veterans, ex-serving personnel and their families in the electorate of Herbert in Townsville.

**Mrs MARINO** (Forrest—Chief Government Whip) (11:50): I am very pleased to support this bill, the Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Omnibus) Bill 2018, because of the additional support it provides to veterans and their families. It was George Washington who said, 'The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive the veterans of earlier wars and how they were treated and appreciated by their nation.' I see this bill as a key part of continuing the respect we have for our veterans and those in the defence forces.

Since its inception, and following all the wars and conflicts we've fought in, Australia has developed a world-leading system of looking after those who serve this nation. This veterans' affairs legislation bill further demonstrates the commitment this government has provided over the last five years. It continues with measures that we introduced earlier this year in several previous bills, all designed to improve outcomes for serving and returned Australian Defence Force members, veterans and their families and to ensure that essential services and supports are available to veterans when they need them. It's really important that veterans are able to access the services and entitlements that they need when they need them, and that's what the measures in this bill are streamlining and assisting with.

I have a very personal interest in returned service people and veterans. My mother was a war widow, and my family, particularly my sisters and my mother, lived their lives with the result of having lost a father and a husband. Having seen so many people in my electorate return from serving Australia overseas in its many conflicts, and having grown up without a father, I well understand what we, as a nation, ask and expect of those who serve in our Australian Defence Force services. I also understand very directly, from the wonderful RSLs and those who work in the veterans community in the south-west of Western Australia, what they need from us, as a parliament, as a government and as a community, in understanding what they and their families have often sacrificed in the work they do for us, serving wherever we ask them to.

Sometimes, as we know, veterans have difficulties when making an initial claim. A lot of the streamlining that we've done will assist them. This bill amends the relevant act to allow the Chief of Defence Force to make a claim for liability on behalf of a current serving Defence Force member. While it may seem to some a small administrative change, it actually provides an alternative way for the claim to be made. To some, this is a very important move. The process will also have a significant impact in reducing the time it takes to have claims for liability accepted by DVA. This is something that I've heard about repeatedly in my time as a member of parliament. It makes a huge difference to veterans and their families, to their mental, physical and emotional health and wellbeing, that their claim is processed effectively and efficiently and that their claim is respected. That is one of the things this government is determined about: that the claims made certainly will be respected. It eases that mental, physical and emotional burden on veterans and their families. Here is a simple example: if DVA accepts a knee injury at the time of the injury via a claim from the CDF, then it could accept the osteoarthritis of the knee in the future. That will be easier under what we see in this bill. DVA will be able to use the additional

claim data at the point of injury to better inform its decisions—in other words, streamlining it and understanding the actual nature and the progression of the claim. It's streamlining and simplifying the claims process.

Another change will enable the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission, the MRCC, to obtain information to determine the claim for compensation under the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act. It sounds technical, but this is yet another change that demonstrates our government's commitment to veterans' welfare and that their welfare is firmly at the centre of all the decisions we're making. We've seen some wonderful decisions around mental health service provisions. I'm very proud of those.

Sometimes, though, through no fault of their own, veterans can be adversely affected when the information that's really needed and critical to their claims is not provided by third parties. These provisions will provide veterans and their families with easier access to information that is relevant to those claims. It will require Commonwealth, state or territory departments, authorities, current and former treatment providers or any other parties to provide information on the request of the commission. Again, this is to make it much more streamlined.

Members in this place have, in my view, a duty to inform themselves about what circumstances our Defence Force members are working in, be it in Australia or overseas, and what we expect from them. One of the major ways they can do that is to take part in the Australian Defence Force Parliamentary Program. It has two components: not only does it encourage, allow and facilitate members of parliament to take part in a number of Defence Force programs; it is actually a reciprocal program where members of the Defence Force are encouraged to come into this place and work with members on all sides of the parliament to understand how the parliament works and the work of the members of parliament themselves. And we can get a real insight into what they're doing and what their job requires. It gives us direct information. I've been on a number of these deployments, and I get the best information from the people on the ground doing the job. Some of that I've been able to pass back to successive ministers and shadow ministers. It's really important because—nobody will be surprised by this—our Defence Force members are very direct in their comments and very honest and open. This program, which was developed in around 2000 to 2001, gives them the opportunity to have direct access to members of parliament in their area of work on the ground. Whether it's Afghanistan, whether it was Timor or whether it was Operation Resolute or Operation Astute, with so many of these deployments and operations members of parliament have actually been on the ground with our Defence Force members.

So, when we look at matters to do with veterans and their families, it makes it far more real for members of parliament to understand not only what the Defence Force members have been through during their term of deployment or what they've done in their time in Defence; equally, when we meet our Defence Force members we talk about what effect their deployment and work is having on their families. I can remember when I was in Afghanistan in 2011, some of the members I met at the time were on their fifth deployment. I know that there are those who are spending extended time away. And I know they understand very well exactly what it is that they're taking on when they join Defence. Some of the extended programs and operations that members are involved in now can involve nine months away from their families and Australia at any given time. This in itself is something that we are very well aware of and need to be, as members of parliament, in understanding why the measures involved in this bill are so important.

One of the last changes in this bill goes to administrative issues with the Department of Veterans' Affairs. We've invested significant funding into DVA as a government. We need DVA to work better for veterans and their families. We've amended relevant legislation to ensure that payments to veterans are streamlined, as much as possible, while ensuring that there are the appropriate levels of compliance that are expected of us in this place. This will affect income support clients and exempt certain lump sum payments from the income tests. That will allow certain exempt lump sum determinations made by DSS to apply to income support clients where this is consistent with DVA's legislation and policy. The practical effect of these changes for veterans is a simple lessening of red tape and bureaucratic delays in the processing of their payments. I can't think of anything better than the mental health support and services that our government has and will continue to provide, in a lifetime sense, for veterans.

I quoted George Washington when I started this speech and how a country, and a great country like Australia, looks after its veterans. I talked about the fact that we have a world-leading system for this. In this centenary year of the end of the Great War in 1918, we should take great pride in the system of support for veterans we have in this country—from government support through DVA to organisations like the RSL, Legacy, Soldier On and so many other community based organisations.

The years have marched on since our first conflicts, and we've had often to look further at our government's response to the needs of veterans and their families. I'm very proud of how our government has done that, particularly since 2013. We've come a long way from the days of the Vietnam vets and how they were received when they came back to Australia, and how some of their resources were dealt with in not getting to them when

they needed to. We are now dealing, though, with a much younger cohort of veterans, from far more recent deployments, who have very different needs. We need to continue to work in this space so that we're meeting the needs of not only our more mature aged veterans but also those who need a different form of assistance.

I'm immensely proud. I've met so many Defence Force members, both as part of the Defence Force program, those who have come into our parliament, and those I've met through RSLs and the community. I am incredibly proud of what they do for our nation. But I also understand the great price and sacrifice that is made by many of them, and their families, and the over-100,000 men and women of the Defence Force who have lost their lives in the various conflicts. I understand very directly, through my own family, the lifetime of loss and what that means. I also really want to acknowledge Legacy and the work they've done over the years, especially for the families of Defence Force members. And my sisters—this was really important to my family. Equally, I want to acknowledge the Red Cross and the Salvation Army, who also provided much assistance in the earlier years.

In reflecting on what George Washington had to say, I think, if George were alive now, we in this country could look him in the eye with great pride. I see the measures in this bill adding to the services and supports that we provide as a nation to the veterans that we respect so much. In finishing, I want to thank every member, past, present, and future, of our Australian Defence Force for what they do for this nation and reassure them that they have the utmost respect of the members of this parliament.

**Ms BRODTMANN** (Canberra) (12:05): I also want to associate myself with the words of the previous member in commending and thanking the Australian Defence Force for past and present service and also the families, who play a vitally important role in providing them with support, often in very stressful circumstances. I would also like to thank the member for her acknowledgement of Vietnam veterans. My late father was a Vietnam veteran, and my late mother-in-law said that she got a different man back from the war. That was a story that was all too common in Australia, and the community generally didn't understand what those veterans were facing. So I also thank the member for those comments about Vietnam veterans and associate myself with the comments that she made about the ADF. Thank you.

The veterans community usually tells us that they are generally happy with the level of service provided by the Department of Veterans' Affairs, but, when issues do arise, the overwhelming reason for complaints relates to the lengthy, complicated and oftentimes adversarial complaints process. The Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Omnibus) Bill 2018 will provide significant benefits to veterans, and it is for this reason that Labor supports the amendments in the bill. The proposed changes outlined in the bill streamline the claims process, make it easier for the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission to obtain information on behalf of DRCA clients, and prevent unnecessary delays with the creation of additional instruments. The changes improve processes for veterans and their families, and Labor offers its support to this bill.

Our veterans know that Labor stands by them and their families. This point couldn't be made any clearer than by looking at the policies announced by Labor's shadow minister for veterans' affairs, the member for Kingston. The member for Kingston announced Labor's commitment to veterans with a comprehensive veterans employment policy, a family engagement and support strategy and, most recently, Australia's first military covenant. A Labor government will put in place a formal agreement, a military covenant to ensure that the nation's armed forces are fully supported during and after their service, and will legislate regular reporting to parliament on how Australia is supporting military personnel. The covenant recognises the immense commitment our armed forces make to serve their country and it formalises our nation's commitment to look after those who have sacrificed so much for our nation. The covenant will be similar to the United Kingdom's armed forces covenant, a principles document that promises that those who serve or have served in the armed forces, and their families, will be treated fairly. Labor will work with the Australian Defence Force, the DVA and ex-service organisations to draft the relevant wording of a military covenant and associated legislation. A Labor government would also introduce legislation requiring future governments to report annually to parliament on how they are meeting their responsibilities to support our serving and ex-service personnel.

Australians who serve in our armed forces can require specialised health and social services assistance, and the covenant will make sure those needs don't slip through the cracks. While we acknowledge a bipartisan commitment to giving the best possible support to our serving and ex-service personnel, this covenant will formalise that commitment. Those who put their lives on hold to serve their country deserve to know in no uncertain terms that we acknowledge the sacrifice they and their families have made in service to our nation and that we are committed to being there for them now and committed to being there for them into the future.

Labor's commitment to those who serve and have served is rock solid, and we will state this commitment as a core value and a core principle. Australia has a proud military history and, as such, we have an obligation to all of those who have served in the name of our nation and in the name of the freedoms that we enjoy today.

The unemployment and underemployment of veterans is a serious issue. It's a significant issue, requiring immediate attention. Veterans' unemployment has been cited as sitting at 30 per cent—30 per cent—and, for those who did not medically discharge, there is an estimated 11.2 per cent unemployment rate, which is more than double the national rate. This is simply unacceptable.

That's why the member for Kingston's comprehensive veterans employment policy will provide greater support to our Defence personnel as they transition to civilian life. It focuses on helping businesses to train veterans. It focuses on a new veterans' employment service and on expanding access to additional education and civilian training. Translating the experience of veterans—which is a unique experience in the military—to civilian life would seem quite obvious, given the level of training that our military personnel, our ADF personnel, have. They are highly trained. Yet, for some reason, that's just not translating into civilian life.

Australian businesses are open to employing veterans, but some employers have talked about some short-term skill gaps that they sometimes see as acting as a barrier to employing a veteran who would otherwise be a suitable applicant. Labor's policy includes a \$5,000 training grant to businesses to help veterans gain the skills and experience they need to move from that military life into civilian life, taking advantage of all of the fabulous training they have had in the ADF and boosting that with this \$5,000 grant to help those veterans gain those skills to make that translation. It also includes establishing an employment and transition service for veterans to provide individualised, tailored support to help with the transition over a longer period of time. Access to this support will be provided for up to five years, following a period of intensive support during the first 12 months from transition advisers. The transition advisers will understand the unique skills and experiences of our ADF personnel and how best to translate those skills for civilian employers.

During my consultations with ADF members, including those serving, veterans and reservists, I've repeatedly heard about the barrier between skills gained within Defence and how those skills translate to civilian life. Labor's veterans employment policy addresses this. The policy will ensure that our veterans receive recognition of prior skills and experience within civilian professional organisations and institutions. So it's that translation of the learning and experience that they've had in the military into that sort of professional, civilian environment. It will ensure that states and territories will expand the Queensland initiative of translating the rank and length of service of ADF personnel to a tertiary entrance score. It's quite extraordinary that, in 2018, this actually hasn't happened, but then that's why this policy is so significant in so many different ways. It will also ensure that peak professional bodies will help identify current ADF training that meets professional civilian standards and will work to ensure that this is recognised. Also the policy will ensure that Defence will establish a temporary security clearance for veterans to use as they apply for civilian work, providing greater incentive to prospective employers.

These targeted measures will strengthen the quality and number of career opportunities for our veterans to ensure that their many skills and their experience lead to meaningful employment. When our men and women undertake to serve their country, we make a commitment to them and their family to support them after their time in the ADF—so we support them during their time in the ADF, but we also make that commitment after their time in the ADF. Preparing and working with those leaving the Defence Force to move into meaningful employment is a key element of successful transition from the ADF—from the military to civilian life.

We all know that ADF families play a pivotal, vital role in supporting our currently serving ADF men and women, and veterans, which is why it is important that we ensure that the families have the support they need to address the unique challenges of military life. These men, women and children are the unsung heroes of our defence forces. Greater support for our military families is greater support for our serving and ex-service personnel. A family engagement and support strategy is one of the key recommendations from the National Mental Health Commission's review of services available to veterans and current serving members of the Australian Defence Force in relation to the prevention of self-harm and suicide. The review highlighted that there is currently a lack of emphasis on the critical role that families play in the lives of current and former serving members. Families play an especially unique role within military life and service, themselves making many sacrifices in terms of career and in terms of the fact that they are constantly moving around. Our ADF personnel and veterans look to their families for support while in service, in transition and in civilian life.

There's no doubt that families also play a critical role in providing support to those who are serving at the moment and the ex-service personnel, particularly those suffering from mental health issues. Labor's commitment to developing a family engagement and support strategy would be co-designed with Defence and veteran families and communities to focus on known stress points for families, including transition for Defence members into civilian life. There are many stress points. I've got many girlfriends who married into the Army and they are extraordinary. Young women—we were all young women once—in their 20s, in the early days of marriage, were moving around every two years. They were just starting their careers and they were moving all over the country to support their husbands and, through that support, our nation—doing extraordinary work, including unpacking in

record time. It's always an inspiration to see how quickly service personnel, particularly their partners, can unpack. So there are so many stress points—I'm not just talking about the moving around and unpacking—in their lives and this will be acknowledged in the strategy.

Families can be the greatest support when dealing with life-changing events that can occur throughout and after military service. I've seen this myself with the Veterans and Families Maker Program, run by Tharwa Valley Forge, which is in my electorate. I visited there recently. Tharwa Valley Forge is a bladesmithing school located in Tharwa, in the most southern part of the electorate, and it's run by Karim Haddad. Karim successfully applied for and received a \$58,000 grant from DVA's Veteran and Community Grants program. The funding was used to provide 16 2½-day programs where 64 participants nominated their preference for knife making, Japanese knife making, blacksmithing, leather work or longbow making.

The programs used the funding within 12 weeks and there are still more than 100 veterans and their families on the waiting list. It's been a hugely popular program with veterans and their families as well. Some of the veterans I met there were transitioning out or had recently transitioned out and were with their family members because they wanted them to be part of their journey. They wanted to engage the family as part of the transitioning journey.

Karim has opened a crowdfunding campaign to get the ball rolling and to show the government that there is a greater need here. We know there's a greater need. Labor knows there is a greater need among our veterans for programs like these. Karim's program appears to have a niche application, with many veterans saying that they had found few other programs that allow them to participate alongside their partners and children. I again congratulate Karim on this fabulous initiative. The program is proving incredibly popular, with a waiting list of 100 people.

While we acknowledge the important and valuable contribution of all of our ADF veterans and their families, I would like to acknowledge the Invictus Games that are currently underway in Sydney—in particular, the participants from the 16 other countries. I want to take this opportunity to extend my support to three veterans from my community here in Canberra who are competing in the Invictus Games. I phoned them last week. Each of the competitors was asked, 'What will winning look like for you at these Games?' I will share their answers with you now. Tiffany White, who is competing at powerlifting and indoor rowing events, answered:

It will be walking away knowing I have done my best, had fun and found a new group of people I can call friends and family.

Squadron Leader Rob Saunders, who's competing in sailing, said:

Conquering my personal challenges while building mental strength and resilience through being part of a team that performs to its best.

Pilot Officer Jesse Costello, who's competing in athletics, indoor rowing and swimming events, responded:

First place would be grand but that is not the tone for how I define a win for me—not in this instance. For me, it will be crossing the finish line because I know what has gone into that moment.

These are really powerful words and very emotional words—just considering what journeys they've been through to get to those games.

Our ADF personnel put their lives on hold in service of our nation. They take risks, they make sacrifices and they commit their lives and wellbeing to the protection of this country, our way of life, our wellbeing and the nation's security. Upon their return, their scars sometimes are not visible. That is why it's vitally important that we provide our ADF personnel the highest standard of care and the greatest amount of support.

**Mr GOSLING (Solomon) (12:20):** I first want to acknowledge all those who have spoken before me in this debate. As always, everyone is coming from a good place when it comes to doing more for our veterans community. Labor, of course, supports the Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Omnibus) Bill 2018, because it's a further step along the road to improving services for our defence personnel and veterans and, importantly, their families. I spoke earlier this year in support of the government's veteran-centric reforms. I'm obviously pleased to see that the government and the minister are committed to providing support to those who have served our country in its defence services.

I am also pleased to recognise the work of our shadow minister for veterans' affairs, the member for Kingston. I know she has been travelling the country a lot. She's been with me in Darwin, in my electorate of Solomon, where there's an important defence and veterans community. She has been working constructively with the government with the aim of improving the services that we provide and she is, to my mind, doing an excellent job.

As the minister said in his second reading speech, the Australian community has a clear expectation that veterans and their families will be looked after, and that's what we're all committed to achieving. This bill takes a further step towards meeting that expectation by amending the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004, the Safety Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988 and the Veterans'

Entitlements Act 1986. The bill has three schedules. They're all designed to streamline DVA processes internally, which will assist veterans in accessing their entitlements.

The issues within DVA are often discussed in the veterans and ex-service community. I continue to hear, almost on a daily basis, a lot of those concerns. Generally speaking, however, once veterans have their claims approved the feedback we receive is that they are happy with the level of service they have been provided. Quite a few members have talked about the crux of the issues with the department generally stemming from the early stages of the claims process. As much as we can, we need to reduce what is sometimes a lengthy, complicated and adversarial—although, hopefully, that is being reduced—claims process. Two of the bill's schedules seek to make changes which will assist in streamlining the claims process, and it is for this reason that Labor offer our support. While these amendments won't address all of the issues in the claims process, we are supportive of any changes that will improve outcomes for current serving members, veterans and their loved ones.

On-the-ground support for our veterans is absolutely vital. Whilst these bills are helpful, DVA can't do everything. There is an incredibly important role also for ex-service community organisations. There's a role for mainstream organisations—Health and others. There is also, as the member for Canberra noted, an important role for events like the Invictus Games. I want to congratulate all those who are involved with the Invictus Games. I again want to acknowledge the competitors from my electorate. We have Samantha Gould, Tom Foster and Sonya Newman. We are very proud of all of the competitors in the Invictus Games and we are proud of the organisers. Well done to Prince Harry for the initiative and for making the Invictus Games such a force for change. Good effort!

Well done also on his impending fatherhood. So congratulations to Prince Harry. Unlike some of our colleagues, I don't think he should be the Governor-General of Australia, but that's not being offensive to the prince. He has got plenty on his plate, so we'll have an Australian to do that.

It is impressive what the Invictus Games have done. I also understand why *Australian Story* this week, about the commandos and their journey with Invictus Games, used Prince Harry as part of that story, because it is a powerful example of how leadership can assist people in their long journey. I understand that the price paid by those who have served our nation can in some ways never be repaid, but through these measures we're talking about today and other measures that we're taking leadership on in our own communities we can give it a good crack.

Some of those Australian families that have paid the ultimate sacrifice in losing their loved ones gathered in my electorate a number of weeks ago. The families of the fallen get together every year in a different part of Australia to provide solidarity to each other. The 'families of the fallen' dinner, which was hosted at the 1st Brigade mess—I want to thank the brigadier for hosting that event—was attended by Sir Angus Houston, former Chief of the Defence Force. It was also attended by the current Chief of the Defence Force. I will just say quickly about Angus Houston: what an incredible Australian he is, with still a lot more to give to our nation. The new CDF has these issues of our service people, and veterans in particular, at the top of mind. It was great to see them both in Darwin, sitting down to have a meal in solidarity with the families that have lost their loved ones. I was very pleased, just this week, to introduce the minister, who is sitting here in the chamber now, to one of the families of the fallen. They very much appreciated the opportunity to have a yarn with the minister.

Around Australia, many of these new centres have been named for soldiers that we've lost overseas on operations, and there are some more in the pipeline. I recently visited the Jamie Larcombe Centre in Adelaide. I want to acknowledge the health professionals and other professionals who are working there, The Road Home, and all of those people who are giving that intense support to our veterans there. Because, whilst events like Invictus play an important role and raise awareness in the community, it's also important to have organisations like Soldier On that provide the wrap-around services. It's my hope that in the future there will be more centres that particularly tap in to the needs of contemporary veterans. There are quite exciting proposals out about more centres and facilities where the correct or very much welcomed wrap-around health and allied health services will be provided to our veterans. I wish those organisations all the best in their advocacy.

In the Northern Territory, and in my electorate of Solomon, we have a need for such a centre. That's what I've committed to. Like other places around Australia, we've lost one of our sons as well from the Top End. That was Scott Palmer. Scott Palmer was killed in the same helicopter crash that injured so badly Garry Robinson and others. When we build that centre, Scott Palmer's name will be attached, with Ray and Pam's blessing of course. It's the hope that that acknowledgement is made of that young man, that fine Territorian, who was killed in the service of our country.

That will be a great facility. It will be a health, wellbeing and transition facility to help the people that are serving our country and our community, and their families. The reason I say their community is that we

acknowledge the work of our first responders. We acknowledge the work of those working for those agencies that provide safety, security and response in our community and, of course, those members of the ADF who go overseas in our name. They will work closely with other stakeholders like the Primary Health Networks with the support of the RSL.

Veterans Australia NT provide a great source of support to members in need and to their families. Veterans Australia NT were formally called the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia NT. They dropped the name 'Vietnam' not because they didn't want to provide services to Vietnam veterans anymore—of course they still do—but because they wanted to reach out to contemporary veterans and make sure there were no barriers to contemporary veterans seeking services from that organisation. I've been a proud member of Veterans Australia NT for many, many years. It was just this week that one of the members contacted me and said: 'Luke, can you help out? There's a Vietnam veteran in one of our aged-care facilities who is not in a good way.' This veteran didn't believe that his mate in this seniors' home was being provided the level of care that he deserved. That's what it's all about.

As well as our responses as legislators in this place, as well as our role as members of parliament, I think all of us have an important role to build awareness in our community of the sacrifices that are made in our name, because it does not come without cost. We look forward to providing better on-the-ground services to our veterans in the Top End. They are important to us. It's important that they're acknowledged in every way, whenever we can.

In closing, I want to acknowledge one of our veterans who recently passed, and that is Len Allen. I want to pass our condolences to the family of Len Allen—to Vickie and the children. His duty is done. Len's duty is done. We want to acknowledge Len, 1201694 Corporal Leonard William 'Len' Allen, who passed away on Friday, 5 October. He was a truly respected soldier. He served with the 5th Battalion in the Royal Australian Regiment in South Vietnam between February 1969 and March 1970. He was mentioned in dispatches for his actions in contact with enemy forces. Len served with many other units in his career, but he finally retired as a sergeant in Darwin. Len is survived by his wife, Vickie, and three adult sons. For those in the Top End or around Australia who knew Len, a funeral service will be held for Len at Darwin Funeral Services this Friday, 19 October, at 10.30. Len Allen's duty is done. Lest we forget.

**Mr CHESTER** (Gippsland—Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Minister for Defence Personnel, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC and Deputy Leader of the House) (12:34): On behalf of the government, I associate myself with the comments by the member for Solomon and extend our condolences to Vickie and the family of Len Allen. And to the member for Solomon, himself a service veteran: I thank you for your service.

I'd like to thank all members who contributed to the debate on this bill and acknowledge the continued tradition of bipartisan support for the veteran community demonstrated by the opposition. The bill is designed to improve outcomes for serving Defence Force members, veterans and their families and will ensure that essential services are available to veterans when they're needed. This bill demonstrates the commitment this government made in 2016-17 to put veterans first, and continues measures we introduced earlier this year under the Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Veteran-centric Reforms No.1) Act 2018 and the Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Veteran-centric Reforms No.2) Act 2018.

As the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, I recognise that the Australian community has a clear expectation that veterans and their families are well looked after. This bill will extend claim avenues to include the Chief of Defence Force; it will resolve veterans' claims more quickly by strengthening the ability of the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission to obtain information from third parties; and it will expedite lump sum exemptions for veterans by simplifying the processes of DVA and the Department of Human Services.

Schedule 1 of the bill would amend the Military Rehabilitation And Compensation Act 2004 to enable the Chief of the Defence Force to make a claim for liability on behalf of a current serving Australian Defence Force member where the member suffers a service injury or disease and agrees to the Chief of the Defence Force or his delegate making the claim. The veterans will benefit from having their future claims for related diseases and conditions that manifest after the service more easily accepted. DVA will be able to use the additional claim data at the point of injury to better inform decisions around trends in injuries and the onset of other conditions. This may inform later policy on simplifying and streamlining the claims process.

Schedule 2 of the bill would enable the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission to obtain information in determining a claim for compensation under the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988, or DRCA. Veterans can be adversely affected when information critical to their claim is not provided by third parties. These provisions will provide veterans and their families with easier

access to information relevant to their compensation claims. The provisions will require Commonwealth, state or territory departments, authorities and third parties to provide information to the commission. This will ensure that the commission has access to all the information necessary to make decisions on claims. The amendments would bring the DRCA in line with the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act of 2004 and the Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986.

Schedule 3 would improve administrative practices in the Department of Veterans' Affairs concerning income support clients and the exempting of certain lump sum payments from the income test. The amendments to the VEA Act 1986 would allow certain exempt lump sum determinations made by the secretary for social services to apply to income support clients where the determination is consistent with Department of Veterans Affairs' legislation and policy. Under the new arrangements, DSS will advise DVA of the determination, which will be applied to DVA income support clients without the requirement to register an additional instrument. The Repatriation Commission will retain a discretion to make a determination to specify an exempt lump sum where they may wish to, and the amendment will not change the current exclusions of the determination as it applies to companies, trusts and primary production. Each amendment of these will mean better outcomes for veterans and families. I commend the bill.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Message from the Governor-General recommending appropriation announced.

### **Third Reading**

**Mr CHESTER** (Gippsland—Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Minister for Defence Personnel, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC and Deputy Leader of the House) (12:39): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

### **Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Bill 2018**

#### **Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2018**

### **Second Reading**

Cognate debate.

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

to which the following amendment was moved:

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

"whilst not declining to give the bill a second reading, the House notes the Government's mismanagement of aged care reform"—

**Mr ZAPPIA** (Makin) (12:40): I speak in support of the amendment moved by the member for Franklin in respect to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Bill 2018. Australia's aged-care system is in crisis. Over the last two decades or so there have been around 20 inquiries that in some way relate to Australia's aged-care system. We've just concluded another inquiry by the parliament through the Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport. That inquiry, whilst concluded, now goes into its next phase, which is to look at the issues of staffing in the sector. We've also seen in recent years several media reports relating to the failures of the aged-care system. We also know that complaints in the sector are increasing. In 2017-18 the number of complaints received by the Aged Care Complaints Commissioner rose to 4,315.

Finally, we now have a royal commission called by the government. I welcome that royal commission. Whilst I am disappointed that the terms of reference do not include inquiring into retirement villages, I nevertheless welcome the royal commission and look forward to its findings. Let me be absolutely clear. The royal commission should be no excuse to defer action or funding on matters of concern that have already been raised, that are known and that need to be urgently addressed. Nor do I believe the royal commission should simply be used by the government as an excuse to put off decisions until after the next federal election.

The royal commission, whilst based in South Australia, should also not be a distraction from the widespread concerns raised in respect to the aged-care sector simply by focusing its attention on what happened at Oakden,

which was in South Australia. Oakden, of course, deserves condemnation. But it's had its own ICAC investigation from within that state. It's also been the subject of a Senate inquiry of this parliament. And the facility is now closed. Oakden was not an isolated case. It is clear from the people I've spoken to, the evidence that I've heard and the revelations to date that the abuse and poor care of elderly people in residential aged-care facilities is widespread. That's both from within for-profit centres and not-for-profit centres.

Let me also make it clear that the Makk and McLeay wards in Oakden, the two most heavily criticised, were inspected and licensed by the federal government's health department. This was through the work of the quality assurance agency that, over many years, carried out inspections of that facility. These inspections were carried out over the very years that the abuse was occurring and where complaints were continuously being made. Indeed, between 1 January 2012 and 13 June 2017 there were 64 visits made by the quality assurance agency to that centre. Some 54 were made in 2017, when the centre was in its dying stages.

So there were numerous visits by that agency over the years, and it was only when the public spotlight was shone on Oakden that the agency started to find flaws with the facility. Indeed, from my recollection, there were about a third of the conditions that were not met in the final inspection. I fail to understand how at a time that the spotlight was being shone, and when there was likely to be greater effort made to comply with the conditions, that the agency suddenly found 15 conditions that were not being met when in all the previous years there were no such findings.

The existing regulatory oversight of our aged-care sector has badly failed Australians, and the government has finally faced up to the reality, through this legislation, that change is required. I hope that this legislation brings about the improvements that we all want to see. I support the legislation, but only time will tell just how effective it's going to be because there are two other important changes that are urgently required if this legislation is going to make the difference that we hope it will. Firstly, there needs to be a culture change across the whole sector, from the regulatory agencies right through to the operators of these facilities. Secondly, there needs to be additional funding, and considerable additional funding in some cases. Without it, I can't see how we're going to make the improvements that the community is calling for.

Every day around 200,000 people are being cared for in an aged-care facility somewhere across Australia. In the course of a year, about 240,000 people will have passed through these facilities. Around 85,000 people are currently in receipt of a home care package, and those numbers are rising—121,418 people are currently on the national prioritisation queue, waiting for a package. We know that those figures continue to rise and, indeed, the real concern is that the government's commitment to providing those packages is not even keeping up with the number of people that each week come onto the waiting list. In the last decade, 33,667 new residential aged-care places were added to the system. Over the next decade, it's expected that around 83,500 will very likely also be added.

The problem, however, is not just that there are more people coming into the aged-care system; with respect to residential aged-care facilities, they enter aged care at an older and more vulnerable age. Over the last decade, those people who were in these residential aged-care facilities and were in what would be referred to as the 'no-care or low-care' classification represented about 45 per cent of people. Today, that figure is down to 15 per cent. Conversely, the people who were considered to have high-care needs 10 years ago were about 28 per cent of the population of those facilities. Today, that figure has gone up to 58 per cent. So we've seen a very clear change in the type of people in these facilities and in their needs. And with greater needs, of course, comes greater cost and greater support required.

Not surprisingly, the industry now claims that some 43 per cent of their facilities are either operating at a loss or are struggling financially. The funding is inadequate because of funding cuts by this government, including the dementia supplement cap that was made some years ago. This government's failure to properly index funding has resulted in a real effect, where billions of dollars have been cut from this sector. This is what the Aged Care Guild said about financial viability in a letter that it sent only last month:

Current funding for aged care services in Australia is inadequate and needs to be addressed. According to independent data from StewartBrown, Chartered Accountants and provider of the most comprehensive financial data across the aged care sector – has calculated that care funding for residential care falls short of cost by \$7.30 per day, per resident. The Guild is concerned that the disparity of over \$558 million per year of care funding will - without redress – lead to further failures in the system and put senior Australians at risk.

It goes on:

Operating costs for aged care providers are currently growing at an industry average of 5.2 per cent per annum, while average care funding will grow by only 1.2 per cent for 2018-19. This is on the back of zero growth in care funding for 2017-18. This is unsustainable and is forcing providers to either reduce services, close or sell their operation, or continue operating whilst

financially hampered and risk non-compliance with quality of care standards. In fact, 43 per cent of providers are currently operating at a loss and the remaining 57 per cent are forecasting similar outcomes over the next twelve months.

That letter sums up the state of the industry right now. Whilst I accept that it's a letter from the industry and obviously they've got an interest in their remarks, the reality is that it also reflects the conversations that I have had with so many of the centre operators and with other people currently within the sector and, indeed, the experiences of what we're seeing within these facilities.

The issue is even more critical with respect to regional and rural locations, where residential aged-care facilities are not only critical; in many cases they might be the closest place that an older person can be taken to. They don't have a choice, in many of the regional and remote areas, as to where an older person can be cared for when they can't remain in their own home, and so those facilities are absolutely critical to those communities. And I know that for many of the regional and rural centres the financial viability is even tougher. Residential aged-care facilities are also important for those communities because in many cases they add immensely to the local economy and job creation within those communities. If they fail, not only is the care that they provide then not available to those communities in the future, but it directly affects the whole township because of the jobs that are lost.

What we have seen in recent years throughout the sector is that the financial pressures are resulting in cost cutting, which in turn results in fewer staff, poorer levels of care, lower food quality and less access to allied health and other social programs that were previously provided. The expectations being placed on staff within those facilities are unrealistic. Some of the stories that I have heard from people who've come to see me about it make me very concerned about how staff could possibly provide the care that is required by residents in those facilities, given the work pressures they are put under.

The other concern that arises from all of that is that it is a false saving for government. What is happening today is that because there is inadequate staff in many centres, when a resident becomes unwell, rather than calling in a doctor or having a registered nurse on site who might be able to attend to the needs of that person, they are immediately being taken to the local public hospital. That in turn puts pressure on the local public hospital—and our hospitals, as we all know, have their own pressures to contend with—to provide a service which could have been provided within the residential aged-care facility, had the facility been properly staffed. I know that is happening because, again, I have spoken directly with people in the emergency sections of public hospitals around the country.

In addition to all of that, we now know that even the doctors are not wanting to go to residential aged-care facilities as they did in the past. One in ten doctors surveyed have stopped going to aged-care facilities altogether in the past five years. We know that one in three GPs have now said that they will phase out or scale down their visits to aged-care facilities over the next ten years. They won't go there, because the compensation, the money they get under the MBS from the government for visits to aged-care facilities, is simply inadequate for the time that they spend at those facilities. It does not adequately compensate them. So, again, if we don't have doctors visiting residents within the facilities, of course they'll end up in the public hospitals, which in turn comes at a much greater cost to the public. So it's actually a no-win situation to cut back on funding to the residential aged-care facilities if ultimately we are going to end up sending them to the public hospitals.

The last point I want to make is this—and I think this is a critical matter. There was a 13-year study by Professor Joe Ibrahim, who found that one in six deaths that occur in residential aged-care facilities was preventable—one in six. That in itself should have rung alarm bells for government and said something is wrong and we need to act and act urgently. If we can prevent those deaths then we should be doing so. The only reasons they were not prevented were, again, the financial pressures and the staffing shortages within those centres. I look forward to the outcome of the royal commission findings.

**Mr DICK** (Oxley) (12:55): There's been much debate from both sides of the House on this important legislation, the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Bill 2018 and the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2018. Whilst Labor will be supporting these bills, it would have been better if I were speaking in this place with both major parties on a bipartisan unity ticket on the issue of giving our eldest Australians the care they deserve. Unfortunately, this is not the case. The government's actions on this national crisis could be considered somewhat too little too late. There are around 1.3 million Australians who are currently receiving some form of aged care, which is provided by around 400,000 nurses and carers. By 2056 it's projected the aged-care workforce will need to triple, with an additional one million workers required to deliver services. We ensure that our aged-care system is properly funded and prioritised to benefit not only our current eldest Australians but for future generations to come.

When our parents and grandparents begin the next phase in their life with aged care, we should know for certain that they are comfortable, they are cared for and they are safe. Last month on *Four Corners* we saw, as

we've heard in this debate so far, the horrors that are facing millions of elderly Australians in aged care. They were deeply disturbing and completely unacceptable. In my opinion, it is indeed a national shame that these types of behaviour have been left unchecked. But I want to be really clear that this is not new information. The Morrison government has known about these types of injustices for years but have paid lip service rather than deliver any sort of decisive action to fix it. For example, we've heard from the previous speaker about the Oakden nursing home in Australia early last year. In response to Oakden, we know there was a Senate inquiry. This Senate inquiry report triggered the government to commission the Review of National Aged Care Quality Regulatory Processes, better known as the Carnell-Paterson review, which was handed to the then Turnbull government on 23 October 2017, almost exactly one year ago.

In fact, as the shadow minister and the member for Franklin stated yesterday, the government has had on its desk more than one dozen reports into Australia's aged-care system. One, of course, is the Carnell-Paterson report into Oakden, but, to date, only one of the 10 recommendations has been partially implemented with legislation in this place at the moment. There are a range of other recommendations that need to be implemented that we are still waiting for. We've had the David Tune report into aged-care services in Australia, for which the government has responded to 18 of 38 recommendations. Another 20 are yet to be dealt with. Despite all of this, when the Leader of the Opposition said in April this year that Australia's aged-care industry was a 'national crisis', members of the government refused to pay any attention and just continued with lip-service. The so-called Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care even had the audacity to say that this statement was 'verging on the abuse of elder Australians'. It just goes to show how much the government sticks its head in the sand and refuses to acknowledge how bad the crisis has actually become.

These are some of the nation's most vulnerable people, who, rather than receiving the care they need and deserve, are instead being exploited and taken advantage of. Australians are right to be appalled by the shocking stories we've seen and by the crisis in our nation's aged-care system, particularly the standard of care delivered in some nursing homes. The aged-care providers must take responsibility for this but so too should the Prime Minister and the government. The lack of response in relation to any reform fits a disturbing pattern of cover-ups and inaction on aged care from successive Liberal governments. It is deeply disappointing. There are dozens of reviews and reports on aged care that have been ignored by the government.

What is worse is that the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison governments have shown a complete lack of commitment to Australia's aged-care system by cutting billions from it. I've been listening to what members of the government have been saying in this debate today and there's been one thing missing: an apology—members of the government getting on their feet and apologising for not taking action sooner. I'm not going to cut it in any way, shape or form that somehow the government have done the right thing here. They have been dragged kicking and screaming, just like any other issue they've got to deal with. And we've never heard the minister in this parliament get up and apologise for not taking action sooner. We've never had the minister walk to the dispatch box and actually outline the reasons why he didn't take action sooner.

The facts are very clear: when this Prime Minister was Treasurer, he cut \$1.2 billion from aged care in his first budget. A cut in size has consequences, and we are seeing these consequences play out in reality today. This is nothing you can sweep under the carpet. The Prime Minister can't revel in the fact that we now have a royal commission when year after year it was his government, and every single member of the government, that voted to take away funding and that didn't take action on these issues seriously. Rather than dealing with this growing epidemic head-on, it is deeply concerning that the government have responded with cuts, not compassion. We know this is nothing new for the LNP in this country. This goes hand in hand with cuts to schools, cuts to TAFE, cuts to hospitals; the list goes on and on. Every member of the government should be ashamed of themselves. They should be embarrassed and they should get up in this chamber and apologise to older Australians.

It is sadly inevitable that standards in the care of older Australians have begun to slip under the weight of these cuts. You cannot cut \$1.2 billion from the aged-care sector in this country without there being consequences. And then the government say, 'Oh, yes, it's all terrible. We are deeply concerned about older Australians.' What a load of rot and what a load of rubbish. If they were concerned about older Australians, why did every single member of the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison governments cut funding to aged care? Stony silence, as always. It took the airing of the *Four Corners* report to have the Prime Minister jump into action. It was clear to see in that program that the current regulatory framework that should be protecting older Australians in care is not working. This is despite the Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care saying the complete opposite.

Labor has repeatedly raised public concerns about the lack of transparency and the handling of reporting and complaints made against residential aged-care facilities. We know there are doctors, nurses, carers and health professionals who work hard to deliver care to older Australians each and every day. We recognise that every day around the country the majority of older Australians are treated with care and respect at residential aged-care

facilities. But anyone who watched the *Four Corners* program would be genuinely moved by the stories told by staff and families about those not receiving this care, and it is clear they were let down. But of greater concern to their loved ones was that they did not get the care that they needed.

While Labor supports a royal commission into the abuse and cover-ups of the aged-care sector, millions of Australians simply deserve much more from this out-of-touch government, rather than waiting for the royal commission to finish before they start fixing the crisis. What we as a parliament need to make sure of and what the government need to make sure of is that we don't wait until the final report in 2020 before acting, because these issues are real and they are happening now, just like the massive blowout in the waiting list for appropriate home care packages. First it was 80,000, then it jumped to 108,000, and the most recent data tells us there are now 121,000 older Australians waiting for the approval of home care packages. This includes 95,000 older Australians waiting on this list with high-care needs, many with dementia, and around 56,000 older Australians who have no home care packages at all.

Our national aged-care system has become almost diabolical because of this government's cuts and neglect. There is no other way to look at it. These might sound like harsh words, but when you talk to healthcare professionals—and one of the first things I did when I was a candidate, before office, was to go and visit and meet with aged-care workers because I wanted to hear what a life in their shoes was, before I was elected. I've got a number of aged-care facilities in my electorate, and today I place on record the hard work and the dedication of those men and women who care for the most frail and vulnerable in my community. I salute them. I acknowledge the work that they do, and I pay them tribute in this parliament on behalf of the people that they care for. We recognise and thank them for the work that they do.

The most recent home care package data was delayed by more than a month and released under the cover of the AFL and NRL grand finals weekend. What a cop-out. They are a government who are so ashamed of what they have delivered for elderly Australians that they will do anything to hide from it. As the list grows longer and longer, fresh stories emerge daily of older Australians waiting for care. It's simply unacceptable. The government will tell you that they are doing something about it. They are taking action to solve the crisis which has come at their own hands. How are they doing this? They are doing it by funding just 14,000 new in home care packages over four years. This is laughable. We know that the latest data on home care packages reveals that the waitlist has grown by a further 13,000 in just three months. This is not a solution; this is a slap in the face to older Australians, who continue to wait six months, 12 months or even two years for appropriate care.

When you break it down, the 14,000 places announced by the government equate to just 23 places per electorate per year. That's 23 in my electorate and 23 in the electorates of the member for Macquarie, the member for Wills, the member for Burt and the member for Lingiari. We say that's unacceptable. I want members of the government in the chamber today to answer this question—through you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Do they think that's acceptable? Do they think that offering just 23 places in their electorate is somehow a job well done? It's not. It's a joke. We know that. Outside of this chamber, if the government wasn't so busy destroying itself, blowing itself up, fighting amongst itself, voting for white supremacy motions in the Senate and making all of the administrative errors that seem to happen day after day, which is an excuse for a government, it should actually take this issue seriously.

This is all in stark contrast to this side of the House. Bill Shorten, the Leader of the Opposition, announced in his budget reply speech earlier this year that under Labor:

... tackling dementia and delivering better aged care will be a national priority backed by real resources ...

This is backed up by the letter that the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow minister wrote to the Prime Minister last month to state Labor's support for the royal commission but at the same time to question whether the scope is broad enough to capture the full picture of what is happening to our oldest Australians. As I said, while the royal commission is a step in the right direction, it will not examine the impacts of reduced funding through the Aged Care Funding Instrument or the inadequacies of short- and long-term funding of the aged-care sector.

Labor also remains committed to establishing a royal commission into violence towards and abuse of people with disability. It's inevitable that the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety will consider issues that relate to people with a disability who reside in aged-care facilities, whose stories and experiences should also be taken into consideration for future development.

On this side of the House, we know what it takes to deliver real quality aged care to elderly Australians, because, unlike those opposite, we actually get out into the community and speak with older Australians, their families, their carers and the staff who work in aged-care facilities. I've held a number of visits into the residential facilities in my electorate and was delighted to host the shadow minister for ageing, the member for Franklin, who did just this, in my electorate. We visited a number of aged-care facilities and retirement locations in my

electorate: a great new location in Springfield; Sinnamon Village, a terrific village; and a new nursing home facility at Jindalee. We heard from residents and staff about the enormous pressure and strains that those in aged care are under, particularly seniors who are relying on government support. That's what real action to improve our aged-care system looks like: getting out into the community and listening to stories of older Australians firsthand.

My mother resides in a residential aged-care facility. I want the best support and care for her. She lives in a place called Bolton Clarke, formerly known as Carrington Retirement Village, in the suburb of Parkinson in Brisbane. Today, with the time I have remaining, I want to acknowledge the carers, the nurses, all the ancillary support staff, the OTs, the extra support and the diversional therapy staff—all the great and wonderful men and women who turn up day in and day out to look after my mother and her neighbours in the village she lives in. They do a wonderful job. They talk to me about the pressures that they are under. When I say, 'What do you want government to do?' they simply say, 'We want respect and we want resources.'

Now, we've got an opportunity to work in a bipartisan manner around aged care in Australia. It's time the Morrison government heard the message. More needs to be done. We cannot simply wait for the findings of the royal commission. We've got to take issues seriously. Stop cutting funds to aged care in Australia. Start listening to those in the sector, because my loved ones and all other loved ones in Australia deserve nothing less.

**Ms TEMPLEMAN** (Macquarie) (13:10): We support the establishment of a new single point of contact for aged-care consumers and providers of aged care that is focused on quality. The bringing together of the Aged Care Quality Agency and the Aged Care Complaints Commission functions was one of 10 recommendations from the Carnell-Paterson review. You have to wonder why it took so long for this one to be implemented.

The new commission's job is going to be about restoring confidence of aged-care consumers in the delivery of aged-care services, given how much public concern there has been in recent times. The new agency is going to look after accreditation, assessment, monitoring of and complaints-handling for aged-care services and Commonwealth funded aged-care services. It is a huge responsibility that it will carry. The aged-care services include all four areas of aged-care services, including residential aged care, home care, flexible care services, the Commonwealth Home Support Program and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program. So this is really looking out for the quality of care for every aspect of our aged-care system right across the country.

Normally these bills would be considered non-controversial—and in themselves they are—but aged care has become one of the crisis points for our community. In fact, I think my conclusion is that these bills are a missed opportunity for the government to give the new commissioner stronger arbitrary powers, given the level of public concern in relation to service providers. It's also timely that we put the government on notice that there must be no change to the cost-recovery process or the fees charged to ensure that there is ongoing support for smaller providers. The smaller independent providers are part of the mix of aged care in my community. Those and the larger not-for-profit providers are full of staff who are doing what they can within the constraints that they have. They provide the very best quality care that they can, but the constraints they face are enormous.

If we think about the current environment, around 1.3 million Australians are currently receiving some form of aged care, which is provided by around 400,000 nurses and carers. The number of people aged over 85 years is rapidly increasing compared to younger age groups, and it's predicted to double by 2032. It's projected that by 2056 the aged-care workforce will need to have tripled to deliver services for more than 3.5 million people, and older people will represent one in four Australians. That's not happening in isolation. That's happening as the workforce demands also rise for people looking after people with disabilities under the NDIS. Both these things are happening at the same time. In aged care, it's an increase from around 366,000 or up to 400,000 people currently working in the sector to around one million by 2050. That is huge growth by anyone's calculations. Public expenditure on aged care could double as a share of the economy by the 2050s. These are really important financial and social considerations that we have to make.

I want to take a moment to talk about three aged-care workers in my community who have for many years been arguing for workforce issues to be addressed. Nurses and Midwives Association member Jocelyn Hofman, Annette Peters and Shirley Ross-Shuley have been fierce advocates for improvement in aged-care nurse wages and conditions and for quotas, and I support them in that call. They know what they're talking about. They have experienced appalling situations of having to look after too many people, with not enough qualified staff.

I've also heard from HSU members about the pressures they face. Quite frankly, from the stories that have been shared with me by staff and by families of residents, we as a parliament have a lot of work to do to make sure that staff are able to do their jobs as effectively as possible and to spend time with patients so that they feel they are cared for, not just dealt with. That is our greatest challenge.

The role of nurses and personal care workers in the care of our older Australians is critical and will become increasingly important, yet the government has failed to act on any of the issues relating to workers in aged care. And that is despite the urgency of it. It's not like we've got a lot of time to hang around and think this one through in more detail. We've had many inquiries and many reports. We actually know many of the things that need to be done in this sector. It took more than two months for the Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care to release the report of the Aged Care Workforce Strategy Taskforce, *A matter of care*, and there has been no commitment to any funding for the strategy. How the government expects to drive reform without committing to or delivering funding is anyone's guess.

Labor has called on the government to immediately implement the workforce strategy and to work with unions and aged-care providers on issues like the proposed 24-hour registered nurse coverage at residential aged-care facilities. Given that the government dumped Labor's \$1.5 billion workforce compact and supplement after the 2013 election, we have consistently called for the development of a comprehensive aged-care workforce development strategy to address issues of training, staffing levels and an ageing workforce. The government finally addressed some workforce issues by announcing \$1.9 million for an aged-care workforce task force in the 2017-18 budget, but there was not a single representative of the aged-care workforce on the task force when the membership was made public. That gives you some insight into the government's commitment.

There are many other health professionals, such as GPs, occupational therapists, physios and dietitians, who play a key role in the wellbeing of older Australians—those being cared for in the community and those being cared for in residential aged care. In speaking of supporting ageing Australians, I want to mention a wonderful Richmond GP, Dr Ravi, who has coordinated dementia workshops for the community. Along with Windsor GP Dr Rory Webb and a range of geriatricians and careworkers, as well as partners of people suffering dementia, he has offered hope to members of the community who are going through that very difficult situation in their own families or in their own lives. The workshops have also heightened awareness of the gaps that we have in supporting patients and their families, both at a local community level and more widely in the system. I congratulate Dr Ravi on the work that he does. He is a wonderful driver of change within our community.

Of course, some of the support that is needed is about home care. You know how desperate things are in a sector when someone who gets very little sleep because she works full-time in aged care and is also a full-time carer for her mum, who suffers dementia, makes the time to come to a community forum that you're running. When that person gives up the only moment of free time she has, you know that things are pretty dire. When the Medicare task force visited my electorate of Macquarie, focusing on aged care, we had a full house in Katoomba. There were people who'd gone through the process of helping an elderly family member—maybe a mum, maybe a partner—tackle the bureaucracy to get an aged-care home package. The room was full of people, and then on the phone we had input from Anthea Cox-Norman. Anthea is an aged-care nurse. She lives in Hobartville and she shared with us her experience in trying to get the appropriate level of home care for her mum. Anthea works nights and she cares for her mum during the day. I first started speaking with Anthea in March when she rang, concerned that, despite her mum being discharged from hospital in early January into her care, they'd been advised of a nine- to 12-month wait for an in-home care package. Anthea's mum, Flo, has needs that have been assessed as meeting level 4, the highest level of care. I visited Anthea and Flo last month and there was still no sign of her package.

Flo is a character and clearly loves attention, and, as many dementia sufferers do, she calls out constantly and she wants a response and expects a response. She needs constant attention and constant supervision. She can't be left for more than a few minutes alone in her bed. Anthea is doing an amazing job of staying calm in the face of exhaustion, but she's doing it on a level 2 package. Because of her skill, she acts as a second carer for her mum to have showers. She doesn't get respite. The package doesn't give Anthea a break; it just means it's possible to shower her mum a couple of times a week. It is really disgusting to see that people have to cope with this on their own. A day after I met with Anthea, we got news. Flo has been allocated another package, although it isn't the level 4 package she wanted; it is a level 3 package. It is still not going to meet her needs.

Sadly, Anthea is not alone. Kim, from South Windsor, wrote to me recently and said:

My parents are currently waiting...waiting...waiting.

She explained:

... unfortunately, my Mother-in-law never got her assistance and had to be placed in a nursing home instead.

Kim describes the trauma of her mother-in-law having to leave home, having most of her personal effects taken away from her, to go to a single hospital type room. She said that has done untold damage to her mental state and it's really broken her spirit. That's an insight into why it's so important that we support people to stay in their homes. Susan, from Blaxland, told me:

My 89 year old mother was approved for a home care package but there is a 12-month wait ... now we have had to remove her from her home with my dad and put we her into a nursing home ... fancy being separated after 62 years married ...

These people don't deserve this and the government can change it. It is not just sad, it is tragic.

One of the key issues that emerged is that so many people give up on the package that they deserve and the package that they are eligible for; they accept a lower package which provides them with a lower level of care and then they find themselves having to foot the bill for the gap. The cost of that extra care can be a real shock and financially devastating. Those are some of the issues about not just the quality of care but the speed with which care can be delivered to people. The other disappointment for me is the delay in the release of data by the minister. The March data took forever to come out. The latest data was also delayed until earlier in October. It now shows 121,418 people waiting for a package. Fifty-five thousand of them have the highest care needs. It is clear that the government and the minister have failed to curb the growing home-care package waitlist and have done nothing to address the aged-care crisis. It has occurred under their watch and they are responsible.

I have an electorate with many retired and elderly people. In fact, people move to the Blue Mountains and parts of the Hawkesbury to retire and breathe our clean air after busy working lives. It's completely understandable that, as people age, they want to be able to do it in their home, their own space, for as long as they can. We should allow them to do that. What's clear is that the Liberals are just too busy fighting amongst themselves to actually focus on what matters. It doesn't just matter to people in my electorate; it matters to people in everybody's electorate. It's deeply disappointing that dozens of reviews and reports have all been ignored. There have also been the cuts to aged-care funding—billions of dollars from the aged-care system. In the last budget was the illusion that there was more money for home care packages, but that tiny amount was actually coming out of another pot of aged-care money. So let's stop trying to play clever games, and focus on what really matters. It's time the Liberals started doing much better on this critical policy area.

I just want to briefly mention the royal commission—which, obviously, we support, to expose the abuses and the cover-ups. But we can't wait for the royal commission to finish before we start fixing this issue. We've said for a long time that we know the things that can be done, but, with three ministers in five years and billions cut from budgets, the government is just standing still on this issue. We call it a national crisis. We don't do that lightly. We do that because of the contacts we have from people, every single day, asking for help to find out when their package will be delivered, or seeking support in trying to speed up the delivery of that package so that older Australians can be safely, and with quality care, looked after in their own homes.

**Dr MIKE KELLY** (Eden-Monaro) (13:25): I'm very grateful to have been able to follow, in my speech on the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Bill 2018, the member for Macquarie—outstanding member that she is—and particularly on this subject, because it's the member for Macquarie who has rendered great service to my own mother, who has been in this situation and is in dire need of in-home support and care in what are the declining months of her life. I'm extremely grateful to the member for her personal intervention and assistance, and I know that that is the sort of support and service she has been rendering to all of her community. She has been a great adornment to this chamber, and we are very fortunate to have her. But it does highlight the very issues that she has been talking about. It's wonderful to see the great line-up of Labor members that have been vitally interested in this issue, showing the deep concern and commitment we have always had. I think the Australian community understands that and gives us credit for giving priority to issues like health and aged care.

When we were in government, we introduced the Living Longer Living Better policy, and that was embraced by the Australian community wholeheartedly. It is very evident that the Australian people want to be able to stay in their homes as long as they possibly can, and certainly that has been the situation with my mother.

The problem is that the initial introduction of that policy, not long before we left government, left work to be done—work we hoped would be done by a committed government, in a bipartisan way, that would take the intent of that policy and the lessons learned and see that that policy was delivered. But what we saw was exactly the opposite. The Aged Care Funding Instrument, which was an essential element of the Living Longer Living Better program, was cut savagely by Tony Abbott, the member for Warringah, and also the health minister under his government. And of course the current Prime Minister, as Treasurer, also axed about \$2 billion from the system.

Now we're in this situation where, the statistics suggest, the waiting lists for these in-home care packages are exponentially rising and, I believe, are now around the 120,000 mark. What was the answer from the government to this escalating need and issue? It was to offer 3,000 new packages in the last budget—3,000, when we're up to about 120,000 on the waiting list at the moment. They've said, 'Yes, but it's 14,000 actually.' Well, it's 14,000 over the forward estimates, of four years, at which time they will be severely outpaced by the exponential growth of the waiting list. So this problem is not being addressed by the government, and the Australian people are crying out for it to be addressed.

We must provide the wherewithal for Australians to be able to live at home for as long as they possibly can. And that's what Labor will do.

This legislation was introduced to answer the recommendations that were handed down by the Carnell-Paterson review, to establish this Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, which is something we would support as one step forward. But—as we have seen from so much of the information that has emerged into the public space recently—there is so much more in this sector that needs to be addressed. Certainly, on this side of the House, we have been banging that drum for a long time, highlighting the effects that these savage cuts to the system have been causing—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hogan):** I thank the member. The debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 43. The debate may be resumed at a later hour, when the member for Eden-Monaro can seek continuation.

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

#### Macquarie Electorate: Cumberland Plain Woodland

**Ms TEMPLEMAN (Macquarie) (13:30):** The construction of Western Sydney Airport involves the destruction of 359 hectares of Cumberland Plain Woodland. This woodland is a nationally-listed threatened ecological community and it's being lost due to clearing and development pressure and now is just reduced to small remnants. The government has approved biodiversity offsets for this woodland as part of the approvals process but we now know that the proposal is to use native vegetation at the Defence establishment in Orchard Hills as an offset for the destruction of woodland at the airport site. But guess what? The native vegetation at Orchard Hills is already conserved and is being remediated under Australian government biodiversity protection legislation. The Minister for the Environment needs to explain how offsets that result in no net conservation gain, because no new areas of Cumberland Plain Woodland will be conserved, are acceptable.

Transferring money, and it's believed to be around \$70 million, between two federal government departments will do nothing to save Cumberland Plain Woodland from eventual extinction. Some of the payment is going to be used for non-conservation-related activities such as repairing bridges and fixing security fencing. Funds will also be used to remediate contaminated land, which the Department of Defence is already legally liable for. At the end of the day, it could all get sold off for housing. This is not good enough. If it has to be biodiversity banking, it has to be genuine.

#### Deakin Electorate: Scouts and Guides

**Mr SUKKAR (Deakin) (13:31):** One of the great institutions for young people in this country is the Australian scouting movement, with many thousands of young Scouts and Guides participating across the country each week. In my electorate of Deakin there are a number of outstanding local Scout and Guide groups, all of which are growing and seeing a renaissance. These include the 1st Croydon Hills, 3rd Croydon, 2nd Maroondah, 3rd Ringwood East, 4th Ringwood, 7th Ringwood, Croydon Central, 1st Heathmont, 3rd Heathmont, 1st Heatherdale, 1st Mitcham, 1st Nunawading, 1st Vermont, 1st Forest Hill, 1st Tunstall, 2nd Mitcham, 2nd Vermont, 1st Mooroolbark, 1st Maroondah and the Croydon West Girl Guides.

The scouting movement has done a brilliant job for many years, fundraising to upkeep its own facilities. But with ageing facilities, this government has taken a decision to assist the Guide and Scout groups, because just maintaining, let alone improving, facilities is getting harder and harder for these groups. That's why this government, as part of our support for the scouting movement, provided \$80,000 towards the 3rd Croydon Scouts to upgrade their facility recently in conjunction with Maroondah City Council, \$20,000 to support Croydon West Girl Guides and \$10,000 to support the 1st Heatherdale Scout group. We're very grateful for the work they do and we are very keen to support them and all Scouts into the future.

#### Parramatta Electorate: Parramatta Stadium

**Ms OWENS (Parramatta) (13:33):** The building of the new Parramatta stadium has descended into complete farce. According to reports, the New South Wales Liberal government has failed to sign a single major event sponsor, despite promising to deliver 43 to 44 events each year. A report by Infrastructure New South Wales predicted the Eels would play at least 10 games and the Western Sydney Wanderers would play 11 to 12 games so it is a surprise to see that both teams are now refusing to sign contracts that are reported to be worth more than double the amount offered at any other 30,000-seat stadium in Australia. They also raise concerns about proposed food and beverage fees that they believe will be exorbitant. The Eels said they are not prepared to accept a new agreement that will continue to impact the club negatively for the next 25 years.

According to the report, there are at least two other teams that are expected to play at the stadium but it's not really clear who they are. This stadium build is part of the New South Wales Liberal government's plan to spend

billions of dollars on new stadiums that they can't find teams to use. This is a stadium that saw them demolish the Parramatta pool, a pool that was built with money raised by the community on crown land that borders the World Heritage listed Old Government House and Parramatta Park. I am pleased to see New South Wales Labor has committed, if elected, to fully funding the cost of the new pool. But we as a community are left with a stadium with no hirers, a pool that's going to cost \$70 million to replace, and a monstrosity that looms over public land and heritage assets. It is a disaster.

### **Petrie Electorate: Redcliffe Relay For Life**

**Mr HOWARTH** (Petrie) (13:34): I don't think there's a single person in in place who hasn't been impacted in some way by cancer. My grandfather, Ronald Bryant, died of stomach cancer before my mother was married. Cancer is infiltrating the lives of many people, not just in my community but right around Australia. But events like Relay For Life help us fight back. Anyone from South-East Queensland will know how much welcome rain we have had over the past week. Unfortunately, the wet weather meant that the Redcliffe Relay for Life was cancelled last weekend. I'd like to thank the committee members Kerri-Anne Dooley, Bec Oliver, Ellie Frawley, Christina Turner, Jodie Ugrinic and Tara Evans, as well as the face of this year's relay, Donna Stein. These ladies worked tirelessly for months to organise the event, and their work hasn't gone unnoticed. The fundraising success has been remarkable. The 51 teams and 444 participants who registered for the event have raised \$45,000 of their \$62,000 without holding the event. I want to give a shout-out to the Pink Snap Dragons and Andrew Pitt, who are the hot favourites for the highest fundraisers. I'm incredibly proud to be patron of the Redcliffe Relay for Life event and I look forward to attending the presentation event later this year to acknowledge the fundraisers and the committee.

### **Petition: Aged Care**

**Mr ROB MITCHELL** (McEwen) (13:36): It's a privilege to rise today to table Doreen Seniors Club's petition 'Spotlight on Aged Care'. Firstly, I'd like to congratulate Dani Trubiano and Terri Mackenzie on this 2,000-signature-strong petition. It's fantastic to see the community come together in such a meaningful way. The Doreen Seniors Club is a prime example of our community's unity and spirit. Whenever I join them for a forum or a Q and A, I enjoy firsthand the passion and dedication they have and the efforts they put into advocating for our community.

The petition is calling on the government to establish an aged-care facility in Mernda or Doreen to meet the needs of the fastest-growing area in the north. As one of the fastest-growing regions in Australia, we urgently need updates to our infrastructure and services to offer our residents the best we can. We've had six years of no investment under this government, the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison government. Nor did we have any investment under the Victorian Baillieu and Napthine governments. Both of those governments together spent not one cent on investment in our community. Aged care, as we know, is an issue that's a hot topic at the moment but, most importantly, working together with local councils and our state MPs, we are working to try and find a solution to help our communities. With that, I seek leave to table this petition of 2,000 signatures of local residents wanting an aged-care facility in our community.

Leave not granted.

### **Fisher Electorate: Small Business**

**Mr WALLACE** (Fisher) (13:37): Last week I welcomed the Minister for Small and Family Business, Skills and Vocational Education, Senator Cash, to my electorate of Fisher as part of her national tour. The minister began the day with a small business meet and greet at the Best Western Plus Lake Kawana Hotel. The minister met more than 30 local small and family business leaders, like Heidi and Pavo Walker of Walker Seafoods—

*Mr Rob Mitchell interjecting—*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hogan):** The member for McEwen is warned.

**Mr WALLACE:** Mike Jessop of Oceancraft, Uta Rabinger of the Bavarian Beach Bar & Cafe at Mooloolaba and Kendall Morton of Home Care Assistance Sunshine Coast, among many other players. The minister spoke with these local businesses in small roundtable discussions about the importance of access to skilled and motivated workers, the need to minimise red tape and the need to keep business taxes low—all issues on which our federal government is taking decisive action. The minister then visited our local family owned icon, Australia Zoo. She heard from the zoo director, Wes Mannion, and many of the staff and very important volunteers, then she rolled up her sleeves and did some hands-on vocational training with me in the caring for tortoises.

*Mr Rob Mitchell interjecting—*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for McEwen will remove himself under 94(a).

*The member for McEwen then left the chamber.*

**Mr WALLACE:** Thank you to the minister for taking up my invitation to visit Fisher and for engaging so enthusiastically with businesses in my electorate. Thank you also to the local businesses who attended. Their feedback was so very important.

#### **Kingsford Smith Electorate: Joseph Varga School**

**Mr THISTLETHWAITE** (Kingsford Smith) (13:39): I want to give a big shout-out to my friends, the students and teachers of the Joseph Varga School in Randwick. It's a small school established as a special education school, but I like to think of the many abilities of the great students that are at this school. It's known as JVS in the local community. Many students who have fallen through the cracks in mainstream schooling go to this school and excel in the environment of a unique, close-knit school.

I was delighted that that excellence was in action, with plenty of colour, at the Joseph Varga School's annual art show, this year held at Clovelly Surf Lifesaving Club on 21 September. As JVS's principal, Daniel Lynch, said, 'Art helps students represent their experiences and communicate their ideas and their feelings.' For the teachers, this expression through art provides valuable insight into the students' thoughts and helps to forge stronger connections. The exhibition's theme was 'movement', with the students expressing this through different mediums of paint, oils, pencils and computer programs.

I want to give a special thanks to my friend Timothy Yaw, who celebrated his 16th birthday last week, who drew a picture of me and my family. That picture proudly hangs on my office wall in Maroubra, right next to the painting that was given to me by the school some years ago called *Sydney Opera Bridge*. I congratulate and thank all of my friends at the Joseph Varga School.

#### **Robertson Electorate: Clean4Shore**

**Mrs WICKS** (Robertson) (13:40): Last Friday, the 2018 National Landcare Awards were held in Brisbane. I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate a particular and very special award winner, Clean4Shore, who took home this year's People's Choice Award. Clean4Shore are an outstanding organisation based in my electorate of Robertson, on the Central Coast. They've been delivering an important environmental education program to keep our waterways clean.

The thing that sets Clean4Shore apart is really the way that they work together to connect with the community, working with local school groups, local businesses, youth organisations, Indigenous groups and individuals living with a disability. This award is an incredible achievement for Graham, or 'Jono', Johnston—as we all know him—and the whole team of Clean4Shore volunteers, as they won the category from a pool of 64 national finalists. Jono told me that the award meant so much, as it was the only Landcare award that was decided by the public, which is a really significant achievement.

Last year, they removed around 57 tonnes of litter from our waterways in more than 70 trips and collected more than 100,000 pieces of plastic, polystyrene and other litter. I'm pleased to say that Clean4Shore have been able to continue their work, funded for three years as part of our local environment plan for the Central Coast, which Jono says has provided the organisation with the stability and structure needed for the program. I'm looking forward to seeing them grow. I know that Jono's dream is to see this running not just on the Central Coast but across the nation.

#### **Domestic and Family Violence**

**Mr BANDT** (Melbourne) (13:42): This week is the global Week Without Violence, but, while government senators in Canberra were busy voting for motions grounded in white supremacist violence, the crisis of family violence continues. Media reports indicate that, in the last two weeks, eight women around Australia have been killed by male partners. Destroy the Joint has counted 55 women killed by violence this year, already more than the 53 women killed in the whole of 2017. This is a crisis. Can you imagine the same silence from government if 55 people were killed by terrorism?

Wonderful organisations in my electorate are doing important frontline work to respond to violence against women, but they need governments to back them. The Greens have long urged federal and state governments to build more public housing instead of selling it off, so that women don't have to choose between homelessness and danger. And we must give non-permanent residents like international students access to refuges and services.

Governments need to tackle the underlying power dynamic that leads to family violence. As our Greens candidate for Richmond in the Victorian election, Kathleen Maltzahn, who has worked intensively to combat violence against women, said:

We cannot address men's violence against women of one kind without addressing men's violence against women of all kinds. We need a new approach to sexual harassment and a focus on reproductive coercion, online abuse, trafficking, the denigration of women in public life, and the links between all of these.

I want to also heartily back the motion introduced today by my Greens colleague Larissa Waters for urgent action.

### **Goldstein Electorate: Beaumaris Art Group Studios**

**Mr TIM WILSON** (Goldstein) (13:44): The Beaumaris Art Group Studios has again celebrated Goldstein's artists, traders and shopkeepers with the *Archibeanu No. 2 Portrait Exhibition*. With support from the Beaumaris Concourse Traders' Association and the Bayside City Council, the Beaumaris Concourse was beautifully lined up with easels showcasing the talent of studio members and their shopkeeper subjects.

Judging the winner was, of course, a challenging privilege that fell to me. Special mentions need to go to Keith Beard, Alban Gomes, Poppi O'Connor and Anda Roche, but the people's choice winner was Andrea Strong. The winner and recipient of the \$500 cheque donated by the Beaumaris Community Bank Branch of Bendigo Bank was Valda Cuming. Congratulations, Valda; you did us proud!

We should thank the Beaumaris Art Group Studios for their community minded excellence and all those who contributed and were part of it, particularly: the president, Michele Laragy; Merry Bransbury and Corrine Boston, who both also entered a portrait; Margaret Amond; and Helen Hargreaves. I also send a big thank you to the Beaumaris Concourse Traders Association president, Lou Rimington, for bringing it all together with the Beaumaris Art Group. These events would not be possible without the remarkable efforts of all of the talented artists we have in our Goldstein community, and, of course, those who are members of the Beaumaris Art Group Studios. To all of you: well done on your participation.

### **Harrop, Mrs Jean**

**Mr DICK** (Oxley) (13:45): I rise to pay tribute to and acknowledge the 60 years of remarkable service by Mrs Jean Harrop to the Queensland Country Women's Association. Jean first joined the CWA in 1958 at Inala. While she was there, she served as vice president and president a number of times, as well as secretary and treasurer. She moved to Oxley when the Inala branch closed in 1972, with eight other members, and she has been an active member of the Oxley branch for the past 46 years.

Jean's biggest passion is, perhaps, music. Jean was the division music and drama chairman from 1989 to 1992, and she was one of the organisers of the very entertaining M&D—music and drama—festivals for many years. At various times she held the role of treasurer of the division committee. At QCWA state level she was well known for her contribution to the organisation of the music and drama cultural committee, serving as chairman, secretary or treasurer for a number of years. She and Mary Martyn often travelled to country divisions using a cultural grant to promote dramatic and musical activities in workshops using short plays and verse speaking as well as solo, duet and small choir singing.

During her leadership, the Oxley branch has become well known for its Cent Auctions, which provide a popular social activity for the Oxley community, including a trivia night coming up this weekend. In the past, Jean has been awarded badges for 25 years of service, 50 years of service and, of course, most recently her 60 years badge. Thank you, Jean, for your many years of service to QCWA and our local community.

### **Berowra Electorate: Drought**

**Mr LEESER** (Berowra) (13:47): As a community with semirural areas, Berowra residents have an intrinsic connection with our farmers. That's why our government's response to the drought has been so strongly welcomed. With an assistance package of \$576 million, we're providing support to community organisations and mental health services, concessional loans and an extended Farm Household Allowance scheme. We have also cut red tape to fast-track the distribution of hay and fodder around the country to the farmers who need it most.

Berowra locals have made a significant contribution to drought relief. Led by President Cathy Bray and club executives Paul Rapp, Tony Goode and Rob O'Neil, the Rotary club of Kenthurst has very active members doing a remarkable job of raising funds. A community barbecue organised by Victoria Burakowski raised \$10,000. At the Kenthurst Country Fair the club raised \$8,000. Special mention goes to Vale Smith, who kindly donated homemade jam, which, along with the raffle and petting zoo, was extremely popular. (*Time expired*)

### **Illicit Drugs**

**Mr KHALIL** (Wills) (13:48): I recently met with representatives from the Australian Anti Ice Campaign to discuss the scourge of the drug ice and its impact on the lives of so many people—not just on those who use it but on relatives and people who work in health and emergency services. We discussed AAIC's plan to help tackle this issue. We do have a unique problem in Australia. The *Final report of the National Ice Taskforce* found that Australians use more methamphetamine than almost any other country: there are some 200,000 Australians, and the numbers are growing. It's getting worse, as Australian teenagers are growing up in an environment where the drug is easily accessible. It impacts our police and ambulance services, hospitals, detox and rehab facilities and mental health services.

The drug has a devastating and lasting impact on young people. Recent findings by the University of South Australia found that brainwave patterns in adolescents who had used the drug five or six times were similar to those who had early onset of Parkinson's disease. This drug is stealing, killing and destroying our youth. That's why the AAIC wants to launch a national ice strategy designed to complement existing drug and mental health initiatives and programs across Australia. The organisation plans to establish teams of paid employees and education workshop presenters in each state and territory to implement these initiatives. With this knowledge, our children, when asked if they want to try ice, can say, 'No, not even once.'

### **India: Floods**

**Mr WOOD** (La Trobe) (13:49): A few weeks back I attended the Malayalee Association fundraiser for victims of the devastating floods in Kerala in southern India. I was touched to be part of such a special fundraising event—The Awakening, by which it was known—at Bunjil Place for those affected by this devastating flood that swept through Kerala in August. I would especially like to acknowledge the contributions of the Malayalee associations in Melbourne under the umbrella of Malayalees of Melbourne and Dr Asha Muhammad, president of the Malayalees of Melbourne, for raising funds towards Kerala flood relief. I also want to acknowledge the great contribution of the Malayalee community in Melbourne and Latrobe in my electorate. Their efforts at the community fundraiser send a very strong message of support and solidarity. They reflect our Australian ethos of mates helping mates and lending a hand to make a difference.

This year's floods were a terrible tragedy. Countless people have lost their homes and livelihoods. Most heartbreakingly, hundreds of lives have been lost and families torn apart. I was very proud to be able to speak the message from Prime Minister Scott Morrison to let all those involved, whether they be here in Australia or those living in Kerala, know how much support the Australian community has for them and also the Malayalee Association and all their supporters.

### **Racism**

**Ms RYAN** (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (13:51): I rise today to bring to the attention of the House that it seems in our national parliament we have ministers' offices devoid of a search engine that would have prevented this week's shameful vote where the once-proud Liberal Party backed in the other place a racist catchphrase used by the KKK and other white supremacist groups. We've got a Prime Minister now spruiking thought bubbles and then claiming they are merely conversation starters. He certainly started a conversation in my electorate, and I don't think he'll like what people have got to say. Prime Minister, if you're short of ideas to define your prime ministership, give up on the muppet movies. There are lots of ideas brought in here every day. You could fund education and hospitals. You could fix Centrelink; it appears to be broken. You could tackle homelessness; that would be a good legacy issue. You could address the aged-care crisis that we've been talking about in here for the last two days.

The Prime Minister, in office for such a short time, has got himself and his party into such a mess. Leadership 101: take the job and have a look and a think before you go to do massive changes that your community isn't ready for. *(Time expired)*

### **Preserve Sight Program**

**Mr RAMSEY** (Grey—Government Whip) (13:52): Diabetes is the leading cause of coronary heart disease, the leading cause of amputation and the leading cause of blindness. Yesterday in this place, with my co-chair of the parliamentary enemies of diabetes, the member for Moreton, we hosted a reception to announce the establishment of the Preserve Sight program. This is supported by a \$1 million grant from the Commonwealth government for the first year, and I thank Minister Greg Hunt, who has been a very strong supporter of the diabetic community. He can be sure that we will continue to knock on his door about years 2, 3 and 4.

Importantly, this program is also supported by a \$5 million commitment over five years from Specsavers and also supported by Vision 2020, Oculo, the Centre for Eye Research and RANZCO. The Centre for Eye Research in Australia estimates that more than a third of the people with diabetes will develop some form of diabetic eye disease in their lifetime. This means that, of the current 1.7 million Australians who reportedly have the disease, around 567,000 are likely to have or develop some form of diabetic retinopathy, which can lead to blindness. For those nearly 600,000 Australians who are facing an avoidable tragedy, this will be a lifeline. This has the ability, with early action, to save their eyesight, and that is a wonderful program.

### **Showcase WA**

**Mr KEOGH** (Burt) (13:54): On Monday I was proud to host, alongside my Western Australian colleague the member for O'Connor, our first showcase WA event, celebrating the diversity of Western Australia's contribution to our nation, and boy was it a success. Parliamentary colleagues had to band together to brace against the crowd

as they surged towards our world-famous beer, wine and spirits. Getting part of the luscious Exmouth prawn pyramid was reminiscent of the recent leadership spill: it was every man for himself!

Political opponents cast down their weapons for one evening and, instead, shared anecdotes about WA's gorgeous coastline, superb fresh produce and amazing tourism. The opposition leader even conceded defeat in the AFL Grand Final—begrudgingly!—and congratulated the West Coast Eagles. And what a great win that was.

The food and produce spearheaded by the enchanting Anna Gare was delicious, the beer from Little Creatures was superb, and the gin and whisky from Old Young's and Limeburners was relatively dangerous. The support we had from Perth Airport was fantastic, with Woodside Petroleum, CME and Rio Tinto showcasing their wares and proving that this country's resources sector continues to thrive in WA and is leading the world in research and innovation.

Thank you everyone involved for ensuring that this event will become a staple of the parliamentary calendar for years to come. And it will be made all the easier now that the government has come onboard to ensure a fair share of GST for WA.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hogan):** I thank the member for Burt, and one of the better grand finals it was!

### **KIERNAN, Mr Ian Bruce Carrick, AO**

**Mr ALEXANDER** (Bennelong) (13:55): Today Australia has lost one of its great champions. Ian Kiernan has passed away after a battle with cancer, and Australia is poorer. A keen sailor, Ian noticed over many ocean journeys in the late eighties that the seas were filling with rubbish. While others turned the other way, Ian dedicated himself to making a difference. In 1989 he took action and launched his first clean-up campaign, Clean Up Sydney Harbour, which turned into Clean Up Australia Day the next year. Almost 300,000 volunteers turned out for the first Clean Up Australia Day in 1990 and over the last 28 years Australians have devoted more than 33 million hours towards the environment, through Clean Up Australia Day, removing the equivalent of more than 350,000 ute loads of rubbish. I had the pleasure of knowing Ian for many years through his activism.

Clean Up Australia Day is celebrated widely across Bennelong. Sadly, Ian was too unwell to attend this year but we were delighted to have his daughter Pip there with us. Our thoughts and prayers are with Ian's family on this sad day. However, they can be reassured that Ian's legacy will remain. Ian, through championing this cause, showed that you don't have to be a horse born in New Zealand, or swing a cricket bat like the Don or swim like Dawn to be a truly great Australian champion.

### **Early Childhood Education**

**Mr GOSLING** (Solomon) (13:57): Under a Shorten Labor government, families with three-year-olds will have universal access to 15 hours of subsidised early childhood education, so they can get the best start to lifelong learning. I want to acknowledge the great work done by the member for Kingston, Amanda Rishworth, in this space because she and those on this side know that 90 per cent of a child's brain development occurs in the first five years of life, and investment in early education is one of the smartest investments our country can make.

I'm proud of this announcement as it will also benefit around 7,000 children in the Northern Territory alone. Studies have shown that children who access quality early childhood education achieve better results in tests throughout their schooling. Early education is particularly vital in closing the disadvantage gap before a child starts school. One of the biggest barriers to accessing early education is finance. Expanding access will help with the cost of living, help parents balance work and family, and help reduce the childcare bills that families have with children already in early education.

I call on the government to match Labor's commitments, support Territory families and support families around Australia. Put early childhood education up in the priority list, because it's the smartest thing we can do in our nation.

### **National Carers Week**

**Mr ANDREWS** (Menzies) (13:58): I was delighted this morning to attend, with members from both sides of the chamber, the launch here in Parliament House of National Carers Week. There are some 2.7 million unpaid carers in Australia, which means about one in every eight Australians serve as an unpaid carer for people they love and support. Of that 2.7 million, some 272,000 are younger than 25 years of age. Indeed, 856,000 carers are the primary carers—that is, they are the person who provides the most support to the person with a disability or who is otherwise in need of care—and we know from Bureau of Statistics data that the average age of primary carers is 55 years. So these are important people who do a wonderful job in our community, whose support for their loved ones, for those around them, for family members and others, is an invaluable support in building the community, in maintaining families, in ensuring that individuals get the support and care they need to live their

lives. We in this place owe a great deal of gratitude to them. We encourage them, we praise them and we continue to support them.

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

### CONDOLENCES

#### Kiernan, Mr Ian Bruce Carrick, AO

**Mr MORRISON** (Cook—Prime Minister) (14:00): I rise, on indulgence, to acknowledge the passing of Ian Kiernan AO. We learnt of his death earlier today. His untimely death is a reminder that being a great Australian is within the grasp of every citizen of this country; you just have to be willing to have a go. Ian's approach was always to empower others. When he founded a movement first to clean up Australia and then to clean up the world, he sought not to attract followers but to produce leaders. Whether it was cleaning up beaches, parks and waterways, or planting trees, or conserving water, Ian's ultimate mobilisation of 30 million people in around a hundred countries was never about him. It was about empowering others to take action. As I said this morning, he observed the beauty of the land and the planet on which he lived and he tapped us all on the shoulder and he said: 'We've got to take care of this. It's our responsibility—each and every single one of us.' He did it by igniting that spark of personal responsibility in those supporters and volunteers who rose to the cause or, indeed, led that cause. 'You know best,' he would say.

Ian Bruce Carrick Kiernan was born near Sydney Harbour, which he loved, in 1940 to British migrants George and Leslie. As a builder, renovator and investor, he accrued a prodigious property portfolio, only to see it go belly up in the recession of '74. After that, he said he would do what any self-respecting young builder who sailed boats would do. 'I got on my yacht,' he said, 'and visited 36 of the most beautiful islands that I could find—Tahiti, Hawaii.' And he did it all in one year. But with the postcard imagery that had attracted him came an ugly awakening. It was while he was moored in Hawaii that an overnight downpour pushed a mountain of rubbish down from the local ravines, dumping it in the harbour. Ian surveyed the unsightly mass and instantly felt a twinge of new opportunity, of the difference he could make. However, it would be some years later, after he set an Australian solo world sailing record of 156 days in the 1986-87 BOC Challenge, that those feelings resurfaced into his life's mission. He later recalled seas that should have been magic and myth that were littered with rubbish: First a rubber thong, then a toothpaste tube, a comb, a plastic bag ... The rubbish popped up on both sides of the bow. So Clean Up Australia Day began, as Clean Up Sydney Harbour Day, on Sunday, 8 January 1989.

The plan initially had been to contain the effort to Mosman's beaches, but Ian was the sort of guy with one eye always on the horizon, like a good sailor. One day he just said—and no offence to the member for Warringah, or indeed to the Speaker of the House for the language—'Bugger Mosman! Let's do the whole harbour.' And he did, with the help of an astonishing turnout of 40,000 Sydneysiders. It went national the next year. It also went gangbusters, bringing together 300,000 Australians to lend a hand.

On behalf of the government and this chamber, I extend our deepest condolences to Ian's family—to his wife, Judy; to his daughters, Sally and Pip; and to his son, Jack. Thank you, Ian Kiernan AO, for your service to our country and to our planet. May he rest in peace.

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr SHORTEN** (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:04): on indulgence—I thank the Prime Minister for his tribute. I think the remarkable legacy of Ian Kiernan's great Australian life springs from a single moment captured in a single sentence. When sailing solo around the globe, through the Bermuda Triangle and over the fabled Sargasso Sea, Ian recorded that instead of a 'golden rainforest of the sea, literally cover by seaweed, I found a fading legend carpeted by rubbish.' The surprise of that encounter changed Ian's life. He'd always had an instinct for conservation. It shone through in the expert way that he sought to preserve and restore some of Sydney's historic buildings. And he'd always had a passion for the ocean. From that time on he combined the two, urging all Australians, with such great and lasting effect, to roll up their sleeves and clean up their communities.

One moment at sea changed the course of Ian Kiernan's life. But Ian's life is also powerful proof that one person can make a difference. His capacity to organise, motivate and inspire others demonstrates that a principled, determined, brave and charismatic person can truly change the world around them. It's this idea, the idea that one person can make a difference, that is also so much of Ian's legacy. It is an enduring lesson that he taught generations of Australians. Ian's extraordinary, ever-expanding success with Clean Up Australia said to every one of us, young and old, city and country, that we have the ability to look after our oceans, our waterways, our environment. We all have the ability and we all share the responsibility. This was Ian's message: all of us are connected, all of us are involved. That's why, far from the TV cameras and the iconic beautiful beaches of

Sydney, you'd find him cleaning up urban waterways, because litter dropped in suburban gutters flows into city creeks and into our oceans. That's why he advocated against single-use plastic bags and pushed for container deposit schemes, because these were decisions that individuals could make to reduce their waste and increase their recycling. That's why he was such a strong voice for protecting marine parks, because he knew it wasn't enough just to have national parks on land; we needed them in the ocean too.

Last summer the New South Wales government named five new ferries after eminent Australians. They conducted a poll to name the sixth. Ian Kiernan received the most votes in that poll. Perhaps, in the light of the nation's loss, it would be a good and worthy idea for New South Wales, at an appropriate time and in consultation with his family, to honour the memory of a man who loved Sydney Harbour so much by finding a suitable vessel to bear his name.

At the heart of Ian Kiernan's life and his work was an abiding faith in the essential decency of the Australian people. From the start, he believed that Australians would join him in his mission, because we have an instinct to get involved, to help out, to pass on a better deal to the next generation than the one that we received, to leave the place better than we find it. As a parliament, as a nation, we can best honour Ian's legacy by repaying that faith by doing more to protect our oceans and rivers for all of those who come after us. May he rest in peace.

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!

#### Reference to Federation Chamber

**Mr PYNE** (Sturt—Minister for Defence and Leader of the House) (14:08): by leave—I move:

That further statements in relation to the death of Ian Kiernan AO be permitted in the Federation Chamber.

Question agreed to.

### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

#### Morrison Government

**Mr SHORTEN** (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:08): My question is to the Prime Minister. Can the Prime Minister confirm that his government on Monday supported a white supremacist slogan in the Senate and on Tuesday upended 70 years of bipartisan foreign policy and that today the former Deputy Prime Minister is doing the numbers to depose the current Deputy Prime Minister? How can the Prime Minister claim that a vote for the Liberals in Wentworth is a vote for stability when he refuses to explain to Australians why Malcolm Turnbull is no longer Prime Minister?

*Honourable members interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** Members on both sides!

**Mr MORRISON** (Cook—Prime Minister) (14:09): Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition really does need to grow up. He really does. There are important issues that we are dealing with on a daily basis, like the economy, the drought and the residential-aged-care inquiry. We're working to ensure that we have a strong economy that can support Medicare, that can provide affordable medicines and that can keep Australians safe.

All the Leader of the Opposition wants to do is drudge around in this building in the bubble of politics. What the Leader of the Opposition is demonstrating to the Australian people is that he is just another politician in a suit. The Australian people have no idea what this Leader of the Opposition believes. They have no idea what he stands for. All they know is that this Leader of the Opposition is about one thing: himself. He cannot put forward a set of beliefs that he can hold from one part of the country to the other. He says one thing in one part of the country to one audience, and then another thing to another part of the country.

What the Australian people can know about me and our government is that our beliefs are clear, our principles are clear, our policies are clear and our results are clear. More than a million jobs have been created under the policies of our government. We're backing in small business, ensuring record funds for health and for education, backing in Medicare, ensuring we're listing the PBS drugs. When the Labor Party was running the government, they couldn't afford to do it because they didn't know how to manage a strong economy and they didn't know how to manage a budget. I would suggest the Leader of the Opposition get out of the gutter of the politics and focus on the issues that are of national interest to all Australians.

On the issues of foreign policy, we have no problem with Australians deciding the issues we should be talking about in this country any more than we have any issue with Australians deciding who comes to this country and the circumstances in which they come. On that side of the House, we have the member for Sydney, who thinks that Israel is a rogue state. The member for Sydney has come into this place as a member of this House and called Israel a rogue state. Now, I don't know if the member for Melbourne Ports agrees with that or if the member for Wills agrees with that. Perhaps members over here do agree with that. I have no idea what the member for Watson

and the member for McMahon think about these questions of support for Israel, but I do know the Australian Jewish community can trust one party in this chamber: the Liberal and National parties.

*Honourable members interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** Members on both sides will cease interjecting. The member for Grayndler and the member for Sydney will cease interjecting. The members for Moreton and Bruce interject constantly. They are warned, as is the member for Wills for the same reason.

### Morrison Government

**Mr ENTSCH** (Leichhardt) (14:12): My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister advise how the government's core beliefs and principles are working to deliver policies that provide a stronger economy, guarantee essential services Australians rely on, keep Australians safe and keep Australians together?

**Mr MORRISON** (Cook—Prime Minister) (14:13): I thank the member for Leichhardt for his question. I welcome all those members of the Cairns convoy which has come to Canberra this week, the TNQ convoy. I congratulate him on his working relationship with his local community.

Our beliefs as Nationals and Liberals, our beliefs as coalition parties, are what drive our agenda for a stronger economy, for guaranteeing the essential services Australians rely on, for keeping Australians safe and for keeping Australians together. Our beliefs are for a fair go for those who have a go. Our beliefs are that a fair society is always created by ensuring a more prosperous society, by ensuring our economy grows. We do not do things that slow the growth of our economy. That's what fairness is in this country—when you pursue prosperity together with a fair agenda which gives a fair go to those who have a go. We believe the best form of welfare is a job, and we also believe that you don't lift people up in this country by pulling others down, with is the politics of envy pursued by the Labor Party and championed by this Leader of the Labor Party, the Jeremy Corbyn of Australian politics. We believe that our policies on defence, foreign affairs and border security should be decided in Australia, not by the instructions of anywhere else.

We are a sovereign country and that's why we believe in lower taxes and are delivering lower taxes. That's why we believe Australians should be keeping more of what they earn and that's why we support lower taxes. It is why we support small and medium-sized businesses and family businesses. The Labor Party opposes them by putting higher taxes on them and by not supporting laws that give small businesses a level playing field. It is why we support trade deals, which are opening up markets. Those opposite have used everything they can to try and frustrate our agenda to expand trade relationships for our country.

It is why we support our farmers, with \$1.8 billion of support for those farmers and rural communities affected by drought. We have a cop on the beat in the Australian Building and Construction Commission because we believe the rule of law should apply right across the Australian economy, particularly in the building and construction industry. But the Labor Party wants the law-breakers in the union movement to be the law-makers when it comes to industrial laws in this country. It is why we are bringing the budget back into balance. We've been able to retain the AAA-credit rating, so we can pay for Medicare and pay for all of our commitments when it comes to schools and when it comes to hospitals.

Australians know what they believe. You need an atlas to understand what the Leader of the Opposition and the Labor Party believe because he says one thing and believes one thing in one part of the country and another in another part. That's why you can't trust this leader of the Labor Party. You don't know what he believes. And when you don't know what someone believes, you don't know what they will do. (*Time expired*)

### Morrison Government

**Mr FITZGIBBON** (Hunter) (14:16): My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister. Yesterday in question time, he said, 'I will never, ever background a journalist.' Does he stand by that answer and is he aware that Ray Hadley said today that the office of the current Deputy Prime Minister was the source of many of the leaks against the former Deputy Prime Minister and that people in glass houses should not throw stones?

*Mr Littleproud interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** Excuse me, the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources will cease interjecting. I'm struggling to see how that question is in order. Before I call the Manager of Opposition Business, in the interests of being upfront, I always review question time and, in reviewing yesterday's question time, I feel I did err in not ruling yesterday's question out of order, having looked at the text of it. I can't see how the question is in order. I'm happy to hear from the Manager of Opposition Business and then the Leader of the House.

**Mr Burke:** Mr Speaker, yesterday in question time the Deputy Prime Minister made a number of statements and it should be in order for us to be allowed to ask whether or not he stands by those statements. It is also clear in *Practice* that ministers are meant to be across what is being said in the media about their portfolios—that's

specifically referred to. When something has been said in the media that contradicts what was said yesterday, it should be right and proper for us to ask whether he stands by his answer.

**Mr Pyne:** Mr Speaker, ministers are responsible for matters within their portfolio and they are specifically, in the standing orders, not responsible for the comments and statements of, for example, media commentators, and nor are they really responsible for allegations made anonymously about their office doing or not doing something. So the part of the question about whether or not he stood by a statement he has already made in the House may well be in order, but the rest of the question is not in order.

**The SPEAKER:** Yes, I think certainly the bit about yesterday's answer and standing by the statement is in order. The rest of the question and references to media commentary are not in order. And the only reason that part of the question today is in order is because I failed to rule yesterday's question out of order, which I should have, so I'm making that very, very clear. The member for Hunter is lucky, but I will be listening very carefully to any other questions he has. The Deputy Prime Minister will address himself to that part of the question that asked him whether or not he stands by his statement yesterday and he doesn't need to address any of the material other than that.

**Mr Albanese:** Less is more, Michael!

**Mr McCORMACK** (Riverina—Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development and Leader of The Nationals) (14:19): I hear the shadow infrastructure minister say, 'Less is more,' but, in the infrastructure portfolio, we are providing more. We are providing \$75 billion—a record amount of infrastructure—and the shadow minister for infrastructure knows full well that we are making sure that we build the roads, the ports, the aviation and the railway lines for getting people home sooner and safer. But more to the—

**The SPEAKER:** I'd say to the Deputy Prime Minister: I've tried to be generous, but I can't see how the answer's in order now!

**Mr McCORMACK:** Sure. More to the shadow minister's question: I stand by everything that I've said in this House. I have never misled this House. I have not misled the parliament. And, indeed, I stand by everything that I've said, both in this House and as a member of parliament—just like I stand by the fact that I stood by my irrigators when the member for Watson threatened to take their water away from them, and just like I stood by my electorate when Labor members threatened to take away all the Building Better Regions programs that were put in place. I stood by them, just like I've stood by the fact that we are investing in our regions, when, under Labor, regional funding programs went to the member for Lalor's electorate when Julia Gillard was the member, and to the member for Watson's electorate, when they should have been going to country electorates. I've always stood up for regional people. I always will stand up for regional people. And I stand by the comments I made then. I stand by the comments I make now.

### Small Business

**Mr GEE** (Calare) (14:21): My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development. Will the Deputy Prime Minister update the House on why the government believes in supporting small business and how the government is acting on that belief to grow country communities and help those who are dealing with the drought? What is at stake if our plan to continue to build a vibrant regional Australia is placed at risk?

**Mr McCORMACK** (Riverina—Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development and Leader of The Nationals) (14:21): I thank the member for Calare for his question. We believe, I believe, in strong economic management. I believe that, when you earn money, you should be able to keep more of that money. Those opposite believe in taking it away—in funding the big tax whack that they stand up for. That's what they stand up for. We believe in allowing people who work hard, who earn money, to keep more of that money that they earn.

We believe in supporting country communities. I've just finished talking, in my previous answer, about how I believe in standing up for regional communities—as do all the Liberals; as do all the Nationals. We believe there is a bright future ahead for regional Australia, and we're standing up for those regional Australians, who deserve better than to hear the inside-Canberra questions being asked of the government. They should be asking questions about regional Australia. They should be asking questions about the economy. But they just want to go into these Beltway tactics. The people who are listening to or watching this do not understand why those opposite—who once stood up for shearers, who once stood up for high-vis workers, who once stood up for coalminers—are not standing up more for regional communities. I mean, your party, the Labor Party, was formed on shearers and on coalminers. But you're not standing up for them.

We believe in small businesses. Those opposite do not. They just want to get out the big tax sledgehammer and whack them even harder. And I can't understand it. The Liberals can't understand it. The Nationals can't

understand why you'd want to take the big tax whack to small business, to family enterprises, to those who work hard, who deserve to keep more of the money that they earn.

These are businesses such as those in the electorate of the member who asked me the question, in the central-west of New South Wales, where Michelle and Angus Pryse Jones own Hill and Crofts CRT in Blayney—

*Mr Fitzgibbon interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Hunter is warned!

**Mr McCORMACK:** Angus and Michelle have owned Hill and Crofts since 2001. The store has four employees—not large, in the scheme of things, but four workers. They're getting on with making sure that those people have a future and those people have prosperity. And that little business has a turnover of \$4½ million. They're punching well above their weight. They are serving the public in the agriculture space. They are certainly serving them in the residential real estate space in Blayney. And they're people who will be targeted if Labor's negative gearing policies ever become law. So that's right—Labor just wants to take the property tax whack out. They want to make sure that people don't have the sort of money in their investments that they should have because they've worked hard and they've invested in real estate. They should be able to get ahead.

We've also put \$1.8 billion into drought relief measures and, in the member for Calare's electorate, they will help, for those councils getting the million dollars—they're going to help the Blayney, Cabonne, Mid-Western Regional, Oberon and Dubbo Regional councils, which are good councils, getting on with the job of making sure that their communities are well served, bringing local infrastructure works forward and getting money flowing into drought-affected communities.

### **Australian Embassy: Israel**

**Mr SHORTEN** (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:24): My question is to the Prime Minister. Can the Prime Minister confirm today's reports that he first informed the President of Indonesia of his decision to overturn 70 years of bipartisan foreign policy via a text message? Is the Prime Minister really so panicked about Wentworth that he is willing to make the most cynically timed foreign policy decision in living memory? Why is the Prime Minister so reckless with our foreign policy?

**Mr MORRISON** (Cook—Prime Minister) (14:25): Australians will know this about me: what I believe today is what I will believe next week and what I will believe a month from now. I went to Israel with the now Leader of the Opposition, but only one of us seems to have remembered the lessons of that trip. Our government, the Liberal and National parties, stand with Israel. I don't know what the Labor Party thinks anymore. Some of their members—the member for Sydney thinks that Israel is a rogue state. She has come into this place and has said this as a member of the House of Representatives—called Israel a rogue state.

I don't believe Israel is a rogue state. No-one on this side of the House believes that Israel is a rogue state. I don't know what the bipartisanship is that the Leader of the Labor Party speaks of when it comes to this place's support for the state of Israel. I don't know what that bipartisanship is that they refer to—particularly from this guy.

**The SPEAKER:** The Prime Minister will resume his seat. The member for Gellibrand will cease interjecting. The Manager of Opposition Business on a point of order?

**Mr Burke:** The point of order is direct relevance. The question goes to whether the President of Indonesia was advised by text message.

**The SPEAKER:** That was one part of the question, but there were a number of other parts and, when you look at them all, it had the diversity of a food court, I have to say.

**Mr MORRISON:** If I listen to the question from the Leader of the Opposition—next week, after the Wentworth by-election, will the Leader of the Labor Party tell us what his views are on Jerusalem, or on the issue of Iran? Will he tell us next week? Why won't he tell us this week? He wants to talk about process this week. My answers to those questions are the same today as they will be next week. He seems to have forgotten the fact that earlier this morning, in the General Assembly of the United Nations, Australia voted no for Palestine to chair the G77. I haven't heard boo from the opposition about this. I don't know what the leader of the Labor Party thinks on these questions anymore. I don't know what he believes in. I can say I'm not sure I've ever known what he believes in. It depends on what part of the country he is in. You don't just need an atlas to understand what he thinks and what he says; you also need a calendar, because it changes from day to day. The Liberal and National parties' view when it comes to a two-state solution is very clear. Our position when it comes to the support of Israel is very, very clear. When it comes to the Labor Party, they are the box of chocolates; you never know what you're going to get.

## DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

**The SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for Melbourne, I would like to inform the House that we have joining us in the gallery this afternoon the former President of Kiribati, His Excellency Aote Tong. On behalf of the House I extend a very warm welcome to you. I also welcome the many former senators and members who are with us today as part of their annual reunion.

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Immigration Detention

**Mr BANDT** (Melbourne) (14:28): My question is to the Prime Minister. Kids need to grow up in a stable, loving environment. But, under your watch, the refugee children on Nauru are in absolute crisis. When a 10-year-old boy repeatedly tried to kill himself, your government refused to transfer him to Australia for treatment until a court ordered it. As emergency grows into catastrophe, Australia's senior medical officer was reportedly arrested and is today being deported from Nauru. Why are you slowly killing these children? Are you seriously arguing that threatening these children's lives is some kind of necessary evil—acceptable because you want to send some kind of broader message? Why won't you accept doctors' advice that it's never in a child's best interests to lock them up until they die?

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the House.

**Mr Pyne:** Mr Speaker, clearly the member for Melbourne has overstepped the boundaries, even in this building, and I would ask him to withdraw those insinuations and statements that we are trying to kill children by locking them up.

**The SPEAKER:** I ask the member for Melbourne to withdraw.

**Mr BANDT:** I'm prepared to rephrase that part of the question.

**The SPEAKER:** No, you need to—

*Government members interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** Members on my right will cease interjecting.

**Mr BANDT:** Why is the government slowly killing these children?

**The SPEAKER:** No. The member for Melbourne needs to withdraw. A rephrase doesn't do it. He needs to withdraw. There's one rule for everyone, I'm afraid.

**Mr BANDT:** I withdraw that part of the question.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you. The Prime Minister has the call.

**Mr MORRISON** (Cook—Prime Minister) (14:30): Our government, when we came to government in 2013, ended the carnage of children dying at sea. We ended the carnage and we did it in three months—stopped that carnage from happening. We took 6,000 children out of detention because of our policies. We closed the detention centres that the Labor Party opened because of their inability to manage Australia's borders—as children lay face-down in the water—and at the urging of the policies of the Greens, whom they so happily went along with. So I'm not going to take lectures from the Greens movement, who are more responsible than any in this chamber, and their reckless attitude, as they seek to stand here and aggrandise themselves—

**The SPEAKER:** The Prime Minister will resume his seat. The member for Melbourne on a point of order.

**Mr Bandt:** On relevance. It was clear from the opening of the question: this is about the children on Nauru. My question is about that, and I want an answer about that. Could you ask the Prime Minister to be directly relevant to that?

**The SPEAKER:** The Prime Minister is addressing the subject of the question. There was a specific element to the question. The Prime Minister's entitled to give some comparisons and to give some context, but the question was about Nauru.

**Mr MORRISON:** Our commitment to provide the health and medical services is on record for the facilities that were opened by the Labor Party when they were in office, and we will continue to treat every single case based on the medical advice that is received and transfers that are undertaken on the basis of that medical advice, and we will continue to pursue that practice in each and every case. I'll ask the Minister for Home Affairs to add to the answer.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister for Home Affairs for the remaining time.

**Mr DUTTON** (Dickson—Minister for Home Affairs) (14:32): I thank the member for his question. As the Prime Minister outlined, firstly there are about 65 medical professionals on Nauru at the moment. The Australian government has provided some hundreds of millions of dollars for medical services on Nauru. In fact, there have been around 200 children who came as part of family units, where a father or a mother may have come to Australia for medical assistance and they came as part of that family unit or, indeed, they came for medical assistance themselves. There are many cases where the Australian government has provided support. I make the point that we have been able to negotiate an arrangement with the United States. Now 435 people have left Nauru and Manus—people who had arrived as part of the 50,000 on 800 boats when Labor was last in government. Those people have formed part of what I hope will be a bigger number heading to the United States. We'll continue to work on a number of cases, as we are and as the minister for immigration is on a daily basis, in relation to this matter. As the Prime Minister rightly points out, we take the advice from the medical experts. We have a look at the—

**Mr Bandt:** You don't follow it. You only do it when a court tells you to.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Melbourne has asked his question.

**Mr DUTTON:** Again, I think Australians are better to stick to the facts because, if they don't, they are led by people like the honourable member who asked the question. What results, as the Prime Minister detailed before, could easily be repeated if that man is ever involved— *(Time expired)*

### Trade

**Mr TED O'BRIEN** (Fairfax) (14:33): My question is to the Minister for Defence Industry, representing the Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment. Will the minister update the House on why the government believes in an ambitious trade agenda that creates jobs and new opportunities for Australian businesses? What are the risks from alternative approaches?

**Mr CIOBO** (Moncrieff—Minister for Defence Industry) (14:34): Today is a good day for trade. It's a good day for trade because the coalition, the Liberal and National parties, have delivered on our vision of making sure that we are driving economic growth in this country and driving jobs in this country.

We believe, as Liberals and Nationals together, in the benefits to all Australians of free trade. We believe in creating more economic opportunity for small businesses and we believe in backing-in those small businesses. We, as Liberals and Nationals, fundamentally understand that trade is good news for Australian workers and good news for Australian exporters. That is the reason why, as a government, we have been so deeply committed to opening up trade agreements. In fact, since 2013, the Liberal and National parties have opened and concluded eight free trade agreements, including the North Asian FTAs with China, Japan and Korea; the comprehensive update that took place with Singapore; PACER Plus; the Peru-Australia Free Trade Agreement; the Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, which we delivered; and, of course, the TPP-11.

But I've got to throw a flower towards Labor—one flower—and that is for the fact that Labor did support the enabling legislation in the Senate. But I have to say that when it comes to trade we really don't know what Labor believes at all. Fundamentally, the Australian Labor Party on trade is a complete house of cards. Should Bill Shorten ever become the Prime Minister—

*Opposition members interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** No! The—

**Mr CIOBO:** Sorry, Mr Speaker. Should the Leader of the Opposition ever become the leader of this country, we know the collapse of that house of cards will see a collapse in trade policy in this country. We don't know what Labor believes on trade. We know, and Australians know, that we believe in creating economic opportunity. We know, and Australians know, that we believe in creating jobs for Australians through trade. In fact, more than a million have been created in this country on our watch.

But Labor's policy still remains so unclear. That confusion manifests in lots of different ways. We see it because the Left have become so rambunctious—because they're unhappy with where the leader is going. And we also see it in others who know the fundamental importance of trade and who are displeased that the Australian Labor Party has no consistency and no clear compass for where they're going on trade.

The simple fact is that Labor's policy on trade is clear: in six years they were unable to start and conclude a single trade deal. So compare and contrast that with a government that knows what it believes, that puts in place export opportunities, that drives economic growth and that creates jobs. Compare it to an Australian Labor Party, that is completely lost when it comes to trade in this country.

### Great Barrier Reef Foundation

**Mr BURKE** (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (14:37): My question is for the Minister for the Environment. I refer to the government's almost half a billion dollar grant to the Great Barrier Reef Foundation. How much of that money could be spent on administration and scaling-up activities?

**Ms PRICE** (Durack—Minister for the Environment) (14:37): I would like to thank the member for his question. This is a good opportunity to talk about the reef. We know about this \$440 million grant to the Great Barrier Reef Foundation. We all know that the reef requires an enormous amounts of effort in terms of the science needed. And there has been a considerable amount done already by the foundation. We've already identified \$200 million with respect to water, a significant amount of money to research more broadly, a significant amount of money for resilience and also a small amount of money with respect to administration.

*Opposition members interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** Members on my right, including the Deputy Prime Minister, are preventing the—

*An opposition member interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** Don't dob on the Leader of the House!

### Economy

**Mr HASTIE** (Canning) (14:39): My question is for the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer outline to the House how this government is growing the Australian economy and how that economic growth is helping Australian families, workers and businesses? Will the Treasurer share with the House what he sees as the biggest threats to the Australian economy?

**Mr FRYDENBERG** (Kooyong—The Treasurer) (14:39): I thank the member for Canning for his question. I'm glad to get a question on the economy, because the Labor Party has delivered more invisible surpluses than the member for McMahan has had questions in this place.

As the member for Canning knows, when you grow the economy, you create jobs and you can provide the essential services that the Australian people need and deserve. We have been growing the economy at 3.4 per cent through the year. We have created more than a million new jobs. We have had our AAA credit rating reaffirmed recently, from the three leading rating agencies. We have delivered a budget deficit for 2017-18 which is at the lowest level in a decade and we are on track to come back to balance in 2019-20, a year earlier than expected. These are the results of a government that believes in lower taxes, a government that believes in lower regulations, a government that believes in more free trade and a government that believes in rewarding people for hard work. As Sir Robert Menzies said more than 70 years ago, it's the Liberal Party that believes in the power of the individual and their enterprise, and it's the Liberal Party that rejects the socialist panacea put by those opposite.

Now the Labor Party are getting arrogant. As we get closer to an election, they think it's in the bag. They are taking the Australian people for granted. We are starting to get a closer look at what they believe, like the member for Lilley, the incoming president of the Labor Party, who said that Labor's goal was to tear down neo-liberalism. He was praising Bernie Sanders, as the Labor Party has rejected the legacy of Hawke and Keating and embraced the Corbyn-Sanders approach. The member for Fenner gave a speech praising Friedrich Engels of Marx and Engels fame. We all know what the member for Sydney said—ambition is a mystery. That's what we have heard from the member for Sydney. We know that the ACTU secretary, if Labor gets to government, will be counselling the cabinet on which laws do not apply to them. That's what we are going to see from a Labor Party in government—higher taxes, higher spending, union domination, and a view that government always knows best. In contrast, the Liberal Party and the National Party believe in the individual and their enterprise. *(Time expired)*

### Great Barrier Reef Foundation

**Mr BURKE** (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (14:42): My question is for the Minister for the Environment. I refer to her previous answer where she said only a small amount of money could be spent on administration. Can the minister please advise the House what that small amount of money is?

**Ms PRICE** (Durack—Minister for the Environment) (14:42): I thank the member opposite. The number is five per cent.

### Small Business

**Mrs WICKS** (Robertson) (14:43): My question is to the Minister for Jobs, Industrial Relations and Women. Will the minister update the House on why the government believes in a fair and sustainable taxation system and what the government is doing to act on this belief through its support for small business? What are the risks for small business from different ideas?

**Ms O'DWYER** (Higgins—Minister for Jobs, Industrial Relations and Women) (14:43): I thank the member for Robertson for her question. She is absolutely passionate about the more than 15,000 small businesses in her electorate of Robertson and is a very powerful voice for them. She is someone who, like every member on this side of the chamber, believes passionately in small business. That is one of the reasons why our government is delivering tax relief to small and family-sized businesses sooner, the more than three million small businesses that provide jobs for more than seven million Australians.

Unfortunately though, those opposite don't really support small business. Those opposite believe in higher and higher taxes for small business. For those small businesses, for instance, that have a trust, they will tax those small businesses. For those small businesses that actually employ people who want to salary sacrifice to save for their retirement income, they would, in fact, scrap that. They don't support small business and they certainly don't support the people who work for small business.

But it's not just on the issue of tax where those opposite would damage small business and the people who work for them. At the behest of the donors of the Labor Party, the ACTU, they would shut down entire industries at a time, costing jobs and closing down small businesses. The Leader of the Opposition has a plan to scrap the tough cop on the beat in the building and construction industry and he would allow militant unions to run riot, to bully and intimidate small-business people and the people that work for them.

We are all aware of and familiar with the rule of law. It applies equally to all, whether you be a barista, a cleaner, a doctor or a lawyer. But, under the Leader of the Opposition, there would be a new law of the land. It would be known as Sally's Law and says that you can break the law whenever you like. We certainly know that Sally's Law would very soon become Bill's Law, and he would make the lawbreakers the lawmakers. The coalition supports small businesses and the people that work for them. While the former leaders of the Labor Party have given the militant unions an IOU, this Leader of the Opposition would give them a blank cheque, and it will be every single hardworking Australian who will be footing the bill.

### **Minister for the Environment**

**Mr BUTLER** (Port Adelaide) (14:46): My question is for the Minister for the Environment. I refer to reports that last night, when the minister was told that the former President of Kiribati was in Australia to deliver a message on climate change, the environment minister told the former president:

I know why you're here. It is for the cash. For the Pacific it's always about the cash. I have my chequebook here. How much do you want?

Does the minister deny saying those words to the former President of one of Australia's Pacific neighbours and one of the nations most affected by climate change and sea level rise in the world?

**Ms PRICE** (Durack—Minister for the Environment) (14:47): Today I received a letter from Senator Dodson with his recollection of a conversation. I was very concerned that President Tong, who was in that meeting—actually it was a gathering at a restaurant where I stumbled across this group and went over to introduce myself to Senator Dodson, who I classify as a friend of mine. Some friend, I have to say. I'm very concerned that President Tong has been offended in any way; I believe he's not here anymore. I have spoken to Senator Dodson and asked him if he was able to provide me with a contact member for President Tong, because I 100 per cent disagree with what he has said was the conversation. What I did say is that the Pacific is a very good friend and neighbour to Australia. In fact, that's exactly what I said to President Tong last night.

### **National Security**

**Mr WOOD** (La Trobe) (14:48): My question is for the Minister for Defence. Will the minister update the House on why the government believes that national security should be our No. 1 priority? What is the government doing to act on that belief? How does this compare to other approaches?

**Mr Champion:** Send in Sergeant York. Horatio Nelson. See you later, General Pyne!

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Wakefield. The warnings don't last for a minute, okay? Leave under 94(a), please, and get on with it.

*The member for Wakefield then left the chamber.*

**Mr PYNE** (Sturt—Minister for Defence and Leader of the House) (14:48): That'll increase the average IQ in the chamber! I thank the member for La Trobe for his question. We do take national security in this country seriously, unlike the member for Wakefield and unlike the members of the Labor Party. We do take defence and national security seriously. They think it's a joke. They think it's something to make fun of. That's what they think. That's what the member for Wakefield and the Leader of the Opposition think. They think that national security and defence are a joke in this country, and that's why they've subcontracted it out to the coalition to do national security and defence in this nation. Some of the members of the Labor Party used to take defence seriously, and

they must hang their heads in shame and embarrassment that the member for Wakefield and the Leader of the Opposition think it's something to laugh about.

I was asked about national security and our beliefs. Our No. 1 belief in defence is to keep the service men and women of the ADF safe. That's our No. 1 priority. Our second priority is to give them the capability, through the procurement that we make into the Australian Defence Force, to make sure that they win, which keeps them safe. And our third priority is to use that defence heft to grow our economy, to grow our defence industry, to grow our defence industry sovereignty. That's why this government invested \$200 billion over the next 10 years—\$200 billion—in building that military capability to keep our service men and women safe, to keep them alive, to make sure they have the capability to win and to grow our sovereignty in defence industry. And it is working.

By contrast, when Labor was in power, they took money out of defence. They'd made big promises. I found that in the Labor Party's election manifesto in 2007 they promised to keep defence spending increasing in real terms every year at three per cent until 2016. They made the promise in 2007 that they would keep spending on defence increasing by a minimum of three per cent in real terms. What was the reality? The reality—and everyone's heard this number before—is that they reduced spending on defence to 1.56 per cent of GDP, the lowest level since 1938, the last year of appeasement. But I also found out that in 2010-11—

*Opposition members interjecting—*

**Mr PYNE:** and they can shout as loud as they like—

*Dr Mike Kelly interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Eden-Monaro.

**Mr PYNE:** In 2010-11 they cut spending on defence by 6.4 per cent in real terms. In 2011-12 they cut it by 2.3 per cent in real terms and in 2012-13 they cut spending on defence by 9.2 per cent in real terms.

*Dr Mike Kelly interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Eden-Monaro will cease interjecting.

**Mr PYNE:** So in three years they cut spending on defence by 17.9 per cent in real terms. That's why people trust this side of the House to deliver on national security. *(Time expired)*

### Climate Change

**Mr BUTLER** (Port Adelaide) (14:52): My question is again to the environment minister. The latest official projection data from the minister's own department confirms that under the government's policies carbon pollution will rise all the way to 2030 and the government will come nowhere near its Paris carbon pollution reduction targets for that same year. Does the minister still agree with the Prime Minister that Australia will meet its Paris commitments at a canter?

**Ms PRICE** (Durack—Minister for the Environment) (14:52): I thank the member for his question. Australia will meet its Kyoto targets. We're well and truly on the way to meeting our 2020 target. Australia is also on target to meet its 2030 target.

*Ms Chesters interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Bendigo.

**Ms PRICE:** We have got the right suite of climate policies. Back in 2017, the review of our climate policies said we had the right policies—CEFC, ARENA, Emissions Reduction Fund, a whole raft—

*Opposition members interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** Members on my left!

**Ms PRICE:** We just recently announced the forestry plan. We have the policies. We'll meet our targets.

### National Security

**Mr HARTSUYKER** (Cowper) (14:53): My question is to the Minister for Home Affairs. Would the minister advise the House why the government believes in strong and consistent border protection policies? How is the government acting on those beliefs to keep Australians safe? Is the minister aware of any alternative policies which would put our border protection measures at risk?

**Mr DUTTON** (Dickson—Minister for Home Affairs) (14:54): I thank the honourable member for his question. Like everybody on this side of the House, we are very much alive to the need for strong border protection, for strong national security measures. As we're seeing in Europe, we have somewhere in the vicinity of 1,400 or 1,500 people who have drowned in the Mediterranean this calendar year alone. We have 14,000 people in Indonesia who would seek to come by boat to Australia tomorrow if they thought that the route was open again.

We have people smugglers marketing New Zealand as a destination. Whether people smugglers seek to travel all the way to New Zealand or whether they seek simply to make Australian landfall at some point is open to debate.

What we do know is that a government needs to have strong resolve. Before our government, the last government to have strong resolve on border protection was the Howard government. The Howard government took tough decisions and got children out of detention. In fact, when John Howard left office in 2007, four people were in detention, including no children. When we came to government, 50,000 people had arrived on 800 boats because Labor had lost control of our borders. As the Prime Minister rightly pointed out before, the most tragic aspect of that was the 1,200 people, including women and children, who had drowned at sea. When I speak to the officers of the Royal Australian Navy, Australian Border Force and others involved in Operation Sovereign Borders, they never want us to revisit that policy dysfunction again. They don't want to return to Labor's days where they lose control of our borders, because we know now of the effects.

Every day since the last election, the Leader of the Opposition has gently announced a roll-back of the opposition's policy, the Labor Party's policy, in relation to border protection. They don't support temporary visas. They don't support offshore processing. They don't support turning back boats where it's safe to do so. It's in their rhetoric. It's in their DNA. They don't believe the success that we've had under Operation Sovereign Borders. If they are elected at the election, as sure as night follows day, this Leader of the Opposition will follow the example of Mr Rudd and Ms Gillard. People will drown at sea, boats will recommence, children will be back in detention.

We have closed 17 detention centres. The 8,000 children Labor put into detention have been released. We have not had a drowning at sea on my watch. We are making sure that we are not complacent in relation to the threats that still exist. The Australian public know in their souls that they can't trust this Leader of the Opposition. Look no further than border protection policy. *(Time expired)*

### Climate Change

**Mr BUTLER** (Port Adelaide) (14:57): My question is again to the Minister for the Environment. Last week, when asked how Australia would meet its Paris carbon pollution reduction targets, the minister said the government would 'build one billion trees'. Does the minister plan on sharing this environmental breakthrough with other nations so they can also build some trees? What other fantastic forestry sector innovations is the minister relying upon to avoid real action on climate change?

**Ms PRICE** (Durack—Minister for the Environment) (14:57): I'm so thrilled to be getting so many questions on the environment. We love to talk about the environment on this side because we're doing a good job. People can trust us. Australians know they can't trust you opposite. Building—I would also say growing—one billion trees. People may have noticed, going back a few weeks ago, the agriculture minister announced a new forestry plan. That is what I was referring to in the media.

We don't make an apology on this side for focusing on getting electricity prices down. That's what we're focused on, but we can look after the environment and the economy at the same time. We are doing this in a responsible way whilst growing the economy. The Australian people know they can trust us to do this. You can't trust those opposite. What's their record? What are they talking about? They're talking about a 45 per cent emissions target. They're talking about a 50 per cent Renewable Energy Target. You cannot trust them.

Don't just believe me. Why don't we get some quotes about what other people have said about Labor. What about the CFMEU president, who said that a 50 per cent RET by 2030 would increase the cost of electricity for manufacturing and households whilst being a poor tool to reduce Australia's overall emissions. Ben Davis, secretary of Bill Shorten's branch of the AWU said—

**The SPEAKER:** The minister will refer to members by their correct titles.

**Ms PRICE:** The Leader of the Opposition—I almost forgot. Ben Davis said, 'the rush away from coal and gas-fired electricity power stations to renewables is a little unseemly in its haste because we are potentially crucifying hundreds of thousands of manufacturing workers.' The Grattan Institute said that Labor's claim that prices would go down as a result of a higher emissions reductions target is 'unlikely to be sustainable', 'could accelerate plant closures', 'requires higher consumer prices' and 'is inherently uncertain'. Just one more: the Business Council of Australia has described Labor's 45 per cent emissions reduction target as 'economy-wrecking'. The Australian people know they can trust us with the environment and the economy. They can't trust that lot.

### Infrastructure: Transport

**Mr ZIMMERMAN** (North Sydney) (15:00): My question is to the Minister for Cities, Urban Infrastructure and Population. Will the minister explain why the government believes in delivering essential transport services? What is the government doing to act on that belief by delivering on congestion-busting projects, including in Sydney and its surrounds?

**Mr TUDGE** (Aston—Minister for Cities, Urban Infrastructure and Population) (15:00): I thank the member for North Sydney for his question. As the member for North Sydney knows, Australia has some of the greatest cities in the world, which are frequently recognised as amongst the most livable, but they're almost amongst the fastest-growing cities in the world—

*Dr Freeland interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Macarthur, cease interjecting.

**Mr TUDGE:** and that brings some congestion. Residents know this and we understand this. We have a plan to deal with this congestion, and it consists of a number of parts. The first element, actually, is having a better planning framework where our population projections are better married with state infrastructure plans so that, in the future, we never have the situation where we have a Premier of New South Wales, like Bob Carr, saying that Sydney is full and not building infrastructure, and yet, a few years later, we have Prime Minister Rudd turbo-charging the population growth. That's the first part.

The second part is a decentralisation agenda: take the pressure off the big cities and support the growth of the smaller states, like South Australia, and some of the regional areas that have growth ambitions.

But the third element of this plan is a massive injection of congestion-busting infrastructure right across the country. We have \$75 billion worth of congestion-busting infrastructure in every single major capital city occurring right now, including in the city of Sydney. In Sydney, we have important projects, such as the WestConnex project and the NorthConnex project. We have a massive infrastructure spend in the Western Sydney Airport and the development at Western Sydney surrounding that. These massive road and rail projects will help people to be able to get home from work so they spend less time in traffic and more time at home. That's what we believe in. We believe in investing in this infrastructure so that you're spending more time with your family and less time in traffic and on the roads.

We will continue to build this infrastructure. We will continue to work in New South Wales with the New South Wales government and work co-operatively with them. What the people of Sydney and the people of New South Wales need is certainty that we can continue with these plans. They need certainty that we will continue to back the WestConnex and continue to back the Western Sydney Airport and these other projects.

What they don't need is uncertainty. If we want to avoid uncertainty in the future, then the people of Wentworth have a very important decision. They need to back a candidate who will support these congestion-busting plans. They need to back a person who will support our plans and who will back those plans to deal with congestion, to ease the population pressures on the big cities and make our cities even better. *(Time expired)*

### Climate Change

**Ms KEARNEY** (Batman) (15:03): My question is to the Minister for the Environment. Will the government be providing any additional money to the Emissions Reduction Fund and, if so, when?

**Ms PRICE** (Durack—Minister for the Environment) (15:03): Thank you for the question. As people will know, that is an excellent policy of ours that was started with over \$2 billion. We're down to \$250 million. Of course, as you would expect, our responsible government is looking at its full suite of policies, which will include the ERF. That's not a matter for me to talk about today; it's a matter for cabinet.

### Welfare Reform

**Mr PITT** (Hinkler) (15:04): My question is to the Minister for Families and Social Services. Will the minister explain why the government believes in a fair and sustainable welfare system? What is the government doing to support families and act on that belief in my electorate of Hinkler?

**Mr FLETCHER** (Bradfield—Minister for Families and Social Services) (15:04): I do thank the member for Hinkler who's been a very strong advocate for a fair and sustainable welfare system, including through his advocacy—his successful advocacy—for a trial of the cashless debit card in Bundaberg and Hervey Bay, in his electorate, something which will commence in late January next year.

On this side of the House, we believe in a sustainable welfare system. If as an Australian you're entitled to welfare then you have a right to expect that when you turn up the government has the capacity to make the promised payment. That means the system needs to be sustainable. Under the previous government, expenditure on social security and welfare was growing at 6.2 per cent a year, nearly twice the rate at which tax revenue was growing. That is unsustainable. Under this government, social security and welfare spending at 2.9 per cent a year is lower than the rate at which tax revenue is growing. That is sustainable. That is an example of our strong economic management, meaning that we can fund the services that Australians rely upon. We believe in a fair welfare system. If you have a go, you'll get a go. That's why we're pushing ahead with the cashless debit card.

Indeed, last week, the member for Hinkler and I had the chance to have discussions about the cashless debit card in Bundaberg. A very impressive young woman I met at a service called IMPACT is undergoing some training at the moment, and she'll be moving into the workforce. She made the observation to me that when people have an addiction, 'Drugs and other habits often come first, rather than the kids.' That is exactly why we need to make sure that we are providing 80 per cent of welfare onto the cashless debit card. Eighty per cent of your benefit goes onto the card. It can't be used to purchase alcohol, drugs or gambling. And the results are very significant.

What, then, is Labor's position on this successful policy? When the member for Jagajaga was the minister, she consistently supported the expansion of income management to seven sites across five states. The former Labor member for Hinkler supports the rollout of the cashless debit card to the electorate, but, sadly, politics has got in the way. The current Labor candidate for Hinkler is running a petition against the cashless debit card. Labor voted against the cashless debit card being expanded to Hinkler, putting politics ahead of a proven policy measure that helps Australians on welfare to stabilise their lives and get into the workforce. We will stand up for the values of mainstream Australians, not the inner-city Green left that Labor seems far too responsive to.

### **Racism**

**Mr DREYFUS** (Isaacs—Deputy Manager of Opposition Business) (15:07): My question is to the Prime Minister. How can the Prime Minister possibly claim that the government voting for a motion that contained a white supremacist slogan was just an administrative error, when the member for Dawson repeated the white supremacist slogan in a tweet yesterday afternoon? Has the Prime Minister sought an explanation from the members for Dawson and Hume and Liberal senators Stoker and Paterson who, according to today's papers, attended a conference with links to racist hate groups? Was this also just an administrative error?

**The SPEAKER:** I won't call the Leader of the House. I can't see how that question's in order. Statements by private members are not the responsibility of any leader. Next question. The member for Flynn.

### **Drought**

**Mr O'DOWD** (Flynn—Deputy Nationals Whip) (15:08): My question is to the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources. Will the minister explain why the government believes in supporting our farmers? What is the government doing to act on that belief by providing support, assistance and marketing opportunities for food and fibre producers?

**Mr LITTLEPROUD** (Maranoa—Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources) (15:08): I thank the honourable member for his question, because he knows full well the impacts this drought, in particular, is having even on his own electorate of Flynn. To answer his question: quite simply, it's because agriculture underpins every regional rural economy out there. It is a \$60 billion industry with nearly \$50 billion in export, so it underpins so much. And despite the rain we've received recently, let me make it clear, one shower of rain will not break this drought. So we'll continue to support our farmers with drought assistance.

We're putting \$1.8 billion on the table to help farmers. And I'm pleased to announce that we are now cutting the farm household assistance application by a third. We're cutting it by a third to make it easier. But we're going to complement that with an extra 39 rural financial counsellor services. They are the angels of this drought who sit around the kitchen tables of our farmers and help them fill out the form. They complement the already 116 who are out there doing the job for us. But we've gone further to look for the resilience of this industry to make sure we're prepared for further droughts. I've been able to bring the banks with us on the journey and now they're prepared to offset farm management deposits against their debt, saving our farmers tens of thousands of dollars every year.

We're also investing in exclusion fencing, improving the efficiency of our primary producers and making sure we're giving write-offs for those who want to invest for the preparedness of fodder storage. This is making sure that agriculture has a good story. The story of agriculture is: just add rain. What we want to do is bring our young people home. We've had a generation-drain of young people because the story of agriculture has not been as positive as it is today. It's positive because of the work we've done around the trade agreements—the 'big three'—with China, Japan and Korea. Now, with thanks to the member for Moncrieff, the former trade minister, who put in place the TPP-11 and Peru, there are real returns to the farm gate, meaning that farmers and their children can now make a quid.

But we don't want to bring just young people home; we want to bring women back to agriculture. I am proud to say that we, at long last, are bringing our women home, because the jobs in agriculture are not just the traditional jobs; they are now in research and development and science. We are at the cutting edge of technology in agriculture and we are taking agriculture to a \$100 billion industry because of the investment we are making. But the government have gone further. I am proud to say that, in the last 10 months, since being the agriculture

minister, I've taken female representation on government boards from 37 per cent to 47 per cent. That's an investment in the women of rural and regional Australia, and we're damn proud to make it.

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

## DOCUMENTS

### Presentation

**Mr PYNE** (Sturt—Minister for Defence and Leader of the House) (15:11): Documents are tabled in accordance with the list circulated to honourable members earlier today. Full details of the documents will be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

## MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

### Schools

**The SPEAKER** (15:12): I have received a letter from the honourable member for Kingston proposing that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely:

The Government's failure to invest in Australian preschools.

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

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

**Ms RISHWORTH** (Kingston) (15:12): We know that the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison governments have not been consistent on many things, but one thing they have been consistent on is their failure on preschools and preschool children. There is a long list of policy failures and neglect from this shambolic government, but their disregard for preschools is surely one of their most concerning failures. They simply refuse to provide any certainty for our preschools and they use them as pawns to inflate their budget position. We hear the same story year after year: after educators, teachers, state governments and families rally at Parliament House and rally around the country, begging for more money, the government begrudgingly roll over one-year stopgap funding to preschools. This creates massive uncertainty for preschools and kindies right across this country, but, importantly, it's creating massive uncertainty for families. Families who want to give their children the best start to life are uncertain about where the government stands when it comes to funding for their children.

As it stands now, preschools are funded for only another year, until the end of 2019. This is convenient timing because, by funding preschools until the end of 2019 only, the government conveniently get to the other side of an election, and we know that in their forward estimates, in their own budget papers, there is no money in the budget after 2019. What does this mean? What does this mean for families and preschools? How are they able to plan for their future? I have been speaking with preschools. They want to plan for 2020. They want to enrol children now for 2020, but they can't. They can't because the government have failed to provide them any certainty. They can't sign leases, they can't recruit teachers and they do not know where their funding will come from after this year. This is not good enough. It is not good enough for the 350,000 preschoolers and their families that are constantly left in limbo by this government.

On Monday in question time, the Treasurer was asked to guarantee funding for preschools. What we got was a lot of hot air and a lot of waffle but absolutely no guarantees whatsoever—no commitment, no guarantees, nothing to give families any comfort and nothing to give our preschools and kindies any comfort at all. The government have stated on many occasions the importance of giving funding certainty to non-government schools and they have said that it is important to give them certainty for a decade. Of course, we on this side have supported that. But what we haven't supported is the fact that, if it is good enough for non-government schools, then it is good enough for our public schools and it is good enough for our preschools. Why should there be a different standard for our preschools? The only guarantee from this government is that, for the nation's four-year-olds, there is no money in the budget next year. It is a simple fact. No matter what the government members will tell you, no matter what the minister wants to tell you, the truth lies in the budget papers. After calendar year 2019, there are zero dollars in the budget. There are zero dollars in the budget for 2021. There are zero dollars in the budget for 2021-22.

We know that some members of this government have trouble counting. The member for Dickson and the member for Deakin can't always line their numbers up. But hopefully, for government members, it is not hard to understand that zero dollars for our preschools means there is no money available from the Commonwealth. And, unless this cut is reversed, every child now under the age of two will not receive preschool funding; they will not be supported by this government and their families will not be supported by this government.

The last minister for education liked to use preschool attendance data as his excuse for not committing funding to the program. He said he wanted to go and negotiate with the states and territories. I am not sure what this new

minister is going to do when he walks into the states and territories meeting—that is, if it goes ahead—sits down with them and says, 'I am here to negotiate. I am here to negotiate over zero dollars. We are not prepared to give you any money whatsoever.' I am not sure what the reaction is going to be, but I assume that the state ministers may not turn up to that meeting.

We know on this side of the House how important quality early childhood education is. It leads to a range of better educational, social and health outcomes for children later in life. It literally lays down the foundation. The Labor Party get it. We understood this when we introduced universal access to preschool when we were in government and we understand it now. That is why we have been proud to commit to ongoing permanent funding for four-year-olds. No more will preschools and families and states have to go cap in hand to Canberra every year, begging this minister for some consideration. Our teachers and our preschools can get on with the job, and parents can have certainty that their child will access early education.

For the first time, we will extend the program to three-year-olds, giving Australian children access to 15 hours of subsidised early learning in the two years before school. This is so we can give our children the best start to life. We are also going to reinstate the \$20 million of funding that was cut by the Liberals that ensures there is quality in our preschools and in our early learning centres, quality that ensures that inspections and assessments take place to lift up the quality of our early learning in Australia. This is not a priority for the government. Unfortunately, without any notice, they cut this money, leaving states and territories in the lurch.

Labor is proposing one of the biggest investments in early childhood education, and many, many people think that is a great thing. The Australian Childcare Alliance said it is 'a great outcome for Australian families'. The Early Learning Association Australia are 'thrilled'. They said:

... after more than eight years of research and debate, early learning service providers and families will finally have some certainty ...

Early Childhood Australia said it is a very welcome announcement. The Parenthood said parents will welcome this announcement. The Early Learning and Care Council of Australia said they were 'excited about the commitment to extend access to three-year-olds from 2021'. They said:

The evidence is overwhelming that two years of access to early learning dramatically improves children's lifelong education, health, wellbeing and employment outcomes.

Ross Gittins, in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, wrote:

... I can't think of any other single initiative more likely to benefit us socially and economically.

There is only one group in Australia that does not welcome Labor's announcement. There's one group that has said this is too costly and not worth doing, and that is the Liberal and National government of Australia. And shame on you!

Unlike the government, we do not see early learning and investing in our children as a cost; we see it as an investment. It is happening around the world, in the UK, Ireland, France and New Zealand—in China. Everyone is acting on this, because they know it is a smart investment. They know that it is a good investment and it will lead to better outcomes. The only people who are denying our children permanent funding for four-year-olds, certainty when it comes to preschool, are the government. They are the only group in this country who refuse to understand and talk about its importance.

I invite the government, I invite the new minister: if you want a tutorial, I am happy to give you a tutorial about the benefits—the economic benefits, the benefits for families, the benefits for children and the benefits across our society. Of course, what would be best would be that he stopped his rhetoric and the government stopped denying these benefits and actually acted. I say to those opposite: join with us and give the parents of four-year-olds the certainty that they deserve; put permanent funding in the budget. There is a time coming up when you will have the opportunity to do that. It is called the MYEFO, the budget midyear statement. Put the money in so that preschools around this country have certainty and, while you're at it, fund preschool for three-year-olds as well. That way, together, we can invest in the children of this country. (*Time expired*)

**Mr TEHAN** (Wannon—Minister for Education) (15:22): Can I thank the shadow minister for her contribution, and can I say that we on this side of the House also believe that we should invest in preschool, that we should invest in early childhood education. But we want to make sure that the return on that investment is one that will lead to our children improving their educational opportunities, improving their educational results and going on to make a significant contribution to this nation.

The Australian government currently, in 2018-19, is funding preschool to the tune of \$870 million. It's worth remembering, of course, when we talk about this investment, that the Commonwealth is funding a contribution to states and territories, as they are primarily responsible for preschool education. Next year alone, the government will provide more than \$440 million to states and territories, benefiting almost 350,000 young Australians—an

incredibly important contribution. This funding, along with contributions from state and territory governments, ensures that all children can participate in 15 hours a week of quality preschool in the year before they start school. Since 2013—so since the coalition government came into office—we have made \$2.8 billion available to state and territory governments through a series of five national partnerships to support universal access to preschool. As such, funding arrangements for preschool from 2020 are a matter for all state and territory governments and will be discussed accordingly.

The shadow minister referred to enrolment and attendance and said that this will be something that we on this side of the debate will bring up—and it is, because it is incredibly important. If we are to put this investment in, we want to make sure that it gets the best returns that it possibly can—especially when we are dealing with our children. That is why we want to make sure that what we do is not solely focused on enrolment. It is very, very important that this is the case. In 2017, preschool attendance nationally was only 70 per cent. Crucially, and more importantly, for Indigenous Australians this figure was 59 per cent; for those with socioeconomic disadvantage, the figure was 65 per cent. As I am sure the shadow minister is aware, when it comes to investment in this area, if we can lift attendance for those from low socioeconomic backgrounds, for Indigenous Australians and for those from rural and remote Australia, we can get significant benefit.

For the information of members, I want to detail some of the data on this when it comes to South Australia. In South Australia attendance is only 57 per cent across the board at the moment; when it comes to Indigenous Australians in South Australia, it is only 38 per cent; and when it comes to vulnerable and disadvantaged children, it is only 50 per cent. That is why this government wants to talk to the state and territory governments about attendance. It is incredibly important. We want to make sure that, when we are investing, we are going to get the best outcomes that we possibly can. It is important that we invest, but it is also important that we invest to get the rights outcomes. We want to make sure that that investment does that.

The shadow minister talked about people who come and support various investments in education. I could go back and say that for the Building the Education Revolution I am sure there were people that said, 'Yes, this looks like it is a good investment,' but then \$6 billion was wasted through that. When it came to providing computers in schools, once again, there was a raft of endorsements.

**Mr Thistlethwaite:** It's a terrible thing to have computers in schools!

**Mr TEHAN:** Well, then why did the program have to be withdrawn? Because \$1 billion was wasted on it. What you have to do when you invest in education is make sure you get outcomes.

*Opposition members interjecting—*

**Mr TEHAN:** Those opposite are saying, 'Tell that to the schools.' I don't know whether those opposite remember, but I remember visiting a school and there were the computers lined up—there was no money given for maintenance; there was no money given to update the software—so the computers were sitting there in the cupboard. That was \$1 billion wasted.

*Opposition members interjecting—*

**Mr TEHAN:** The point I am making for those opposite is their schemes of just throwing money at everything—their Building the Education Revolution and their computers in schools programs—show that you have to target that investment. You have to make sure that that investment is going to get results.

There are Australians who work incredibly hard doing a raft of things and pay taxes; they expect us to make sure that we get good outcomes from that investment. On this side of the House, that is what we are determined to do. I say to the shadow minister: I began discussions with my state and territory colleagues when I met with them in Adelaide, and we had a conversation about what we will be looking for and what we want to see when it comes to early childhood education.

We have asked them to provide data on what they will be doing to lift attendance, because, as I have said, if we want to get the significant returns from that investment then we have to make sure that our investment in early childhood learning gets results across the board.

We want to make sure—once again I'll point to South Australia, because I know that they're doing very good work in this area—that we can work with them to lift that attendance rate from 57 per cent across the board, and especially when it comes to Indigenous children of 38 per cent and vulnerable and disadvantaged children at 50 per cent. We want to make sure that we're getting the results, like we are seeing from our record investment in child care, where we've seen the most significant reforms in child care that this nation has seen. Around one million Australian families who are balancing work and parental responsibilities are benefiting from this package. Why? Because it's targeted. This is quality, affordable child care. We want to make sure, for those who are

working or who are working and earning the least, that they are able to get access to that quality and affordable child care. What we are seeing from that investment is proper results and outcomes. That is what we are determined to do when it comes to early childhood learning.

The shadow minister is right: this is a very important area. It's one where we do need to invest, and that's why this government has invested significantly, with \$2.8 billion worth of investment since 2013. So our record clearly shows through those national partnerships that we are committed to investing in this area and working co-operatively with the state and territory governments to ensure that this investment gets the outcomes that it needs.

We want to lift that national attendance rate, which in 2017 was only 70 per cent, and 59 per cent for Indigenous children and 65 per cent from low socioeconomic areas. That is what our commitment is. It's a commitment to work with state and territory governments to make sure that the investment we put in will lead to the results and outcomes that will mean that all Australian children have a very bright future when it comes to their education.

**Mr THISTLETHWAITE** (Kingsford Smith) (15:32): Every parent understands and knows the value of early childhood education. I've seen with our kids the cognitive development, the foundational skills and social skills that are developed in a child when they get access to early education and structured teaching at an early age. We in the Labor Party understand the value of the skills, the hard work and the dedication of those early childhood educators who are providing that foundational education for our kids in so many settings and centres throughout the country.

We all know that unfortunately in Australia at the moment our educational attainment and results for particularly primary school and high school kids are failing. We are going backwards when it comes to international comparisons of literacy and numeracy outcomes for Australian kids. We, as legislators, as members of parliament, have an obligation to look at those results, to analyse them and to say that we're not doing well enough in education, particularly in those foundational years of early education.

What has this government's response been to this developing crisis in education in Australia? We all know that they've failed to provide the necessary funding to ensure and guarantee that four-year-olds get access to a program that guarantees that vital early childhood education regardless of where they live and their parents' income. This is a program that has long been funded in partnership between the Commonwealth and the states. When you look at this year's budget paper you see the commitment of this government and this minister to early childhood education and the funding for the four-year-old preschool program, when you look at the figures in the forward estimates. From 2017-18 all the way through to 2021-22 there is nothing but zeroes—nothing but zeroes in terms of the dollars that this government is going to devote to the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education.

Labor will act in the interests of children. Where this government refuses to guarantee that funding, Labor will act. Not only will Labor act to guarantee funding for four-year-olds; we will extend this program to all three-year-olds so that they get very important and vital access to those early childhood educational years. I want to congratulate and I also want to thank the member for Kingston for the wonderful work that she's done over the course of the last 12 months in developing this policy announcement. If we are elected at the next election and we get the opportunity to implement this program, it will go down in history as one of the most important and fundamental reforms to early childhood and Australian education in our nation's history.

I know that the member for Kingston has done the hard policy yards, consulting with parents, educators and experts in framing this policy. It's a great policy and something that Labor is very proud of. We will commit to permanent ongoing funding to the national preschool and kindy program for all four-year-olds. We will extend that program, right throughout the country, to all three-year-olds, commencing from 2021. We will establish a \$100 million facilitation fund to expand capacity where required. We will ensure preschools and early education centres are high quality and safe by restoring the \$20 million safety and quality framework that was cut by the Liberals. That is the commitment of the Labor Party. That is how much Labor cherishes education and ensuring that our kids get the best opportunity and best start in life through those foundational early childhood and preschool years.

We will even go further, because Labor understands the value and the skills of those early childhood educators. A couple of weeks ago the member for Kingston, as the shadow minister, announced that Labor would also scrap up-front fees for 10,000 early education students studying at TAFE, boosting the early education workforce throughout the country and finally recognising the value, the emotional support and the social skills that go with early childhood educators.

We will also work in partnership with the states to ensure that they're in a position to fund these programs so they can be rolled out across the nation. That is Labor's commitment to the parents and to the young people of

Australia. Where this government refuses to act, Labor not only will act to restore that funding but will boost it and extend it to three-year-olds throughout the country.

**Ms LANDRY** (Capricornia—Assistant Minister for Children and Families) (15:37): Today I feel like I've travelled back in time. It's as though we have regressed past the digital age back to the era of vinyl, because here today Labor sounds like a broken record, always preoccupied with spending money instead of delivering outcomes. Those opposite spend more time focused on delivering talking points than delivering for the community. Over and over, they skip and repeat like a busted old 45, reiterating the same virtue signals and trumped up attempts to blame the government for being prudent with the hard-earned tax revenue we are in charge of. This latest announcement by an opposition on the run is a cynical, focus-group-driven attempt at policy work. Mark my words, the opposition's theatrical policy has nothing to do with delivering for children and everything to do with delivering taxpayer funded jobs for teachers and preschool workers.

'But how will they pay for it?' I hear you say. The answer is: the same way those opposite pay for everything—put it on the nation's credit card and then tax us all to the hilt to pay the interest while borrowing even more money for other projects. As I get around any electorate, I haven't found a single person who wants to pay more tax. What they want is to be taken seriously. They don't want people to demonise industries they rely on for their livelihoods. They don't want to have major job-creating infrastructure projects like Rookwood Weir and the Capricorn Highway duplication blocked by politics. They want their representatives to get on with delivering jobs for them and to help address the climbing cost of living. Families are doing it tough. It's tough enough without also having to pay for the woeful economic management those opposite would provide. A household budget is a hard enough exercise without the extra taxes any government from those opposite would thrust upon them.

Having said that, preschool is, of course, an important aspect of our education system. The head start our kids are able to take advantage of is part of how we keep ahead of the rest. That is why the coalition government is committed to preschool. While investing record funding of \$8.3 billion in the childcare system this financial year the coalition government is also delivering for preschool children, with around \$870 million available to support preschool throughout 2018-2019. This funding for preschool is secure until the end of 2019. State and territory governments are responsible for preschool delivery, and it is not good enough for states to shirk their constitutional responsibilities. We have a Constitution for a reason and, if we don't respect it, we will leave ourselves open to ruin. The federal government will of course continue our engagement with the states and territories to discuss funding arrangements together into the future beyond 2020. With funding locked in until 2020 we have certainty and time for this work to be done properly, to ensure that future funding investments are aimed at achieving the best outcomes for our children.

By way of comparison, Labor's report card on education is very shaky. During their last term, Labor increased childcare fees by 53 per cent and allowed the taxpayer to be rorted and ripped off to the tune of between \$6 billion to \$8 billion as part of the white-elephant-producing Building the Education Revolution program. And Labor allowed dodgy training providers and third-party brokers to exploit VET students, leaving them with no qualifications and a mountain of debt. In one year alone, Labor tried to rip over \$2.8 billion from higher education in a desperate attempt to achieve a surplus. Did it work? Of course not. Labor has failed to deliver a budget surplus since the late 1980s.

This really does come back to my previous question: who is going to pay? At this stage all we know is that each and every Australian will pay more tax under a Labor government.

**Ms LAMB** (Longman) (15:42): Before coming to this place, I spent many, many years of my life working in the education sector. For a number of years I worked as a teacher aide at Dakabin State School, a fabulous local primary school that each of my four boys attended. Not long after working at Dakabin, I moved into the early childhood education sector, where I stood up for the pay and conditions of the educators who shape the minds of our children.

They say it takes a village to raise a child, and from my experience I can wholeheartedly stand by that statement. I've seen just how important these education systems are for a person's future. I've seen firsthand the tremendous impact that educators and teachers have on the development of our children. I know for a fact that I can't take sole credit for raising young men as wonderful as my sons. I know it was the combined strength of many people in their lives—others who had a hand in educating my boys—that helped them grow into the wonderful men that I am so very, very proud of today.

My experiences in the early childhood sector, as a teacher aide and as a mother, have shown me how important a strong education system is, and how vital it is that a government truly cares about the education of our children. This is why I'm standing here today and this is why I'm standing on this side of the chamber: I'm standing here because I value education. I'm standing here because I know we need a Labor government, because it's only Labor

that truly stands up for education and only Labor that's been showing any leadership—any leadership at all—when it comes to Australian kindergartens and preschools.

In the last few weeks Labor has announced the biggest-ever investment in early childhood education in Australia. While this government has made cuts to TAFE, Labor is scrapping those up-front fees for 10,000 early education TAFE places, which we know will boost the workforce. While the government hasn't yet funded an early education program for our four-year-olds beyond 2019, Labor has committed to permanent ongoing funding for four-year-olds. I want to be very clear at this point to any parent who might be listening and who has a three-year-old who is turning four this year. This government has put zero dollars in their budget for their child. Let me be very clear. If you have a child who is three and turning four, this government is giving you zero dollars for your child's education in kindergarten.

While we have a government here that's busy acting with less maturity than a three-year-old, Labor is extending the national preschool and kindy program to ensure three-year-olds get a head start on their education journey. Labor has committed to guarantee around 700,000 Australian children each year the ability to access subsidised kindergarten and preschool. In my electorate of Longman that will mean about 5,000 children, not a small number at all, and it will make a huge difference to their future.

I know Labor's commitment to subsidised kindergarten and preschool is a great policy, and it's not just my own personal experiences that confirmed that for me. I'm hearing it from parents. I hear it from workers. I've seen the data. So many countries have already expanded their early childhood education program to include three-year-olds: countries like the United Kingdom, New Zealand, France, Ireland and China. This government's short-sighted cuts are threatening to push Australia backwards, but what we need to do is actually move forward. We need a government with vision for the future that isn't afraid of making tough decisions, and we know only Labor will do that.

Only Labor is reigning in unfair tax concessions that predominantly benefit the wealthy, so that we can fund priorities that make life fairer in Australia. Endorsing our policy is United Voice, the union that stands up for early childhood educators, recognising how funding early learning will help tackle economic inequality, which continues to rise under this government. It shouldn't be the bank balance of a parent that determines the quality of their child's education. Only Labor truly values early childhood education for every child in every home in every suburb in every town, every city and every state.

**Dr McVEIGH** (Groom) (15:47): I welcome this opportunity to speak in this very important debate. I acknowledge the comments of those before me on both sides of the House for their personal interest in education—in this case, obviously, early childhood education. I share those experiences. I'm the brother and brother-in-law of teachers. Most importantly, I'm married to a teacher, and my wife, Anita, and I are in the final stages of supporting our children through their university years. One has graduated as a teacher and another is studying education at the moment. So I share that experience and I appreciate the importance that all members in this House, especially those of us blessed to be parents, place on education.

Preschool education—early childhood education—is obviously a most essential part of all of that. Part of this debate is about the budgetary perspective, and from an outcomes or priority perspective in education—the other part of this debate—you need to remember that we need a sound and robust economy to support priorities such as education, particularly early childhood education. That's what we have in this country: a sound, robust and growing economy. We need to maintain that, such that we can continue to support essential services and work with the states, particularly in the area of education. I know the minister has referred to the fact—and I want to reiterate it—that we have therefore been able to make a record funding investment of some \$8.3 billion in the childcare system this financial year. As the minister said, funding for preschool is secure until the end of 2019, simply because that is the basis of existing agreements with the states. Around \$870 million will be available to support preschool education in particular throughout 2018-19, and the minister has stated on behalf of the coalition government that he and we are committed to entering into new agreements. Those conversations are obviously underway—they're always underway—with the states.

The GST policy, if I can use one example, is proof that this government works with and supports the states. It recognises their priorities, their challenges, and is prepared to negotiate, to go through the tough discussions, and get the outcomes that we've just announced for the GST. That's important for the states and their funding, particularly for their role in education. As the minister said, early childhood, preschool, education funding or management, I should say, is a state responsibility. It's up to the federal government to get behind them, and that is what these arrangements are all about. The coalition is determined to see future arrangements focus on attendance, as has been said, particularly for the most vulnerable, the most disadvantaged, those who need the most assistance. That's important in regional Australia, where I'm from, particularly for the Indigenous students we want to continue to support into the future.

The contrast to that, I'm afraid to say, is uncertainty, because Labor's plan lacks detail. Who's going to pay for it? How does it go about implementing and getting the outcomes we want to see, like improved attendance? I acknowledge the comments of the member for Kingsford Smith, in terms of wanting those educational attainments right throughout the continuum of education in this country. Most importantly, that starts in preschool. I'm concerned that there'll be a blind increase in federal taxes to support such a policy, and we need more detail. I do ask the opposition, in announcing its policies, to provide that detail, at least in the interests of the states.

The coalition is focused on early education. We're focused on the family. We're focused on family businesses, particularly in regional Australia. And we've all shared the experience. It's important to us that we have that support in place. Just today I spoke to my daughter Annabelle, one of our six children, who completed a university exam this morning. It took me back, as I spoke to her, to the days when I dropped her off to preschool—long before I came to this place, quite obviously. It was important to her. It's important to all of our children. We need to improve outcomes, we need to support the system and we need to support the states.

**Mr WATTS** (Gellibrand) (15:52): The Leader of the Opposition created a problem for me recently. As many people in my community know, people ask me, 'Why did you into politics? What do you want to achieve in your political career?' or 'If you were PM for a day, what would you do?' I used to tell them I'd do universal access for three-year-old kinder. There's a lot of nonsense in this building, particularly in recent times, but when you think about the big things, the really big things that matter to this country, when you ask yourself what will really matter over the long term—not over the news cycle, not over the electoral cycle, but over decades, generations—this is it; the evidence is in: access to universal early childhood education, high-quality early childhood education, matters. So, if a Labor government wins the next election and forms government I'll need a new answer to that question, because a Shorten Labor government, thanks to the hard work of the member for Kingston, will make this happen.

Like many of my colleagues, I'm a parent of young kids. Both of my kids are under the age of seven, and you get a PhD in parental guilt in this place! My kids share their dad with this building and more than 100,000 of my constituents. You end up worrying a lot as a dad whether you're doing everything you can to give them the best start in life, even when you can't be there. It's so important. We know that 90 per cent of children's brain development happens before the age of five. Both of my children have gone through early childhood education while I've been an MP, so I know how important high-quality early childhood education is. It helps teach kids the skills that parents can't—social skills, school-readiness skills, foundation skills for a life of learning.

That's why I am proud that Labor has committed to the biggest ever investment in early childhood education in Australia, an investment of an additional \$1.75 billion into early childhood education that will deliver two years of high quality play based learning to support the most important years of a child's development, when they're three and four years old. Labor's plan will see around 700,000 three- and four-year-olds access preschool every year, including more than 2,000 three-year-old children in my electorate. The Morrison government, in contrast, has failed to extend preschool funding for four-year-olds beyond the next school year. They talk about certainty—if someone said that you had job certainty for 12 months, would you think that was giving much certainty? It's just not good enough.

They on the other side of this chamber don't get it. They don't get that investment in early childhood education is an investment in the Australian economy, in sustaining our prosperity. The European Union has found that, for every dollar invested in early childhood education for three-year-olds, \$4 was returned to the economy. If you could find an infrastructure project with a four-to-one CBR, you'd be laughing all the way to the bank. Those opposite just don't get it. They don't get that investment in early childhood education would make Australia a fairer society. If you want to give all Australian kids a fair go in life, you've got to give all Australian kids access to high-quality childhood education. As a dad, I want my children to have the best possible start in life. But, as a Labor MP, I want all children in Australia to have an equal opportunity to reach their full potential. Who a child's parents are and where they are born shouldn't matter to their ability to reach their full potential.

But in Australia today that's not the case. In Australia, the influence of a parent's income on a child's adult income has actually increased in the last ten years. That means that, if the parent earns more, the child is likely to earn more as an adult. That's not a fair go. Children in less-advantaged households are less likely to be exposed to reading. The best-educated parents are twice as likely as the least-educated parents in our society to read to their children every night. Inequality manifests early and it becomes more expensive to address with age. What kids learn before the age of five is the foundation of what and how they will learn for the rest of their lives. We know how important language acquisition and vocabulary building is in these years, but the non-academic skills are even more important—relationship building, conflict resolution, self-control and focus, skills that are essential both to being a successful learner and a successful member of our society. It's far harder and more expensive to bridge the skills gap in primary school, in high school, in university or in TAFE.

If we're serious about fighting intergenerational inequality, we need to start at kinder. We need to start with kids at three and four years of age, and we need to ensure that every kid in Australia gets every opportunity to reach their full potential in life. That's the kind of country that we on this side of the chamber believe in—an egalitarian society, a society of the fair go for all. I couldn't be prouder of the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Kingston for their work in this area, and I'll fight every day till the next election to make it a reality for future generations of Australians. *(Time expired)*

**Mr ALEXANDER** (Bennelong) (15:57): Firstly, I'd like to compliment the member for Gellibrand for his most genuine contribution. Thank you to those opposite for bringing forward a debate about preschools, and I mean that, because preschool is a most important time in a child's development. Studies regularly demonstrate that investment in the earliest years of a person's life pays dividends throughout their education and their life beyond. That's why the government is investing so much in this critical area of education. In addition to investing record funding of \$8.3 billion this financial year in the childcare system, the coalition government's funding for preschool is secure until the end of 2019, with around \$870 million available to support preschools throughout 2018-19. With funding locked in until 2020, we have certainty and time for this work to be done properly to ensure future funding investments are aimed at achieving the best outcomes for our children.

We are determined that future arrangements address issues in the current system such as attendance, particularly amongst vulnerable, disadvantaged and Indigenous children. We've seen results in terms of increased enrolments, but we need future arrangements to boost attendance and to ensure children are getting the best outcomes from their early learning opportunities. The coalition government is further committed to preschool in the childcare package that commenced on 2 July this year. We're investing record funding of \$8.3 billion this financial year in the childcare system. The coalition has removed the activity test for preschool-age children to attend preschool programs in childcare so that preschool-age children can attend without the family needing to meet the activity test. These families can therefore receive the applicable childcare subsidy that their family is entitled to.

This is all excellent news for my local preschool and childcare centres, many of which I have had the pleasure of visiting just this year. Just a few months ago, I was at the Clovel Early Learning Centre in Eastwood to celebrate great local centres through Early Childhood Education Week. Clovel is an excellent place, with committed staff and wonderful children. They often say that the best measure of an institution is the longevity of the staff, and, by that measure, Clovel must come out near the top, with the education leader, Theresa, still working there after 21 years, and a number of other employees having been there for more than a decade.

Bennelong is at the cutting edge of preschool education. Our local centres, particularly the Top Ryde Early Learning Centre, have been integral in the trial and expansion of the Early Learning Languages Australia program, or ELLA. ELLA is a language app for preschool children, which, after its highly successful trial at Top Ryde, is now rolling out to schools across Australia. It has given our local children the opportunity to experience Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian, French or Arabic languages through apps which are being delivered to selected preschools across Australia. It's a great opportunity for our preschoolers to make an early start on becoming familiar with another language, and I'm delighted that the government has invested \$9.8 million in the languages app to help to revive language study in Australia's early education schools and universities.

Finally, another great early childhood program in my electorate is the wonderful CCA's Mobile Play Group. We launched their Mobile Play Group van earlier this year, and, since then, it has been providing structured play resources to aid early learning childhood development, and will develop skills such as literacy, numeracy, science, construction, art, craft, music, group activities and imaginative play. The van's mobility means that it can reach families across the electorate. The CCA has a particular focus on engaging culturally and linguistically diverse families, which is very beneficial in Bennelong, as we are proud of being a very strong multicultural community. CCA aims to have 50 per cent of playgroups targeting children and their grandparents of Chinese background, as evidence suggests that these families face greater obstacles to accessing vital early childhood learning resources. I would like to add that this project has only come about through a generous grant from the federal government's Stronger Communities partnership grant program, which makes high-quality valuable projects such as these viable. *(Time expired)*

**Ms TEMPLEMAN** (Macquarie) (16:02): Listening to those on the other side, it's very clear: this government is like an old house with a termite problem; it's being destroyed from the inside out, eaten away every second of every day, and there is only so long you can keep pretending that everything is okay before you just have to knock it down and start over. Sure, you can rebuild the verandah out the front; you can paint the mailbox so it gets the Shaynna Blaze street-appeal tick. But, as soon as you look a bit closer, you can see it's a wreck. In a desperate attempt to stop it all from crumbling down, it seems they do two things: first, float a change in major foreign policy, hoping it will prop something up—anything! And then you accidentally support a white supremacist

slogan, with your fingers crossed that it'll prop something up somewhere, too. But—alas!—no luck. An infestation is an infestation.

On this side of the House, we have a strong, united team, with a plan to deliver a fair go for all Australians, and I stand here proudly as a member of a team that has committed to the biggest ever investment in early childhood education in Australia. This program will offer every child, every family, two years of high quality, play based learning, to support the single most important years of a child's development. It's universal access for every child, no matter where they live. It will help parents balance the challenges of work and family life and help ease the pressures of their childcare bill.

I was in Bligh Park recently, talking to a mum of two children under four, who was providing a really rich home environment but wanted to give them the benefits of a quality preschool program, but she was struggling to afford it. This will mean that she and many other parents will have access if we win government and have the opportunity to implement it.

I just want to point out: this is not simply taking one policy announcement and saying, 'Here it is. Here's the plan.' This is a part of a holistic plan to look at how we can guarantee around 700,000 Australian children access to subsidised preschool for two years.

In Macquarie alone, in my electorate, this is greater access to early education for more than 1,700 three-year-olds. Not only have we committed permanent, ongoing funding to the national preschool and kindy program for all four-year-olds and extended that cover to all three-year-olds; we will set aside \$100 million in a fund to expand capacity where it's required to help with the new enrolments and to help people adjust. We will also make sure that preschools and early learning centres are high quality and safe, by restoring the \$20 million for safety and quality funding that was cut by those opposite. We will scrap the up-front fees for 10,000 early education students studying at TAFE, because that's how we'll build our early education workforce.

It's a well-thought-through package for the whole sector. I commend our shadow minister on her work. It will reduce inequality in this country in generations to come. The change is so important and so integral to our children's futures, but those opposite just don't get it. The Liberal funding for the four-year-olds' program expires next year, and we know that there is absolutely zero in the budget to cover it. That's been confirmed time and time again.

Can I be clear: this is not just about mums and dads. Of course it's about mums and dads on one level—mums and dads who want to give their kids a high-quality start in life. But let's be really pragmatic and use the evidence base. A recent European Union study showed that for every dollar spent on early education for three-year-olds, \$4 was returned to the economy. This is a damn good investment. You often hear people comment that they are sick of short-termism in government and in politics. Well, here you are. This is a long-term investment in the people who will pay taxes when we're too old to do it, who will look after us when we're in hospital, who will look after us in aged care and who will help us stay in our own homes. When the current crop of two-year-olds are 25, I will be 78. This investment is in the workforce of the future. It will help them thrive at school and it will help them thrive in tertiary education. Ultimately, it's going to grow our economy. It just makes sense. It is good economic sense, and if the Liberals were really any good at managing the economy, other than through sheer luck, they would have done this first and they would be supporting us now. *(Time expired)*

**Dr GILLESPIE** (Lyne) (16:07): It's obvious that there is universal agreement across this House that early childhood education is critical in developing the best for every child. I just want to point out some pretty obvious facts that have been distorted by the other side.

We are funding compulsory preschool of 15 hours a week, with \$428 million this year and \$444 million next year. There are also negotiations already afoot to make sure that the money actually leads to children attending preschool. You don't get any benefit from funding; you get benefit from going to preschool for those 15 hours a week. As the minister, the member for Wannon, so accurately pointed out, the attendance figures for 15 hours a week of preschool are notoriously bad in many states who are quite happy to accept the funds but don't ensure the children turn up for preschool. In some states it's at low as 40 per cent—in many it's 50 per cent—and the more remote and disadvantaged areas are the ones with the lowest attendance. That's why there are negotiations going on. In fact, the federal government never paid for preschool—it was solely a state responsibility—up until 2008, so we want to make sure that states are not taking the money without delivering the service.

Everyone understands that early learning influences the transition into school, but a lot of the argument is based on overseas experience. We have evidence, which many on the other side are familiar with, that attendance at preschool in the year before your schooling improves your NAPLAN score in year 3. There are lots of figures showing that going to preschool before your schooling means you are much more likely to finish and graduate out of school, less likely to drop out from school, and more likely to have better outcomes.

But there is nothing wrong with your early learning being delivered in a family daycare centre rather than a formal preschool situation or with your own family. In fact, there is a lot of evidence coming out of Europe, from Germany and Italy—I've got the articles here; I can show you later, Mr Deputy Speaker—that in some quarters extra formal daycare leads to a lower IQ down the track and that there is less beneficial social and emotional wellbeing and more aggressiveness in children that are in very long daycare. So we've got to be careful how much we take on as a state and how much we let parents interact with their children.

The evidence is that the benefit is greatest to the child where the parents aren't delivering that sort of one-on-one stimulation, play, interaction, early reading, looking at images and speech development. In remoter areas English might be a first language or a second language or third language. We have lots of migrant parents in this country who aren't fluent in English and theirs are the kids who will get the biggest benefit. That's what our policy is all focused on and that's why we are arguing with the states to get the attendance figures up, and we'll deliver the money.

The other thing that is not very well appreciated is a lot of these figures about attendance in the years before school are based on the European experience. Children in a lot of countries in Europe—and I've got some figures here—do not start school at 4½ or just turning five like here in Australia; they start at seven and six, so the two years before school are actually older than what we are advocating here in Australia. In Finland, school starts at seven. In the UK, it has been an issue in the press there that children who have just turned five shouldn't be let to go to school because they start their school in the middle of their summer, or our winter, whereas we start school in January, in the middle of their winter. In Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece and Hungary, they start school between six and seven, so preschool for them is when you're five and six, not four and three. I mean, we're not all going to end up rocket scientists and with PhDs because we have our children in preschool at the age of three.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The discussion has concluded.

### PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

**Mr CHRISTENSEN (Dawson) (16:12):** I wish to make a personal explanation.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hogan) (16:12):** Does the honourable member claim to have been misrepresented?

**Mr CHRISTENSEN:** Yes, most grievously.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Please proceed.

**Mr CHRISTENSEN:** In question time, the member for Isaacs asked a botched question, which wasn't allowed by the Speaker. In that question, he made a couple of claims regarding me, which I wish to correct in the House right now, the first being this claim that I attended some sort of neo-Nazi event. The event he was talking about was a libertarian event called Liberty Fest, all about less government, not authoritarian government, something which I strongly support—limited government, lower taxes and less regulation. He also made a claim that I put a white supremacist statement up on social media. I can tell you that the statement was anything but. For the purposes of the *Hansard* and House, the statement said:

It's OK to be white.

It's OK to be Aboriginal.

It's OK to be Torres Strait Islander.

It's OK to be South Sea Islander.

It's OK to be Asian.

It's OK to be Jewish.

It's OK to be whatever ethnicity you are.

If you're for all of the above, good on you. If you're against any then you're a racist and that's fairly unAustralian.

And it's GREAT to be Australian!

### COMMITTEES

#### Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters

##### Membership

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hogan) (16:13):** I have received messages from the Senate informing the House of a change in the membership of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters. Copies of the message are on the chamber table and details will be recorded in the Votes and Proceedings.

**BILLS****Customs Amendment (Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership Implementation) Bill 2018****Customs Tariff Amendment (Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership Implementation) Bill 2018****Returned from Senate**

Message received from the Senate returning the bills without amendment or request.

**Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Bill 2018****Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2018****Second Reading**

Cognate debate.

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

to which the following amendment was moved:

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

"whilst not declining to give the bill a second reading, the House notes the Government's mismanagement of aged care reform"—

Debate resumed.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hogan)** (16:15): Before debate is resumed on this bill, I remind the House that it has been agreed that a general debate be allowed that covers the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2018. The original question was that this bill be now read a second time. To this the honourable member for Franklin has moved as an amendment that all words after 'that' be moved with a substitute other words. In continuation, I call the member for Eden-Monaro.

**Dr MIKE KELLY** (Eden-Monaro) (16:15): I was reflecting upon the enormous blowout in the waiting list for in-home aged care before I broke my speech on the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Bill 2018 and the related bill. It really is getting quite distressing for all of those people who are in these incredibly attenuated waiting periods now. People are dying, waiting for in-home care. It's just a completely unacceptable situation, and I'm getting feedback on that at every community forum, mobile office or interview I have around the region. Of course, this is exacerbated much more in rural and regional areas.

It's a shame that the coalition government did not build on what was the successful concept of the Living Longer Living Better program. I guess it's just another testament to the failures to build on Labor's initiatives in many areas in this respect. I'm also very proud of the investment that we put behind aged care along with that program. In Eden-Monaro we invested not only in facilities but also in relation to the workforce issues that have been presented to this country with the demographic challenge of an ageing population. I was very happy to get funding for the Bega and District Nursing Home—half a million dollars there is an example of facility support.

In relation to that challenge of the workforce, we are looking at a 300 per cent increase in demand over the next 30 years. That has to be met; we have to be planning for these sorts of skill challenges. Most of our good, full-time and rewarding jobs in the future may be in areas like the NDIS and health and aged care. So where is the plan for that? We're not seeing any plans in the Defence skills area either, frankly, or a plan for supporting the Snowy Hydro scheme—we know there are going to be 5,000 new jobs there. All of our TAFEs have been gutted, with the \$3 billion that this government has cut from TAFEs. That has also been compounded by the damage that the New South Wales state government has done to TAFEs. This is heinous, in that we've seen a 140,000 loss in apprentices over that time.

In contrast to that, when we were in government we saw hundreds of thousands of dollars invested in training for the aged-care workforce in Eden-Monaro, including at the Eurobodalla Adult Education Centre, where \$675,000 was dedicated to providing the skills and training that that workforce needed for the demand that was really increasing, particularly in my electorate. We have a number of aged-care facilities right around the region. Obviously, it's an attractive place for people to come to and retire to—to enjoy facilities in a beautiful environment, surrounded by caring communities. But they need that support.

The other aspect of it, of course, is not only the workforce but in relation to those facilities. There is a greater demand on the nature of those facilities. There is astronomical growth in dementia in Australia at the present time.

In 2016 dementia became the leading cause of death among Australian females, for example, surpassing heart disease, and in 2018 we know there are an estimated 436,366 Australians living with dementia. And we're also seeing a lot of early onset dementia that we never used to see. There is a lot of speculation about the causes of that—of course, some of the baby boomers may have experimented with different types of cigarettes or whatever in their time—but, certainly, this growth in dementia is a huge problem.

That means we have to provide higher-end facilities to deal with that demand. I've talked to a lot of our aged-care facilities in Eden-Monaro, like, for example, Horton House Nursing Home and Warmington Lodge in Yass, where there is a lot of knowledge and experience that have been gleaned from international best practice in designing facilities and centres in that space. But it takes money, and we've got to be helping there. When you stump up to the budget that we've just had and say, 'We're putting an extra 3,000 home care packages out there,' but then you take that money from the residential care side of the budget, that's stealing from Peter to pay Paul. And it's hurting these aged-care facilities and their ability to deal with this huge challenge in the growth of dementia. Specifically in Eden-Monaro, we're looking at 3,110 people suffering from dementia in 2018, and that number is going to grow. It's projected to be, in 2028, 4,242 and, by 2058, 6,165. That's a huge challenge for our country and it's one that we must begin planning for in terms of facilities and workforces, because people dealing with those high-end needs really need particular training.

Obviously, when we see the state government pulling registered nurses out of aged-care facilities, like they're doing in New South Wales, there's a huge outcry. I've had meetings around my region. There was a huge forum in Merimbula, for example, with a very big roll-up of people from the sector and people trying to deal with the sector. The big things that were raised were exactly these issues: staff issues, in terms of the ratio to residents, and the heart-rending stories they tell you of being unable to sit with dying residents because they're now completely focused on tasks that they're getting paid for, in theory, with no extra ability to actually provide the human care and contact that the residents need. I've seen this firsthand through some personal experience, but they are telling the heart-rending stories of their inability to provide the basic human contact and service that our aged citizens deserve and earned. They've earned the right to be treated that way.

We talk about the great generation that suffered and delivered to us the peace, freedom and prosperity we enjoy. How are we looking after them now? What's the return for them on all of that sacrifice? The workers in those facilities also deserve our respect and our support. We've seen the horrendous images in the *Four Corners* reports, but there's a larger systemic issue. The royal commission that's being put in place needs to address and deeply dig down into the systemic issues that are causing the problems that have so shocked the nation.

People also complained about the My Aged Care portal. The government are trying to force a lot of stuff online now and so many of our citizens are not just capable with dealing with those types of online portals. They're really struggling with them. Their lives don't necessarily fit into the dialogue boxes that have been created. We know what a terrible record the government have with digital and online services, as my colleague the member for Chifley has highlighted on many occasions. My Aged Care is just another example of the failure of that digital service provision that the government are becoming notorious for. The meetings have been extremely useful but alarming. I put my hand up and say to those people we met at those forums: I thank you so much for providing your personal stories and information. We're feeding that into the policy process. Labor believe in providing you that help, and help will hopefully be on the way if we can win the next election.

The answer to these issues will require a budget strategy, clearly, and that brings me back to the tax reform suite of measures that Labor is proposing. It has been extremely honest and forthright and, some would say, brave in putting them forward to the community. We took the community at their word when they said they wanted politics to be more honest and they wanted respective governments to be honest with them and put forward policy, not come to government and then suddenly surprise them, like we saw with the Abbott administration, which said there would be no cuts to health, no cuts to education, no changes to pensions and no cuts to the ABC or SBS, and immediately proceeded to do all of that. This is a bit of a cautionary warning to the voters of Wentworth on Saturday: before the Griffith by-election, they all ran around and said, 'There's no plan for a GP co-payment. It's outrageous to assert there's a plan for a GP co-payment,' and what did they do after that by-election? Wham: they tried to go ahead with a GP co-payment. So, people of Wentworth, beware. When the government tell you they're going to do a review or do something or not do something, don't believe them.

With our tax reform measures, we will provide the budgetary support for the things that must be done, and that is why the dividend imputation reform is so important. I say to people who have raised this issue with me: think about your retirement income. In retirement, we know that, in the last three years of your life in particular, you will be drawing the most heavily on health services and aged-care services. That's when you're going to need it the most. We could have an American-style, dog-eat-dog, user-pays environment where you will be left to your own devices and it will completely destroy and eat into your retirement income, or this nation could do the right thing

as Australians, who have always believed in providing you with that support so that it doesn't come completely back onto your income. So we need to do things like the dividend imputation reform to assist you with your retirement income and give you the support in your retirement that you have earned. It's not like it is being taken away from you; it's being given back to you as security and support to get the health- and aged-care services that you will need, you will want and you will turn to government to provide. And there will be many more people turning to government to provide that.

This is the necessary reform that has to take place, and it's in areas like closing off tax loopholes, not increasing tax. We're talking about closing all those loopholes out there that the nation can no longer afford. You should not be able to claim this tax relief for tax not paid. It's quite simple and it's fair. So we're about fair tax reform at the same time as putting ourselves in the position to do good budget reform to enable ourselves to also invest in the health facilities, education and aged-care services of the future. That's what you're going to get from a Labor government, and the choice is very clear.

**Ms OWENS** (Parramatta) (16:26): We were all horrified at the appalling record of abuse of elderly in care in nursing homes. It's a full-blown crisis, as *Four Corners* demonstrated all too clearly, and Australians are rightly appalled by the shocking stories we've seen and the crisis in our nation's aged-care system—particularly by the standard of care being delivered in some of our nursing homes. One of the worst in the country is actually in my electorate of Parramatta. But we shouldn't actually be surprised by what we saw on *Four Corners*, because the warning signs have been there for quite some time. There have been reports that have languished on ministers' desks. The Labor opposition called for investigation and action quite some time ago and said that the sector was in crisis. The signs have been there, and it's clear that the government has not acted on those signs. It's clear that, in many nursing homes across the country, the standard that we all expect is not being met.

So Labor is supporting these bills. The purpose of the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Bill 2018 is to establish a new aged-care quality and safety commission from 1 January 2019. The new commission will be tasked with helping to restore the confidence of aged-care consumers in the delivery of aged-care services, given the context of recent public concern. It does become essentially a one-stop shop. The new commission will provide a single point of contact for aged-care consumers and providers of aged care in relation to quality of care and regulation and will be responsible for accreditation, assessment and monitoring, and complaints handling of aged-care services and Commonwealth-funded aged-care services. That covers all four areas of aged-care services, including residential aged care, home care, flexible care services, the Commonwealth Home Support Program and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program. So it is a one-stop shop and it is a significant move to address some of the many problems we have in the sector.

There is a well-known growing need in the aged-care sector, something that we've known about for a long time. We've known for a long time that our population is ageing. Even back in the Howard-Costello years we had reports from the Treasurer on the ageing of the Australian population. An ageing policy is a rapidly changing environment and it's been driven essentially by the Living Longer Living Better reforms delivered by Labor in 2012. Those reforms were designed to deliver important benefits to older Australians, including more support and care at home, better access to residential care, increased recognition of carers and those from culturally diverse backgrounds, more support for those with dementia and better access to information.

I remember those years leading to 2012 when we engaged in the consultation with our many diverse communities, who all have different attitudes to how they support their families as they age and their partners as they age. For many of our communities—and the member for Chifley would know this quite well—the idea of putting a parent into a nursing home is just not an option. It's so far beyond their cultural understanding of support for their parents and their partners. So, provision of home care and culturally-appropriate home care was incredibly important at that time, and it was very well received.

They were really important reforms, because we also know, if you think about it, that what the person wants for themselves and what is best for them and their families, which is to stay at home as long as they can, is also, strangely, cheaper. It's better for everybody. Renovating a bathroom so that a person can get in and out of a shower or a bath, installing a winch so that a person can assist their partner get in and out of bed—these things are relatively inexpensive and allow a person to stay at home. And they're incredibly inexpensive relative to the alternative, which is putting a person in a nursing home or having people come daily to assist. So there are lots of options.

The Living Longer Living Better reforms were designed to provide that flexibility so that families, with all their cultural differences and all their different capacities and needs, could make the decisions that were best for them. The main focus was about consumer directed care that would give older Australians greater choice about the care they wanted but the independence and support to live in their homes for as long as possible, preferably

until they passed away. The aged-care reform package provided \$3.7 billion over five years. It was legislated in June 2013, three months before the Abbott government was elected.

We know how important it is, because 1.3 million Australians are currently receiving some form of aged care provided by 400,000 nurses and carers. And by 2056, which is getting closer by the day, it's projected that the aged-care workforce will need to triple to around one million workers required to deliver services for more than 3.5 million people, and older people will represent one in four Australians. Public expenditure on aged care is expected to double as a share of the economy by the 2050s. We've known this for some time. This is not new information. We have known for a long time that we need to work hard and consistently on making sure we have the appropriate aged-care system in place for our ageing population.

The government have been really quite inept over the last five years. They don't have a minister for ageing and aged care in the cabinet, for example. Given that we're talking about a quarter of the budget within 30 years, given that we're talking about one in four Australians being in aged care within just 30 years, that is quite remarkable. They've had three aged-care ministers across the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison government, and their carriage of the reforms for the past five years have failed to do anything, in any real way, across the Ageing portfolio.

The former health minister, Sussan Ley, did little or nothing to progress the Living Longer Living Better reforms. What she and Tony Abbott will be remembered for is cutting billions from aged care and dumping Labor's \$1.5 billion workforce compact, even though we know we're going to need hundreds of thousands more aged-care workers over the next 10 to 30 years. More than a dozen reviews and reports, including hundreds of recommendations, are still sitting on the minister's desk without being actioned. The government has cherry-picked its way through some of the recommendations but has done little or nothing to drive long-term reform, and any changes it's making are piecemeal in nature. Now that it is acting, we know that it's acting in response to a crisis brought on by the public sector.

Many years ago, when I was in my late 20s, I was a great fan of an old Chinese book called *Bing Fa* or *The Art of War*. It was written by a group of Chinese philosophers but is credited to a man called Sun Tzu. It forms a foundation for a lot of business strategy right through the Asian region. I had about seven translations in my early 20s. It's a phenomenal book. A lot of people misunderstand it. Essentially, it says that the greatest generals are the ones you've never heard of, because they manage not to go to war. They manage to avoid war. The greatest doctors don't have sick patients. You've never heard of them, because the patients don't get sick. If a person lets a problem get to a point it's visible, they've already failed. So the ones known for presiding over the rise of a problem and then solving it are not the ones you should really be praising—they're the ones you've never heard of.

I look at this government sometimes and I watch it do almost the opposite. The idea that this government would see a problem coming and act early to avoid it, to minimise its effects, to make it go away—I don't think they're capable of it. It's as if every time they act it's because they've let the problem get so big that everyone can see it. And, once everyone can see it, they act on it and seek credit for the solution. It's completely the opposite to what a great leader does, it's completely the opposite to what a nation needs, and it's certainly the opposite to what all those people in aged care needed when they were being treated the way the *Four Corners* report showed.

The extraordinary growth in the number of older Australians waiting for care underscores the coalition's complete inaction and failure to address the crisis in our aged-care system. As the list gets longer and longer, fresh stories emerge daily of older Australians waiting for care, particularly in the all-important home care area, which keeps people home with their families as long as possible. It's incredibly important and the choice that most Australians would make. None of us are saying: 'Woo hoo! I'm looking forward to going into an aged-care facility.' None of us are doing that. We all want to stay home as long as possible, and home care allows that. But older Australians are entering residential care, or even emergency departments, rather than staying at home and receiving the home care they were approved for, because the waiting list is so long. Since the first release of data, the waiting list for home care has grown from 88,000 older Australians to more than 121,000, and it includes around 96,000 older Australians with high needs, many with dementia, and around 56,000 older Australians who have no home care package at all.

In the budget, the government announced with fanfare the funding of 14,000 new in-home care packages over four years. I want to break that number down. That's about 3½ thousand places a year. We have 150 electorates. If you assumed—quite wrongly, but probably quite reasonably—that each electorate had roughly the same number of people who were over the age of 70, you would be talking about 23 places per year per electorate. In Parramatta we have 12,300 people over the age of 70. It's inconceivable that the number of new places required in my electorate per year would be 23, when I have nearly 12½ thousand people over the age of 70. Many of those people are in communities where it would be inconceivable for a person to put their parent in an aged-care facility. Home care is actually the necessary solution in order for them to live within their cultural norms and, essentially, sleep at night. So that was an amazing announcement that the government made with such fanfare. We

also know, by the way, that they funded it by taking money from residential aged care. We've seen, instead, the waiting list grow, and it will continue to grow until the government take this seriously.

I don't have the figures for the electorate of Parramatta itself, but I do have them for Western Sydney. As at 31 March, there were 2,160 people in home care packages in Western Sydney, and in June this year there were 968 people in the prioritisation queue who had not been assigned even a lower level package. They hadn't been assigned anything. So we had close to a thousand people in the queue in Western Sydney in June 2018. There were 492 home care packages released in the June quarter, but we had 968 people on the prioritisation list—and that's not counting the people who are not in the prioritisation queue. So there's no way in the world that what this government is doing is keeping up with what is actually required.

We on this side of the House support the royal commission into the abuse and cover-ups in the aged-care sector, but we want to stress again that we've been saying for quite some time that there is a crisis. And we want to point out again that the government mustn't wait for the royal commission to finish before they start fixing this crisis. The Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison government cut \$1.2 billion from aged care. The former Treasurer, Mr Morrison, cut \$1.2 billion from aged care in the first budget, and he cut residential aged-care places in this year's budget. He called this cut—\$1.2 billion from aged care—and further cuts to residential aged-care places 'efficiencies'. Well, they are not efficiencies for the families whose loved ones are being treated the way we saw on *Four Corners*. These aren't efficiencies; this is horrific for families who know that they have no other alternative but to have their parent or their partner in an aged-care facility and know that every day they are being treated in that way. Families are justified to have deep concerns about the quality of care being delivered in residential aged-care facilities for their loved ones, and they saw it proven on *Four Corners*.

Prime Minister Morrison is characterising his \$1.2 billion cut to aged care as a little fact. That's an insult to every older Australian who relies on care. This Prime Minister, when he was Treasurer, actually cut the per resident funding for aged care. Every time he tries to talk about the numbers and says, 'It's more money,' remember that there are more older people. The key here is that he cut the per resident funding for aged care. Each person in an aged-care facility gets less funding per person than they did before this man became Treasurer. Of course the budget grows; it has to grow. The number of older people is growing and the number of people in aged care is growing, but they get less per person, thanks to this government, than they did before. That is the thing to remember when you worry about your family. When you worry about your loved ones in aged-care facilities, just remember that: less money per person under this government. (*Time expired*)

**Mr PERRETT** (Moreton—Opposition Whip) (16:41): I rise to speak on two bills, the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Bill 2018 and the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2018. The purpose of these two bills is to establish a new aged-care quality and safety commission from 1 January next year. The establishment of the commission was one of ten recommendations included in the Carnell-Paterson review. Whilst Labor supports these bills—I say that up front—I would just like to make the comment that it is almost one year since the Carnell-Paterson Review was handed to government. Why has the Morrison government taken so long to action this review, when the aged-care sector is clearly in crisis? Labor has known for a long time that the aged-care system is in a state of national crisis, but this shambolic government has been too busy dealing with their own internal crises to notice.

It is hardly surprising that the sector is in a mess when they've had three different aged-care ministers across the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison governments—the ATM governments. The aged-care minister is not in cabinet, and the coalition does not even have a minister for ageing. There have been dozens of reports and reviews into the aged-care sector, but none of them have been actioned. The only action the coalition government has taken in aged care is to cut. Let's have a look at it. When Prime Minister Morrison was Treasurer, the member for Cook was responsible for ripping out almost \$2 billion from the care of older Australians at a time when the number of older Australians was increasing. Is it any wonder older Australians are suffering with ever-decreasing levels of care? In 2012 under a Labor government, Labor introduced the Living Longer Living Better reforms. These reforms were designed to deliver important benefits to older Australians, such as: more support and care at home, better access to residential care, increased recognition of carers, recognition of those from culturally diverse backgrounds, more support for those with dementia, and better access to information. The main focus of Labor's reforms was to give older Australians a choice and to provide them with the support to live independently in their homes for as long as possible. These reforms were accompanied by a funding package of \$3.7 billion over five years.

Sadly for the elderly of this nation, just three month after those historic Labor reforms were legislated, the Abbott government was elected. Since then, the coalition government has shown almost a complete lack of commitment to Australia's aged-care system. They've cut billions from the aged-care system and they've ignored

dozens of reviews and reports, including hundreds of recommendations that were all about improving the aged-care sector.

Aged-care policy is not something that can be kicked down the road. It's in crisis already and every demographer—and anyone who goes out in their community—knows that it is only going to get worse in the years to come. There are around 1.3 million Australians currently receiving some form of aged care. There are around 400,000 nurses and carers administering the care to these Australians. By 2056, just 38 years away, the aged-care workforce will need to triple. One in four Australians will require aged care by 2056. That's around 3½ million older Australians. We need to get this mess fixed now.

So I support the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. The horrors of abuse we have seen documented on *Four Corners* and elsewhere really are a national shame. Sadly, these are not just one-off incidents. We know that abuse is occurring widely and is still happening today.

When the Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care announced the royal commission, he asked members of parliament to engage with their communities and report what issues should be included in the terms of reference for the royal commission. Unfortunately, he only gave us a very short time frame—in fact, just one weekend—but I emailed my constituents on the Friday afternoon and asked them to report back to me on the Monday.

I was overwhelmed with the response just in that one weekend. Many Moreton constituents told me of their own experiences with their loved ones in aged-care facilities, and this was heart-wrenching information. The same issues came out in emails and phone calls and letters over and over again: staffing levels; the qualifications of staff; the standard of care; appropriate care for those living with dementia; the provision of medical care in residential aged care; the needs of the culturally and linguistically diverse residents; the affordability of aged care and funding arrangements; the transparency of provider performance and regular inspections of residential facilities; information about the choices available in aged care; and responsiveness to the allocation of home care packages and transitions between levels of aged care.

This is a sector in deep crisis. A royal commission is welcome, but older Australians deserve this crisis to be fixed, not just recognised. The Morrison government needs to do its job and look after older Australians who need to access aged care. The Prime Minister has a particular responsibility because he was responsible for those deep cuts into this sector. The waitlist for home care packages has now blown out to 121,000. These are older Australians who want to stay in their own homes, thus saving money—people like my father. They are capable of staying in their home with some support, but the longer they stay on the waiting list without the support they need, the more likely it is that they will need residential aged care. Many older Australians are waiting more than two years for the home care package they've been approved for. This is disgraceful.

It is with great reluctance by the government that these figures were even revealed at all. The release of each set of data has been delayed by months. The most recent data was released under cover of—guess what?—the grand final weekend. It was released late on the Friday afternoon right before the NRL and AFL grand finals kicked off. Labor has written to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care, calling on the government to do more to fix this crisis in the home care package waiting list.

Sadly, there is a significant, growing crisis inside the aged-care sector, and that concerns dementia. Dementia is the second-leading cause of death for Australians, but for women it is actually the leading cause of death. Dementia is not a normal part of growing old. It is an insidious, terminal illness that impacts on and eventually takes the lives of more and more Australians each year. This is an urgent issue, one that has a serious impact on the aged-care sector.

Labor fully understands how urgent the issue is. At the last election, Labor made a commitment to raise awareness of the growing dementia crisis and build community capacity towards a dementia-friendly nation. We must continue to invest in research to find a cure, but, until we have that cure, we need to do more to make our communities livable places for people with dementia. We need to make sure that government gives families and carers of people living with dementia the support they need and that aged-care providers are giving their residents who are living with dementia the care and the dignity that all older Australians deserve.

It is not good enough that older Australians are continuing to endure the suffering that we've seen on our TV screens, on that *Four Corners* program and in other programs. Older Australians living in residential aged-care facilities include some of the most frail and vulnerable in our community. Many are unable to communicate to raise the alarm if their care is not as it should be. They often literally have no voice—and please note that correct use of the word 'literally'. We often hear the phrase, 'It's your word against theirs,' but, for our most vulnerable in aged care, many have no words. When there are unexplained bruises or other injuries, the families have no choice but to accept the explanation given by the aged-care provider, even when that explanation just does not sit right.

They could make a complaint to the Aged Care Complaints Commission. Many of those have been made—more than 5,000 last year. But, as I will come to in a minute, those complaints often go nowhere. Imagine the fear of those vulnerable, frail residents—not able to move, not able to raise any alarm at all and day after day subjected to treatment that no Australian should be subjected to. We must ensure there are safeguards in place for these Australians to protect them from harm.

I must stress that the overwhelming majority of carers in the aged-care sector are great, or good. They are hardworking and caring professionals. We're not talking about the majority; it's just the occasional rogue. But, sadly, sometimes there are not enough of the best-hearted people. There are not enough staff, or not enough trained staff, to properly care for the needs of those dependent on their care.

The Australian Medical Association's submission to the Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee said that the current system has failed older Australians—strong words from the AMA. They said that the current:

... lack of coordination and information-sharing can result in the inexcusable, continuous neglect of older people ...

The AMA quoted the 2017 *Review of the Commonwealth's aged care quality regulatory processes*, that said in its report:

Serious complaints about medication mismanagement and unexplained bruising on a resident at Oakden were raised with the Principal Community Visitor in June 2016 and then with Northern Adelaide Local Health Network (NALHN). This led the CEO of the NALHN to request South Australia's Chief Psychiatrist to undertake an extensive review of clinical care within the Oakden facility in December 2016 and appoint a senior nurse manager on 9 January 2017 to oversee the delivery of clinical care. Inexplicably, the Commonwealth aged care quality regulators were not advised of these issues and instead found out about them through a media report on 18 January 2017.

The Aged Care Complaints Commissioner communicates fewer than 15 per cent of complaints received by it to the Australian Aged Care Quality Agency—15 per cent! That cannot be right! The AMA continued:

There is no overarching regulatory body for the whole aged care sector. This be confusing for aged care providers and consumers, as well as create inefficiencies and a lack of communication between the existing regulatory bodies.

So this bill will create an Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission which will be led by a statutory-appointed Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner. The commissioner will be appointed for a term of five years.

The task of the commission is to help restore the confidence of aged-care consumers in the delivery of aged-care services. There will be a single point of contact for aged-care consumers and providers of aged care in relation to quality of care and regulation. The commission will be responsible for accreditation, assessment and monitoring of and complaints-handling for aged-care services and Commonwealth funded aged-care services. All areas of aged care will be included: residential aged care, home care, flexible care services, the Commonwealth Home Support Program and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program. The functions and operation of existing authorities will be transferred into the new commission. Members of the existing Aged Care Quality Advisory Council will continue for their current term of appointment as new members of the Aged Care Quality and Safety Advisory Council.

As I said at the start, Labor supports these bills, and I support these bills, because these bills will create this new statutory commission. However, I remain concerned about the time it has taken this government—in their 6th year of governing; I guess we can call it governing!—to introduce this legislation, and they've had this recommendation for almost a year. There were 5,779 complaints about aged-care services submitted to the current Aged Care Complaints Commissioner in just the last 12 months. That was an increase of 23 per cent on the previous year. So there is much work to be done to improve the lives of older Australians. As a nation, we should judge ourselves by how we treat our elderly—this generation that has done so much for us. We can't call ourselves a fair and generous country until we give all elderly Australians the love, care and respect that they deserve.

**Ms HUSAR** (Lindsay) (16:54): It's always good to follow the member for Moreton in his passionate speech, particularly about aged care, and it's great to have so many Labor people up here speaking on this important issue. It's something that we need to all consider, given that we're all ageing and we're all going to get there at some point—some sooner than others, as I note especially when I stand in this chamber with those around me now.

We need to do better in the aged-care sector. Currently 1.3 million Australians are receiving some form of aged care, provided by about 400,000 dedicated nurses and carers. I must say that the reports we've seen on *Four Corners* don't reflect all of the great work that is being done by some of those hardworking and dedicated aged carers. Given that we're all ageing and we'll all be there at some point, in order to keep up with the monumental demand, which is going to increase exponentially by 2056, the aged-care workforce needs to triple to adequately deliver services. Older Australian will make up around one in four of the population. There are over 14,000 age pensioners living in my electorate of Lindsay. Not all of them receive aged care, but it is fair to say that at some

point they will. We need to establish this new Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission and we need do it now—no more stalling, no more waiting.

Given the government dumped Labor's \$1.5 billion workforce compact and supplement after the 2013 election, we have consistently called for the development of a comprehensive aged-care workforce development strategy to address the issues of training and staffing levels on an ageing workforce. The government finally addressed workforce issues by announcing \$1.9 million for an aged-care workforce taskforce in the 2017-18 budget; however, when the government made the membership of its task force public six months later, it failed, ironically, to include any representatives from the aged-care workforce.

The government's long-term inaction in the aged-care sector means devastating things for everyday Australians. The quality standards and reporting systems are not working, as was very adequately outlined by the member for Moreton. Aged-care workers are under immense pressure to cope with the increasing amount of work and the same—in some cases less—pay, respect and support. I've had representations in my electorate from aged-care workers who are not given adequate breaks; they're not given adequate training; and they're not given adequate conditions to work in under the pressure that they do, lovingly and caringly providing assistance and support to older Australians.

The government, however, thinks that funding just 14,000 new home care packages is enough to deal with the backlog that we have seen grow to 108,000 people currently waiting in the last six months, including 88,000 people with high needs, many living with dementia. Around 54,000 Australians are receiving no packages at all. I watched my great-uncle suffer with dementia. It's not a pleasant disease to watch somebody die from. It's not a pleasant thing to watch them lose all their functions and their ability to be alive, slowly and painfully. We need aged-care workers who are adequately trained and also a government who is willing to openly and transparently provide that support.

The average wait time for somebody at the moment for a level 3 and 4 package is still more than 12 months. I can't imagine watching what my great-uncle went through and then saying that we've got to wait another three or four or 12 months. I don't know what our family would have done. We are also awaiting key data, including a state and territory breakdown of the home care package wait list. Australians who rely on these services also deserve to know when the government's budget, which announced the 14,000 places, will be released and delivered.

It is now clear, though, that the government and the minister have failed to curb the growing home care package wait list and have done nothing whatsoever to reduce this aged-care crisis that has occurred under their watch. The Liberal government shouldn't be waiting for the royal commission to finish before starting to make an effort to fix this national crisis. I note that in May, when Bill Shorten said to this parliament that there was a crisis in the aged-care sector, the government called it the equivalent of committing elder abuse. It is good that they are now actually starting to listen and pay attention. It's a shame that it took *Four Corners* to reveal that, but that's another reason why we need a good ABC, I guess.

More than two months after this minister for aged care received the Aged Care Workforce Strategy Taskforce's report *A matter of care*, the Liberal government finally released their strategy. On the other side they seem to be a government of blue skies and rainbows and unicorns. It would seem that they're planning on driving this reform in the sector without having to provide any additional funding whatsoever to implement the strategy. The strategy needs to consider issues such as the proposal for 24-hour registered nurse coverage at residential aged-care facilities as well as the important role of professionals such as GPs, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and dietitians and the impact that the allied healthcare profession can have on older Australians. I acknowledge the chair of this report, John Pollaers, for his important work, and I implore the government to take on the strategy seriously and implement it now without any further delay.

It was only in May this year that the government was refusing to acknowledge that our aged-care system was in a state of national crisis, a crisis that has been caused by endless cuts to this sector. After six years and three prime ministers, those opposite still can't get it right. In his first year as Treasurer, the now Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, cut almost \$2 billion from the aged-care sector. Despite this track record, I hope that he makes good and takes this crisis seriously. We've seen report after report and review after review ignored, just collecting dust on the shelves of all of us who have copies of them in our offices, without the government showing any desire or ability to fix the problems. The government's inaction, denial and cruel cuts have manifested in not even being able to fill three vacancies on its advisory council, which is quite concerning given the level of responsibility that the advisory council has. We only have to look at the budget and no further to understand that those opposite have never, and will never, put the best interests of older Australians front and centre. We see that not just in the aged-care crisis but also in their cutting the energy supplement and cutting back Medicare services for older Australians. This government is completely out of touch when it comes to older Australians. It will never put them

front and centre, this generation of people who have worked hard to give us the standard of living that we all enjoy now.

The government hasn't allocated a single dollar for Australia's aged-care system in this year's budget. Not only did it underdeliver, but the budget was also quite dishonest and underhanded in trying to say that it funded things which it didn't. Playing politics with the lives of old people is never fun. It's now evident, by the government's own admission, that the 2018-19 budget response of 14,000 home care packages over four years is woefully inadequate, given that the waiting list, as I said before, is up to 108,000. Disappointingly, the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison—and-who's-next?—government has shown a complete lack of commitment to our older Australians by cutting billions from the aged-care system. It is often said in this place that you are judged by how you treat your most vulnerable people, and I think this is an appalling indictment and a sad reflection on those opposite. Funding only 14,000 new in-home aged-care packages over four years is cruel and made even worse by the fact that the funding is coming from within the aged-care budget, not from new money. Instead of focusing on the needs of older Australians, those opposite have been quite busy and quite successful at fighting themselves. If only they were as good at fighting for older Australians as they are at fighting themselves, I think we'd all be in a better position here. They've denied their duty of care.

In contrast, though, Labor has a strong track record when it comes to ageing reform. It was Labor that introduced the historic Living Longer Living Better reforms in 2012, and it will be Labor that will make ageing and dementia a national priority. Only a Labor government will fight to make sure that older Australians are getting their fair share. The government has created this aged-care crisis and ignored it for so long now that it's going to take a mammoth effort on our part to fix it when we're in government. It astounds me that this government can justify \$80 billion in tax cuts for the big end of town, including \$17 billion for the big-bank fat cats, while stripping away funding from our most vulnerable Australians. I think it's important to point out the anomalies in giving people a tax cut while older Australians with dementia and high needs are basically left to rot in a state of disarray. It's particularly cruel, though, after the government promised older Australians it would address the injustices in the aged-care sector. The government needs to apologise for constantly overpromising and underdelivering and for failing older Australians while giving away \$80 billion in tax cuts. Those opposite must start to work collaboratively with unions and aged-care providers in order to compete with the growing demands and pressures being placed on the sector and to correct the injustices that have been done in the aged-care frame.

If this government fails to act, we will see not only the material impact on older Australians but also the mental impact of the stress and anxiety in the minds of older Australians who are left to fight for themselves and the families and carers who look after them voluntarily. This government has created the crisis, and it needs to come clean and fix it. Its failure to fix this crisis is an absolute reflection on how this government feels about older Australians.

**Ms BRODTMANN** (Canberra) (17:05): I'd like to start by noting that it's a relief to finally be here. It's a relief to see the Morrison government introduce the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Bill 2018 into the parliament, and better late than never. One year ago, almost to the day, the government was handed the *Review of national aged care quality regulatory processes report*, better known as the Carnell-Paterson review report. This review was the result of a Senate inquiry into aged care, after an investigation into the South Australian Oakden aged-care facility revealed abuse and neglect of elderly residents. This bill arises from one of the 10 recommendations from that Carnell-Paterson review. One year ago—again, I underscore this—this government received that review's report. And here we are talking about it today. Since they received the report of that review, it has been one year. It is only now that we are talking about this.

This bill is to establish a new Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission from 1 January next year. The new commission will be tasked with helping restore the confidence of aged-care consumers in light of recent public concern. It will address all four areas of aged-care services: residential aged-care services, home care services, flexible care services, the Commonwealth Home Support Program and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program.

We've seen the reports from the ABC and the fact that this government announced a royal commission just the night before the program actually went to air. Labor supports the royal commission into the abuse and the cover-ups in the aged-care sector, but we don't believe that we have to wait for a royal commission to finish before we start fixing the crisis that has been created by those opposite after years and years and years of cuts to the sector.

There are 108,000 people on the home care package waiting lists, including 88,000 people with high needs. This includes many people in my community. I want to share just one of their stories. These are not hypotheticals; these are stories of the real lived experiences of men and women who have contacted my office for help, after months of feeling helpless.

Margaret lives in Kambah and requires modifications to her bathroom to ensure it is safe for her to use. Margaret's occupational therapist has told her that these modifications are vital—they're absolutely essential for her to live happily and safely in her own home. Margaret was approved for a home care package and applied to a local service provider to have these modifications done 14 months ago. For over a year, she worked with the provider to get the modifications, including to get a handrail installed in her shower. After 12 months of back-and-forth, Margaret was told that the service provider was no longer able to help. After 12 months of communication, the light at the end of the tunnel had gone—it had vanished. She had to start the whole process again. So Margaret began to look for other service providers in the area that could provide the services that she had had approved. Unfortunately, there is only one, and this provider is already at capacity with home care packages and unable to accommodate Margaret. She has now been placed on a waiting list, and it could take up to 12 months for her issues to be addressed.

Since being put on the waiting list, Margaret has had a fall in her shower. She was hospitalised, and her occupational therapist told her once again that the modifications to her bathroom were essential and urgent. This situation is ongoing. Just today, Margaret told me that she is still waiting for a home care package. This is a member of my community who, as recently as this morning, couldn't shower in her own home without the burden of the risk of yet another injury. After a year of back-and-forth to get the package she is entitled to, she has been forced to sit around and wait again.

Last month, in question time, the minister for human services was asked why more and more older Australians were finding it hard to get their applications for the age pension approved. He was, unfortunately, unable to answer, instead inviting MPs with individual concerns to contact him. In 2017-18, the average wait time for Australians trying to access the age pension was 49 days. This is up from 36 days the year before.

In Canberra, it seems to be a different story. Several members of my community can only wish they fell into this timeframe. I recently heard from Peter and Jenny, who live in Banks, who told me that, after applying for the aged pension, they were forced to wait five months—that is, about 150 days—with no communication about the progress of their application. Every email they sent to the department was unanswered and at one stage they were waiting on hold to the Department of Human Services for 45 minutes, so I hope that the minister is listening. Jenny and Peter told me calling or emailing is just a waste of their time. Eventually, they were fed up and visited my office, just like Jan, who waited four months or 120 days for her age pension, and Noel who also waited five months or 150 days for his age pension. Frank and Sharon waited a total of 10 months or a whopping 300 days to receive their age pension.

I hope the minister is listening. Here's what Canberra has to say in response to the request that you just sent out in question time. Frank and Sharon had by far the longest wait time I have ever heard about. I have no doubt there are many more Canberrans experiencing these delays in home care packages and aged pensions and I encourage them to contact me. Canberrans, please call or email my office if you are experiencing unreasonable wait times and delays for the services that you are entitled to.

**Ms LEY** (Farrer—Assistant Minister for Regional Development and Territories) (17:11): In summing up for the Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care, I want to acknowledge the contributions of all members on all sides of the parliament relating to this incredibly important issue. For any of us who have tuned in to some of the personal stories from so many colleagues, it has been quite heartbreaking. I commend the Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care in particular for the lead role he has taken and is taking in actually turning so much of the anguish into action.

The Australian population is ageing and senior Australians and their families deserve to have confidence that they and their loved ones are being properly cared for. The Australian government has established a royal commission to look more broadly at the challenges facing the aged-care sector, particularly as Australia's population ages, including the quality of care provided in residential and home aged care. The royal commission is in addition to, not instead of, the action the government is already undertaking. The government remains committed to continuing its reforms to improve safety and quality in aged-care services. This includes the establishment of a new aged-care quality and safety commission announced in the 2018-19 budget. The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Bill 2018 and the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2018 are part of the Australian government's fundamental reforms of the aged-care system. The reforms contribute to the promotion of high-quality aged-care services that meet consumer needs and preferences, and create a competitive market-based system where consumers drive quality.

The new independent Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission will be a single point of contact for consumers and providers of aged care in relation to quality of care and regulation. The commission replaces the existing Australian Aged Care Quality Agency and Aged Care Complaints Commissioner and, from 1 January

2019, will be responsible for the accreditation, assessment, monitoring and complaints handling of aged-care providers and Commonwealth-funded aged-care services. The commission will also undertake consumer engagement and education of providers, consumers and the general public as part of its functions.

The work of the commission will be strengthened through a number of initiatives announced in the 2018-19 budget, which will be delivered progressively over two years. This includes the development of options for a serious-incident response scheme and measures to strengthen risk profiling of providers with the aim of preventing or responding quickly to failures of aged care.

The provisions of these bills have been referred to Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee for inquiry and report. The government will consider the recommendations and findings of the committee in the context of reforms being introduced by these bills and, as appropriate, through broader aged-care quality reform. Once again, I thank members for their contributions on this very important debate.

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

The House divided. [17:19]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .....68  
Noes .....73  
Majority.....5

#### AYES

Albanese, AN  
Bandt, AP  
Bowen, CE  
Burke, AS  
Butler, MC  
Byrne, AM  
Champion, ND  
Clare, JD  
Collins, JM  
Dick, MD  
Elliot, MJ  
Fitzgibbon, JA  
Georganas, S  
Gorman, P  
Hart, RA  
Hill, JC  
Husic, EN  
Kearney, GM  
Kelly, MJ  
Khalil, P  
King, MMH  
Leigh, AK  
McBride, EM  
Mitchell, RG  
O'Connor, BPJ  
O'Toole, C  
Perrett, GD (teller)  
Rishworth, AL  
Ryan, JC (teller)  
Snowdon, WE  
Swan, WM  
Templeman, SR  
Vamvakinou, M  
Wilkie, AD

Aly, A  
Bird, SL  
Brodthmann, G  
Burney, LJ  
Butler, TM  
Chalmers, JE  
Chesters, LM  
Claydon, SC  
Danby, M  
Dreyfus, MA  
Ellis, KM  
Freelander, MR  
Giles, AJ  
Gosling, LJ  
Hayes, CP  
Husar, E  
Jones, SP  
Keay, JT  
Keogh, MJ  
King, CF  
Lamb, S  
Marles, RD  
Mitchell, BK  
Neumann, SK  
O'Neil, CE  
Owens, JA  
Plibersek, TJ  
Rowland, MA  
Shorten, WR  
Stanley, AM  
Swanson, MJ  
Thistlethwaite, MJ  
Watts, TG  
Zappia, A

#### NOES

Abbott, AJ  
Andrews, KJ  
Banks, J  
Broad, AJ  
Chester, D  
Ciobo, SM

Alexander, JG  
Andrews, KL  
Bishop, JI  
Buchholz, S  
Christensen, GR  
Coleman, DB

## NOES

Coulton, M	Crewther, CJ
Drum, DK (teller)	Dutton, PC
Entsch, WG	Evans, TM
Falinski, J	Fletcher, PW
Flint, NJ	Frydenberg, JA
Gee, AR	Gillespie, DA
Goodenough, IR	Hartsuyker, L
Hastie, AW	Hawke, AG
Henderson, SM	Hogan, KJ
Howarth, LR	Hunt, GA
Irons, SJ	Joyce, BT
Keenan, M	Kelly, C
Laming, A	Landry, ML
Laundy, C	Leeser, J
Ley, SP	Littleproud, D
Marino, NB	McCormack, MF
McGowan, C	McVeigh, JJ
Morrison, SJ	Morton, B
O'Brien, LS	O'Brien, T
O'Dowd, KD	O'Dwyer, KM
Pasin, A	Pitt, KJ
Porter, CC	Price, ML
Pyne, CM	Ramsey, RE (teller)
Robert, SR	Sharkie, RCC
Sukkar, MS	Taylor, AJ
Tehan, DT	Tudge, AE
Van Manen, AJ	Vasta, RX
Wallace, AB	Wicks, LE
Wilson, RJ	Wilson, TR
Wood, JP	Wyatt, KG
Zimmerman, T	

Question negatived.

**The SPEAKER** (17:24): The question now is that this bill be read a second time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

### Third Reading

**Mr WYATT** (Hasluck—Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care and Minister for Indigenous Health) (17:24): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

### **Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2018**

#### Second Reading

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

### Third Reading

**Mr WYATT** (Hasluck—Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care and Minister for Indigenous Health) (17:25): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

## MOTIONS

### Minister for the Environment

**Mr BURKE** (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (17:25): I move:

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

(1) notes:

(a) in the House today, the Environment Minister categorically denied reports that last night she said to the former President of Kiribati "I know why you're here. It is for the cash. For the Pacific it's always about the cash. I have my cheque book here. How much do you want?";

(b) however, multiple sources have confirmed to journalists that the Minister did in fact say those words;

(c) the Minister also told the House today during Question Time that only "a small amount of money" could be spent on administration under the Government's almost half a billion dollar Great Barrier Reef grant and that administration costs were capped at five per cent;

(d) however, under the Government's grant agreement up to 10 per cent of the entire grant can be spent on administration by the Foundation itself and a further 10 per cent of any grant money provided to subcontractors can be spent on administration as well, which means that more than \$80 million can be spent on administration; and

(e) immediately before providing this incorrect information, the Minister was handed a note by the Prime Minister which she appeared to rely on during her answer when she falsely claimed that administration costs were capped at five per cent—an amount \$60 million lower than what is the case; and

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

(a) attend the House to correct her answers as she is required to do under the Prime Minister's Ministerial Standards; and

(b) advise the House whether any of the incorrect information she provided was as a result of the note handed to her by the Prime Minister.

It beggars belief that what we saw today was anything other than the Minister for the Environment misleading the House of Representatives. And when a minister misleads, they have an obligation to come into this place and correct the record. There is no doubt that by now the minister knows she misled. Her own office has a copy of the contract that makes it clear that more than \$80 million can be spent on administration. They know that what was provided to this parliament is wrong. I suspect the minister would have been here a moment ago for the division. The obligation under ministerial standards is that you correct the record at the first available opportunity. Well, where is the minister? The minister should be here now correcting the record, because we saw two misleads that she needs to address. One of them appears to have been on the basis of false information having been provided to her by none other than the Prime Minister of Australia.

You really start to see what happens when the advertising guy has been put in charge of everything. It doesn't matter to them now whether what's presented is factual; all that matters to them is that they get over the next hurdle. This minister would have known exactly what she said last night to the former President of Kiribati. The words were put to her in writing by Senator Patrick Dodson prior to question time so that she was fully forewarned about this, and other people who were present have since corroborated the exact account that was presented to her in question time. What does the minister say? Sometimes you get weasel words—they say there was a different context or it was a little bit different. No, the words from the minister today were these: 'I 100 per cent disagree with what he has said was the conversation.' There is no room to move now. We had a minister provide information to the parliament about what she said last night to the former President of Kiribati that, based on all of the evidence in front of us, is just plain wrong.

We had that same minister in question time today provide information to us about how much could be spent on administration that is demonstrably wrong, based on the contract that the government itself has signed with the foundation. When did the government ever tell us, when they gave half a billion dollars away to a small private foundation, that \$80 million of that wasn't for the reef but for a small private foundation to become a really big foundation and for a whole lot of contractors to take 10 per cent off the top as well? The minister described the amount that could be spent on administration in these terms: she said it was 'a small amount of money'. It takes a pretty extraordinary level of incompetence and denial to describe as 'a small amount of money' even \$20 million, but, when it's \$80 million, that's extraordinary.

Sometimes we come back after question time when someone has provided information that is incorrect. Often at the end of question time ministers or even prime ministers will stand up and add to an answer and correct information that they provided that was false. But this minister provided false information about what happened last night and provided false information about what is in black and white in a contract. She then would have come back here, I suspect, for the division. She has been available to the House. The shadow minister for climate

change and I had a media conference a little while ago—more than an hour ago—explaining all of these issues. So there is no doubt that the minister, by the time she walked into the House for the division, knew she had misled the parliament. She knew. What did she do? Did she walk up to the dispatch box? Did she let people know that she was correcting the record? No, she just walked out again, as though there is not a problem.

Misleading the House has been described by none other than the Minister for Home Affairs as a cardinal sin. Misleading the House is the one thing that everybody in Westminster has always agreed is a reason a minister would have to go. But it has always been accepted that if someone makes a mistake they merely have to correct the record. Well, the minister has had the opportunity, and she hasn't done that. So it's time for the House to call on the minister to come back here and correct the record and to tell the truth about what was said last night, rather than to give an account of the conversation last night with the former President of Kiribati that doesn't match the version corroborated by the other people who just happened to have heard what was said. The minister needs to come back and tell the truth about what was said last night.

The minister needs to come back and tell the truth about how much money this government claimed was going to the Great Barrier Reef and instead is being thrown away so a foundation run by some of their mates can go from being a small foundation employing half a dozen people full time to being a foundation that has tens and tens of millions of dollars at its disposal not for the reef but for itself. Don't forget: 'administration costs' will include their own salaries. 'Administration costs' will include their own friends who they choose to employ, and the contractors will have the same opportunity.

If you are the Minister for the Environment in that government, of all the things that could be a factual piece of information that you probably should know about, it's probably the Great Barrier Reef Foundation. It's not like it's been a small issue. It's not like the concept that's in front of us is something that wasn't likely to come up in question time.

It's one thing for a minister to be incompetent. It's one thing for a minister not to be able to answer questions that should have been in the question time briefing so she should have known or questions that she should have known because they only happened last night. It's another thing for the minister to then think that ministers in this government are just above the rules, that they can provide misleading information to this parliament and it just doesn't matter. It does matter, and this parliament will expect this minister to come back into the House and to correct the record, to tell the truth about how much money can be thrown away on administration and tell the truth about what was said last night to the former President of Kiribati.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hastie):** Is the motion seconded?

**Mr BUTLER (Port Adelaide) (17:36):** I second the motion. This—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hastie):** Are you speaking to the motion?

**Mr BUTLER:** Yes, that's right. That's the idea.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I give you the call.

**Mr BUTLER:** That's what happens. Phil Coorey from the *Financial Review* wrote this morning that yesterday was one of the worst days that any government has had in recent memory. Well, the Minister for the Environment is trying to lift the bar. She potentially misled this parliament not only once in question time earlier this afternoon but twice, on two separate matters utterly central to her portfolio. I think any casual observer of the environment and climate change portfolios would understand that this minister, to say the least, has made a slow and inauspicious start to her portfolio. But what she has done this afternoon beggars belief. And her failure to come in and participate in this debate just compounds the insults to these portfolios and to our friends and neighbours in the Pacific islands region.

We've only heard once or twice from this minister. She's done one interview in the several weeks she's had this portfolio, and it was a complete car crash. She described the IPCC report, one of the most serious reports published on climate change in recent years, as just the 'opinion' of a number of scientists. When asked what policies she was putting in place to bring down carbon pollution, it was a whole list of things that this government has tried to abolish: the CEFC, ARENA, the Renewable Energy Target and 'building' one billion trees. It's not entirely her fault, because this has been a government at least consistent in its denial of climate science and the need to take serious action on climate change, but today brings into question very clearly this minister's fitness to hold an office of minister of the Crown.

Last night, it is said—by Senator Patrick Dodson, one of the most respected figures in the Australian community—that this minister, when informed that former President Tong from Kiribati was here in Australia again to talk about climate change, said: 'I know why you're here. It is for the cash. For the Pacific, it's always about the cash. I have my chequebook here. How much do you want?' Former President Tong is a nominee for the

Nobel prize, a confidant of President Obama on climate change policy, not only an esteemed figure in the region and a regular visitor to Australia about the existential threat posed by climate change to our neighbours in the Pacific but an esteemed figure around the world. Not only is this a deep insult to him as an individual but it's a deep insult to the entire region because of what President Tong represents as a key, esteemed figure from that region.

The minister came into the parliament and didn't equivocate about this. As my colleague the member for Watson said, she denied it 100 per cent. She denied Senator Dodson's account 100 per cent. But, since question time, another figure who was at the table and heard the conversation has backed Senator Dodson's account 100 per cent. It is well beyond time that this minister came in and corrected the record, withdrew the comments she made last night and apologised not just to President Tong but to our neighbours in the Pacific. And the clock is ticking on whether or not this minister has a future as a minister of the Crown if she continues to delay the delivery of her responsibility to do this.

This government has form, unfortunately, on this question. We all remember the Minister for Home Affairs and his boom-mic moment, when he laughed at the fact, as he described it, that Pacific Islanders might be late because they have water lapping at their doorsteps. He laughed at the existential threat facing communities that Australians regard as friends and neighbours. In the Pacific Islands Forum, in recent weeks, we know—because the Prime Minister of Tuvalu said so—that the Australian government sought time and time again to water down declarations from that forum about the importance of the global community, including Australia, taking serious action on climate change.

This is a government with clear form on disrespecting the science of climate change, disrespecting the impact that climate change will have on some of our neighbours and friends in the Pacific Islands, and disrespecting individuals, like President Tong, who have devoted their remaining years to doing everything they can to engender climate action around the world. The clock is ticking on this minister. Her duty now is to come into this parliament, apologise and withdraw the outrageous comments she made last night.

**Mr HUNT** (Flinders—Minister for Health) (17:41): This government rejects this motion from a party that is a bunch of frauds on the environment, frauds on the reef and frauds on climate change. And let us begin with their glorious achievements: pink batts, green loans, cash for clunkers, a citizens' assembly and putting the reef on the World Heritage watchlist. I had to go and correct your disastrous pattern of putting the reef at the risk of being declared in danger and, of course, a carbon tax that was nothing more than an electricity price hike. So these guys, on that side, are environmental frauds. And we are calling them out today.

Hands up those who think that the pink batts program was a success. Is there one member on that side who will stand for the pink batts program?

**Mr Rob Mitchell:** I'm happy to!

**Mr HUNT:** One brave soul.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hastie):** Order! The minister will resume his seat. If the member for McEwen wants to interject he can do it from his seat.

*Honourable members interjecting—*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Just try me.

**Mr HUNT:** So is there one who stands up for the pink batts program? I knew the families that were affected by it. This is an opposition that pretends to be pro-worker, yet there was an utter silence, a cowardly silence, a conspiracy of silence about a program that took four lives. Is there anybody who's proud of that program—any brave souls, anybody sufficiently callous, anybody sufficiently cowardly? We warned, we talked in advance, of the first loss of life, about a program that was going to be a catastrophe. We put that program to the Auditor-General before the first of those four young men lost their lives. There was nothing—no response, no care, no concern. Not one member of this great coalition of the workers' supporters stood up for those young men in advance. Nor, when they talk about investing in the environment and waste, do they think that a \$2 billion catastrophic waste is worthwhile, because it was an utter shame, in terms of public money, as the royal commission found. It was a royal commission that eviscerated the program, eviscerated the conduct, and we had to fix it up, in terms of payments to the families and businesses that were affected by it.

It was the same with the green loans. It was a catastrophic program that utterly failed to achieve value for money and outcomes. When you raise the issue of investing and getting value for money, that program was a disgrace and a disaster and an embarrassment to the then government. Before we even get to the issue of the citizens' assembly and cash for clunkers—is there anybody here who stands by cash for clunkers? Just one, one brave soul. Come on!

*An opposition member interjecting—*

**Mr HUNT:** Oh, you're a cash for clunkers fan? Is that a program that you will bring back? The member for Griffith is a big fan of cash for clunkers. What about the citizens' assembly—that glorious policy which they abandoned the moment they were re-elected in 2010?

By comparison, we hear a little bit about the reef. The question of the reef has been raised in this context. The government is investing over \$400 million in programs to improve the reef. Let us remember what the largest part of that is: it's reducing sediment run-off; it's reducing the impact of nutrients; it's reducing the impact on the reef of the items that come from farms or gullies. They are all programs with a practical, real-world impact. I have a little bit of acquaintance with this because I had to attend the meeting in relation to the World Heritage Convention. Why was that so important? That was important because, when we came into government, Labor had two consecutive motions from the World Heritage Convention Committee which put Australia's Great Barrier Reef on the watch list, on a path to 'in danger', and they demanded a radical change. They demanded a change because what had occurred under Labor was a catastrophic failure of management, a catastrophic failure of environmental outcomes and a catastrophic failure in relation to protecting Australia's reputation. Do you know what happened at that meeting in Bonn in 2015? The World Heritage Committee took what Australia had done on the reef, in our time, on our watch, including the ending of capital dredge disposal in the Great Barrier Reef and including ending the five major proposals that Labor had for capital dredge to be dumped on the reef. They saw our investment, they saw our long-term plan out to 2050, they saw the changes that we made and, as a consequence of that, they praised Australia as a global leader.

This is about waste and calling out Labor's utter fraud and 'what we've achieved', and it also is about the reef. In relation to the reef, we turned around Labor's catastrophic mismanagement. Those people are utter frauds on the environment and the reef, and the World Heritage Committee called them out. Why did they praise us? Because we got it right and we reversed their failures. We reversed the actions which led to Australia being put on the path to 'in danger', on the World Heritage watchlist. I am very happy—

*Opposition members interjecting—*

**Mr HUNT:** You know that the 2012 and 2013 decisions of the World Heritage Committee made it absolutely clear that, without reform, Australia was going to be put—

*Opposition members interjecting—*

**Mr HUNT:** You are airbrushing history and you out to be utterly ashamed of what occurred on your watch. Let me be absolutely clear: the third part of this element is about climate change. When we came into government, there was a 750-million-tonne shortfall to meet our 2020 targets. Do you know what? We're on track now to be an almost 300-million-tonne surplus government. We have a billion-tonne turnaround from where Labor had emissions to where we are. We've achieved what they promised. We were on a track to fail. So we have achieved the very thing they promised but were unable to deliver. Their own figures, in their own last assessments, showed a shortfall of 755 million tonnes. The other thing we did as part of that was to abolish a catastrophic carbon tax, which wasn't going to achieve the outcomes but was going to achieve the damage.

The last time they were in government, they brought an electricity tax to the Australian people. They deliberately increased the price of electricity. We took that tax and abolished that tax. We reduced the price of electricity, as the ACCC said, by the full amount of the tax that the previous government introduced, and, as a consequence, families and business and jobs are better off. But, as we project forward to what their plan is and their proposal is, it's another electricity tax. As the Prime Minister made clear last night, potentially we are looking at a tripling of the carbon tax with their 45 per cent emissions reduction target and their 50 per cent renewable target. If we put those two together we have a near tripling of the carbon tax, but in the form of an electricity tax. So their plan going forward now is a massive electricity tax on Australians.

They want to talk about honesty and they want to talk about record. Well, we are very happy to talk about those. They are ashamed of what they did on the reef and they deny what the World Heritage Committee had to say. They are ashamed of what they did in the Home Insulation Program and in the pink batts program. Not one of them is willing to stand by that—but on this occasion for good reason, because young people lost their lives in a program which was a disgrace. Not one member of that government should ever be in government again.

As a consequence of that and because of those failures—because of their failures on the reef and because of the fact that they were 755 million tonnes short—we reject this motion on every possible ground. On that side they are environmental frauds; on this side we've achieved the outcomes. We reject this motion, and categorically reject it.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that the motion moved by the Manager of Opposition Business be agreed to.

The House divided. [17:55]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes .....71  
 Noes .....71  
 Majority.....0

AYES

Albanese, AN  
 Bandt, AP  
 Bowen, CE  
 Burke, AS  
 Butler, MC  
 Byrne, AM  
 Champion, ND  
 Clare, JD  
 Collins, JM  
 Dick, MD  
 Elliot, MJ  
 Fitzgibbon, JA  
 Georganas, S  
 Gorman, P  
 Hart, RA  
 Hill, JC  
 Husic, EN  
 Katter, RC  
 Keay, JT  
 Keogh, MJ  
 King, CF  
 Lamb, S  
 Marles, RD  
 McGowan, C  
 Mitchell, RG  
 O'Connor, BPJ  
 O'Toole, C  
 Perrett, GD (teller)  
 Rishworth, AL  
 Ryan, JC (teller)  
 Shorten, WR  
 Stanley, AM  
 Swanson, MJ  
 Thistlethwaite, MJ  
 Watts, TG  
 Zappia, A

Aly, A  
 Bird, SL  
 Brodtmann, G  
 Burney, LJ  
 Butler, TM  
 Chalmers, JE  
 Chesters, LM  
 Claydon, SC  
 Danby, M  
 Dreyfus, MA  
 Ellis, KM  
 Freeland, MR  
 Giles, AJ  
 Gosling, LJ  
 Hayes, CP  
 Husar, E  
 Jones, SP  
 Kearney, GM  
 Kelly, MJ  
 Khalil, P  
 King, MMH  
 Leigh, AK  
 McBride, EM  
 Mitchell, BK  
 Neumann, SK  
 O'Neil, CE  
 Owens, JA  
 Plibersek, TJ  
 Rowland, MA  
 Sharkie, RCC  
 Snowdon, WE  
 Swan, WM  
 Templeman, SR  
 Vamvakinou, M  
 Wilkie, AD

NOES

Abbott, AJ  
 Andrews, KJ  
 Banks, J  
 Broad, AJ  
 Chester, D  
 Ciobo, SM  
 Coulton, M  
 Drum, DK (teller)  
 Entsch, WG  
 Falinski, J  
 Flint, NJ  
 Gee, AR  
 Goodenough, IR  
 Hastie, AW  
 Henderson, SM  
 Howarth, LR  
 Irons, SJ  
 Keenan, M  
 Laming, A  
 Laundry, C  
 Ley, SP  
 Marino, NB  
 McVeigh, JJ

Alexander, JG  
 Andrews, KL  
 Bishop, JI  
 Buchholz, S  
 Christensen, GR  
 Coleman, DB  
 Crewther, CJ  
 Dutton, PC  
 Evans, TM  
 Fletcher, PW  
 Frydenberg, JA  
 Gillespie, DA  
 Hartsuyker, L  
 Hawke, AG  
 Hogan, KJ  
 Hunt, GA  
 Joyce, BT  
 Kelly, C  
 Landry, ML  
 Leeser, J  
 Littleproud, D  
 McCormack, MF  
 Morrison, SJ

## NOES

Morton, B  
 O'Brien, T  
 O'Dwyer, KM  
 Pitt, KJ  
 Price, ML  
 Ramsey, RE (teller)  
 Sukkar, MS  
 Tehan, DT  
 Van Manen, AJ  
 Wallace, AB  
 Wilson, RJ  
 Wood, JP  
 Zimmerman, T

O'Brien, LS  
 O'Dowd, KD  
 Pasin, A  
 Porter, CC  
 Pyne, CM  
 Robert, SR  
 Taylor, AJ  
 Tudge, AE  
 Vasta, RX  
 Wicks, LE  
 Wilson, TR  
 Wyatt, KG

The requirements for an absolute majority not having been satisfied, the motion was not carried.

**The SPEAKER** (17:59): As members would be aware, in these circumstances I issue a casting vote. Normally that vote, according to the principles, would be that the motion doesn't have a majority and the status quo remains, but I think, in line with earlier precedents, I won't exercise a casting vote because the motion is to suspend standing orders and it fails because it doesn't have an absolute majority. So we'll just declare it lost.

**BILLS****Civil Law and Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2018****Second Reading**

**Mr PORTER** (Pearce—Attorney-General) (18:01): I present the explanatory memorandum to this bill and move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Civil Law and Justice Legislation Amendment Bill is an omnibus bill which would amend the Acts Interpretation Act 1901, the Archives Act 1983, the Bankruptcy Act 1966, the Domicile Act 1982, the Evidence Act 1995, the Family Law Act 1975, the International Arbitration Act 1974, the Legislation Act 2003, the Marriage Act 1961 and the Sex Discrimination Act 1984. The bill would make minor and technical amendments to modernise, simplify and clarify the legislation, and to repeal redundant provisions. The combined effect of these amendments would improve the efficiency and operation of the civil justice system.

The government aims to make all Commonwealth legislation coherent, readable and accessible to the widest possible audience. To this end, this bill would amend the Acts Interpretation Act and the Legislation Act to clarify the validity of ministerial acts and the management of compilations of legislation on the Federal Register of Legislation.

The government also aims to make Australia's archival record accessible to the broadest range of applicants possible. To this end, amendments to the Archives Act would assist the National Archives of Australia to appropriately manage requests for records from high-volume applicants and make other minor and technical amendments to the act. The proposed amendments would also simplify the interpretation of the Domicile Act by specifying within the act the external territories to which the Domicile Act applies. This would replace an existing specification of those territories in the regulations, and that regulation could then be repealed. The bill would also amend the Evidence Act to align the time frame for the presumed receipt of postal articles with current Australia Post delivery times.

The bill also reflects the government's commitment to maintain its place in the international legal environment by amending the International Arbitration Act to help ensure that Australian arbitral law and practice stay on the global cutting edge, so that Australia continues to gain ground as an attractive arbitration jurisdiction.

Amendments to the Sex Discrimination Act would repeal obsolete provisions. The bill would repeal the combat duties exemption in section 43 of the Sex Discrimination Act that allows discrimination against women in connection with employment, engagement or appointment in Australian Defence Force positions involving combat duties. The exemption is no longer necessary, as the Australian government's policy to remove all gender restrictions from Australian Defence Force combat roles was fully implemented on 1 January 2016. Repealing this provision is consistent with Australia's intention to withdraw its related combat duties reservation to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Minor and technical amendments contained in the bill would improve the operation of the Family Law Act by clarifying existing laws, simplifying processes and remedying inconsistencies. The bill would make amendments

to provide the same rights to de facto and married couples, when instituting maintenance or property proceedings. The bill would also amend the Family Law Act to clarify that the admissibility provisions in the Evidence Act relating to evidence obtained in an improper or illegal manner apply to disclosures of child abuse made to family consultants.

The bill would also amend the Family Law Act to provide new offences of retaining a child overseas without parental consent or a court order, and these new offences would complement the existing international parental child abduction offences which apply when a child is unlawfully removed or taken overseas. The existing international child abduction offences would also be amended to conform to current drafting practice and provide that the prosecution bears the burden of proving that consent or a court order permitting the taking of a child overseas did not exist. Further, the bill would add a new defence of fleeing family violence for these offences. The unauthorised removal or retention of a child overseas would be excused if this was to escape family violence.

The bill would assist the operation of the Family Court of Australia in a number of ways. The bill would amend the Family Law Act procedure for appointing members of the Family Court of Australia Rules Advisory Committee, to be consistent with the process for appointment of a similar committee advising the Chief Judge of the Federal Circuit Court of Australia. Other amendments to the Family Law Act would clarify the range of persons who may perform the powers of the registry managers in the Family Court of Australia and any other court. The Bankruptcy Act would be amended to clarify that the Family Court of Australia has bankruptcy jurisdiction when a trustee applies to have a binding financial agreement set aside under the Family Law Act. The bill would also make amendments to the Bankruptcy Act to ensure the bankruptcy trustee can be represented in family law proceedings relating to property of a discharged bankrupt person which is vested in the trustee.

The bill would also make minor, technical amendments to the Marriage Act. Many of these amendments are aimed at improving the operation of the Marriage Celebrants Program. These measures would enhance administrative efficiency by making improvements to the annual celebrant registration charge process. The bill would also formalise an existing expectation that marriage celebrants comply with any disciplinary measures imposed by the Registrar of Marriage Celebrants and clarify that the Register of Marriage Celebrants is the publicly available list published on the internet.

In addition, the bill would provide that, where state and territory employees are appointed according to their position title to perform functions under the Marriage Act, they may be referred to on the register by their position title rather than their individual name. The bill would also remedy a defect in the legislation to remake provisions in relation to the registrar of overseas marriages that were repealed in 2002.

In conclusion, therefore, the intention of the bill is to make minor and technical amendments to a number of acts to increase access to justice for all Australians by improving the operation and clarity of civil justice legislation. Significantly, the amendments contained within the bill would improve the civil justice system by making it easier for individuals to understand and comply with the law, and I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr DREYFUS** (Isaacs—Deputy Manager of Opposition Business) (18:07): The majority of this bill, the Civil Law and Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2018, makes a number of minor, technical and uncontroversial amendments to legislation relating to civil justice. The many amendments to existing legislation in this omnibus bill are intended to improve the operation and clarity of civil justice legislation, primarily by modernising, simplifying and clarifying existing provisions and by repealing redundant provisions. Some more substantial changes to existing legislation are also included in this bill, and I will discuss those amendments shortly.

The bill amends the following acts: the Acts Interpretation Act 1901, the Archives Act 1983, the Bankruptcy Act 1966, the Domicile Act 1982, the Evidence Act 1995, the Family Law Act 1975, the International Arbitration Act 1974, the Legislation Act 2003, the Marriage Act 1961 and the Sex Discrimination Act 1984. The bill was carefully scrutinised by the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee, which reported on 10 May 2017. The committee received six submissions, which commented on the proposed changes to five of these acts, and I will discuss those comments in more detail. The committee received no comments on the remainder of the bill, which is not controversial. The committee made several substantive recommendations for improvements to the bill, subject to which the committee recommended that the bill be passed. Labor is pleased that the government is implementing those recommendations of the committee to make improvements to the bill, and Labor is supporting the bill on that basis.

The first recommendation of the committee that the government has implemented relates to the amendments to the Bankruptcy Act. Schedule 3 of the bill would make an amendment to the Bankruptcy Act that would:

... clarify that the Family Court of Australia has bankruptcy jurisdiction when a trustee applies to have a financial agreement set aside under the Family Law Act.

Some submitters raised concerns about these amendments. The Law Council of Australia noted, 'The proposed amendments do not provide jurisdiction to the Family Court in bankruptcy in circumstances where a person has been discharged from bankruptcy, albeit that their estate remains vested in the trustee in bankruptcy.' To remedy this, the Law Council recommended that the definitions of 'bankrupt' and 'bankrupt party to a marriage' be clarified. The committee agreed with the Law Council and recommended that the bill be amended. Labor is pleased that the government has accepted the Law Council's advice and acted on the recommendation of the committee by clarifying that a bankrupt:

... includes a reference to a person:

- who has been discharged from bankruptcy; and
- whose property remains vested in the bankruptcy trustee under the Bankruptcy Act 1966.

The second recommendation of the committee that the government has implemented relates to the amendments to the Family Law Act. The bill makes a significant change to Australia's response to international parental child abduction, clarifies the range of persons who may perform the powers of the Registry Managers in the Family Court, or any other court, and improves the consistency of financial and other provisions for de facto and married couples. The bill contains provisions that would create new offences regarding retaining a child outside Australia in the Family Law Act. The explanatory memorandum notes that these provisions would remedy a gap in the existing legislation.

Next, I wish to comment on the aspects of this bill that relate to family violence. The Australian Human Rights Commission raised their concerns that there are circumstances where it would be inappropriate to expose parents or others to criminal sanction for taking, sending or retaining a child outside Australia. For instance, where there is evidence, in some cases, that children are taken or retained abroad by parents fleeing family violence. An analysis of return-and-access applications under The Hague convention revealed that 70 per cent of child abductors were women and that the most common reason for the abduction was fleeing from domestic violence. The committee formed the view that the bill should be amended to include a defence of fleeing from family violence to ensure that the existing and proposed offences of unlawful transfer and retention of children abroad do not apply in circumstances of family violence. Labor is very pleased that the government has accepted this recommendation of the committee. Labor is firmly committed to responding to family violence and to supporting measures that reduce gender inequality. That is why we believe in supporting legislative reform to better deal with family violence, as well as measures to improve the capacity of the judicial system to deal with family violence. This amendment will ensure that victims of family violence who take their children overseas with them to flee their abuser will not be committing an offence.

There was considerable debate over some months between the government and the opposition about the most appropriate form for these new provisions. Most of that debate was quite technical in nature and I will not recite the many iterations of those provisions here, but I note that the final form of the amendments to several of the provisions in this bill dealing with children being taken overseas are acceptable to Labor. There has been quite some time taken between the time at which the Senate committee reported and the eventual production of this bill with appropriate amendments in this House, but it has been time spent on making sure that the provisions are in the most acceptable form possible to achieve the policy aim that the committee noted and that Labor supports.

There are further comments that I wish to make in relation to the arrest powers. The Family Law Act currently provides that a person who is authorised by the court to arrest another person has powers related to the use of reasonable force in making the arrest, and powers of entry and search for the purposes of arresting persons. In its submission to the Senate committee, the Attorney-General's Department noted that the current arrest powers in the Family Law Act are subject to fewer limits than the arrest provisions available to other federal courts, are broader than the arrest powers available to police officers in the Crimes Act 1914, and lack limits and safeguards. The bill authorises additional persons to make arrests under the Family Law Act, including a marshal, deputy marshal, sheriff or deputy sheriff, police officer or the Australian Border Force Commissioner. The bill also provides that the power to arrest another person is conferred on an APS employee in the Department of Immigration and Border Protection.

The scrutiny committee considered this bill and asked whether the bill can be amended to require a certain level of relevant training be undertaken by those APS employees authorised to exercise these coercive powers. The Australian Human Rights Commission also shared the scrutiny committee's concern. On this basis, the committee urged the government to amend the bill to limit the delegation of arrest powers so that they only applied to employees of the Australian Border Force who have received appropriate training. Labor is pleased that the government has proposed amendments to the bill which limit the APS employees authorised to exercise these powers to only employees of the Australian Border Force, in order to ensure that coercive powers are only being delegated to appropriate persons.

Finally, I come to the amendments that this bill would make to the Sex Discrimination Act. The bill repeals section 43 of the Sex Discrimination Act, which exempts discrimination against women in connection with employment, engagement or appointment in Australian Defence Force positions involving combat duties. It is an anachronistic provision. Labor fully supports this change, which removes gender restrictions from combat roles and is an important step towards equal opportunity for women. Labor is pleased to support the bill.

**Mr PORTER** (Pearce—Attorney-General) (18:16): I thank the honourable member for his contribution to this debate. As has been summarised, the purpose of the Civil Law and Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 is to make minor, technical and uncontroversial amendments to civil justice legislation in order to improve its operation and clarity. The bill compiles minor amendments to civil law and justice legislation. Amendments to the Acts Interpretation Act and the Legislation Act would clarify the validity of ministerial actions and the operation of provisions about the management of compilations prepared for the Federal Register of Legislation. Amendments to the Archives Act would provide the National Archives of Australia with an enhanced ability to appropriately manage high-volume applications requesting access to records and would make other minor technical amendments, including repealing outdated provisions that do not affect the archives' current services or technology advances. The amendments to the Bankruptcy Act would clarify that the Family Court of Australia has bankruptcy jurisdiction when a trustee applies to have a financial agreement set aside under the Family Law Act.

An amendment to the Domicile Act would amend the act so that it applies to territories currently specified in the regulations. An amendment to the Evidence Act would update the presumption about when postal articles sent by prepaid post are received to accord with changes to Australia Post delivery times. Amendments to the Family Law Act would strengthen Australia's response to international parental child abduction, clarify the range of persons who may discharge the powers of registry managers in the Family Court of Australia and improve consistency in the application of provisions for de facto and married couples.

The bill also includes amendments to update arrest, entry and search provisions under the Family Law Act and adds additional safeguards about the exercise of those powers, which have been summarised by the shadow Attorney-General just now. The amended arrest provisions are better tailored to the needs of the Family Court and bring the provisions in line with equivalent regimes exercising arrest powers. The list of arresters under the Family Law Act would clarify those persons who can make arrests. Under the present provision, the court may authorise any person to make an arrest. The proposed list is narrower. It identifies appropriate law enforcement officers and is consistent with the list of authorised persons in the Family Law Rules and the Federal Circuit Court Rules.

It is appropriate that the list of persons who can be authorised as arresters under the Family Law Act continues to include Australian Border Force officers, who will provide support to combat instances of international child abduction. Like other law enforcement officers, Australian Border Force officers are to and do undertake structured and specialised training in arrest powers. The Australian Border Force college provides training, which includes face-to-face training with legal officers on the parameters surrounding the use of the power, discussions with experienced ABF officers who have used these powers in the past, and practical scenario training to assess an officer's understanding of the use of the power in an operational context. Only ABF officers who have received training in relation to arrest, entry and search powers and their limitations would exercise those powers in operating environments.

The bill would also make minor and technical amendments to the Family Law Act to clarify definitions and remove redundant positions. Amendments to the International Arbitration Act would specify the meaning of 'competent court' for the purpose of the model law, clarify procedural requirements for an enforcement of an arbitral award, modernise provisions governing arbitrator's powers to award cost in international commercial arbitrations and clarify the application of confidentiality provisions to arbitrations subject to the United Nations Convention on Transparency in Treaty-based Investor-State Arbitration. Amendments to the Marriage Act would remove outdated concepts and ensure consistency with the Family Law Act in relation to parental consent for the marriage of minors.

Technical amendments of minor policy significance would also be made to improve the operation of the Commonwealth Marriage Celebrants program. The registrar of overseas marriages would also be reinstated, remedying a defect in the existing legislation. An amendment to the Sex Discrimination Act would repeal section 43 of that act to remove the ability for women to be discriminated against in connection with employment, engagement or appointment in ADF positions involving combat duties.

The bill, as has been noted, has had the benefit of the scrutiny of the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee and the Senate Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Bills. I would like to thank these committees for their consideration of the bill. I note the amendments responding to the issues raised by these committees were passed in the Senate.

In conclusion, this bill will make minor and technical amendments to improve the efficiency and operation of the civil justice system and provide individuals with greater access to justice. I thank the members for their contribution and commend the bill to the House.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

### Third Reading

**Mr PORTER** (Pearce—Attorney-General) (18:21): By leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

## Treasury Laws Amendment (Black Economy Taskforce Measures No. 2) Bill 2018 Excise Tariff Amendment (Collecting Tobacco Duties at Manufacture) Bill 2018

### Second Reading

Cognate debate.

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

**Dr LEIGH** (Fenner) (18:22): I move:

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

'whilst not declining to give the bill a second reading, the House notes that the Government's return to surplus—already at risk by the abandonment of fiscal rules—is premised on an accounting change in the timing of the imposition of tobacco excise'.

Labor will be supporting these bills which, in the main, put in place sensible, uncontroversial changes aimed at cracking down on the black economy. Schedule 1 to the black economy bill denies an income tax deduction for certain payments if the associated withholding obligations haven't been complied with. To give honourable members an example of that, currently it is possible to claim as a deduction withholding payments such as pay-as-you-go earnings, even if the required withholding obligation hasn't been met. Changing the rules around that will provide a greater incentive for employers and entities engaging contractors to comply with their withholding obligations, and that measure will have a positive but unquantifiable gain to revenue. It is a recommendation from the Black Economy Taskforce's final report.

Schedule 2 to the black economy bill requires entities providing road freight, IT or security, investigation or surveillance services that have an ABN to report to the tax office information about transactions that involve engaging other entities to undertake those services for them. That's an expansion of the taxable payment reporting system introduced by the former Labor government for the construction sector and expanded with Labor's support to the courier and cleaning services. That measure is projected to increase revenue by some \$605.8 million over the forward estimates, and it too was a recommendation of the Black Economy Taskforce's final report.

The two bills also amend the excise acts to establish a framework to make excise duty on tobacco due and payable at the time of manufacture. It's an issue that was touched upon in debate earlier today in a customs tariff bill, which deals with parallel issues relating to the implementation of this change. As my colleague the member for Blair pointed out, the change in timing is ostensibly to reduce the importation of illicit tobacco. But, just coincidentally, in a 'Oh, my goodness; is that you, Deirdre Chambers?' kind of moment, the measure moves \$3.27 billion into tax year 2019-20. That's because the change is to tax tobacco 12 weeks earlier, upon its entry into Australia, rather than when it leaves the warehouse.

This is really an advertising trick, pretty much what you'd expect from a government led by a former advertising executive, albeit one who was fired by the Howard government—

**Dr Mike Kelly:** Where the hell is he?

**Dr LEIGH:** Indeed! I appreciate the interjection by the member for Eden-Monaro. Without that timing trick, the return to surplus would be pushed back a year to 2020-21. This is coming at the very time the government is in confusion, inconsistency—that's being too kind; they are in complete abandonment of their fiscal rules.

Let's just remind the House what those fiscal rules say, from the 2018-19 budget:

The budget repair strategy is designed to deliver sustainable budget surpluses building to at least 1 per cent of GDP as soon as possible, consistent with the medium-term fiscal strategy.

A little back, before the 2013 election, we were promised surpluses in the first year and every year after that, but that's this year's fiscal strategy.

The strategy sets out that:

- new spending measures will be more than offset by reductions in spending elsewhere within the budget;
- the overall impact of shifts in receipts and payments due to changes in the economy will be banked as an improvement to the budget bottom line, if this impact is positive...

As recently as 26 September, the finance minister told *Sky News*:

No. I do not know where all this speculation comes from. The rule remains precisely the same.

But then the Prime Minister began to crab-walk away, saying, 'There are exceptions to the rules.' He said, somewhat confusingly:

The government reserves the right to exercise that discretion, but they are the rules.

The finance minister then went a little bit further:

Actually, the offset rule in our fiscal strategy in our budget requires that any new spending measures have to be more than offset with spending reductions in other parts of the budget.

What we are talking about here is a tax cut.

As my colleague the shadow Treasurer told the House yesterday, apparently the fiscal rules are now that tax cuts don't need an offset; only spending measures need an offset. The problem is, then, if you're not going to offset them, how are you going to pay for them? So you're spending the revenue upgrade, which is effectively a breach of the fiscal rules. No matter how you cut it, the Liberal Party is planning to breach its fiscal rules by not offsetting tax cuts, by effectively not having a way to pay for the tax cuts, by breaching its own fiscal rule, which says that improvements to the economy, to the extent that they improve the budget bottom line, should be banked rather than spent.

So then Australians are entitled to say, 'What will be the long-term effect of this?' Is it to be an increase in debt already in excess of \$20,000 per person, in gross terms, in excess of \$14,000 per person in net terms? A Liberal Party that once drove debt trucks around the country should now be driving debt road trains around the country.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I call the minister for immigration.

**Mr Coleman:** I draw your attention to standing order 75, in relation to the speaker being on the point of the bill.

**Dr LEIGH:** Deputy Speaker—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I haven't called you. Resume your seat, please. Standing order 75 is on relevance, and I remind you of it. I call the member for Fenner.

**Dr LEIGH:** Thank you, Deputy Speaker. It is difficult to see how the minister could regard the fiscal rules as being irrelevant to a debate over a Treasury laws amendment bill. It speaks to this government's attempt to jettison its own fiscal strategy by suggesting in this House, as the minister has just done, that the fiscal rules are irrelevant to the debate on a Treasury laws amendment bill.

The very fact is that this bill has an accounting gimmick in it—an accounting trick that the projected budget surplus relies upon—which was one of the last-ditch efforts that the government made before completely abandoning any pretence of fiscal responsibility. This is a government which is engaged in fiscal profligacy and fiscal gimmickry and is unable to crack down on much of the wrongdoing that we've seen in the multinational profit shifting, tax havens and the black economy.

Of course we welcome the modest measures in this bill, but the government's complete failure to do anything about tax havens means they are ignoring the \$600 billion of profits shifted annually to tax havens and the \$40 million dollars of multinational profits shifted to tax havens. Tax havens are used by drug runners, extortionists and money launderers. The government's failure to close the loopholes that are allowing profits to be shifted to tax havens is imperilling the budget, as well as being a threat to good, honest businesses in Australia which are not availing themselves of tricky accounting tricks and tax havens.

Labor will get tough on multinational profit shifting and Labor will get tough on tax havens through our transparency measures, through cracking down on passports for sale, through the introduction of a beneficial ownership registry so we can see who really owns Australian firms, and through mandatory shareholder reporting of tax haven exposure. Labor believes in cracking down on tax loopholes. Labor takes seriously the task of budget repair.

In conclusion, at the next election Labor will be able to invest more in schools and hospitals. We will deliver more generous personal income tax cuts for the bulk of Australians. We will pay down debt faster over the

forward estimates and over the medium term. We can do that because we've made the hard decisions under the consistent leadership of Bill Shorten and Chris Bowen over the last five years. Labor takes this task of budget repair and economic policy very seriously. We support these modest measures, but we wish the government would close the loopholes that remain gaping wide.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bird):** I thank the member. As the member indicated he was summing up, I didn't interrupt, but I remind members they should refer to people by their titles and not by their names. The original question was that the bill be read a second time, to which the member for Fenner has moved an amendment. Is that amendment seconded?

**Dr Mike Kelly:** I second the amendment and reserve my right to speak.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The amendment is seconded, so now the question before the chair is that the amendment be agreed to.

**Mr TIM WILSON (Goldstein) (18:33):** Where does one begin after the address from the member for Fenner? That random, long dissertation and rant really had nothing of substance to it beyond the broad commentary and political narrative of an opposition that has never had any economic credibility—not ever; not even under him, and he used to be a professor in these things. He was seeking not even to remotely address the fundamental issue in the legislation, yet he has made an amendment to the bill, which I am sure will be just another pointless exercise in trying to drag members of parliament into this place for the purpose of his own ego, to show to other members that he is capable of moving these things. He can sit and swivel around in the chair that one day, he dreams, he might sit in more permanently.

When it comes down to it, this legislation is actually quite constructive. It's designed to try and help deal with things in a black economy. It's pretty straightforward. I don't even know why it's not just going through on the voices rather than the charade that's being put forward by the opposition. What we're trying to do is increase compliance with the law—and not just the practical application of the law but the spirit of the law. We actually don't think that people should be engaging in aspects of the black economy and deducting things unless it's necessary or appropriate under schedule 1 of the bill; dealing with tax reportability, particularly around domestic freight, in schedule 2 of the bill; and, of course, the matter which I spoke about earlier this morning, related to the collection of tobacco excise.

What we have in this country are thousands of law-abiding taxpayers and citizens. Every day, they wake up, brush their teeth and go off to work. They are on a PAYG system for the most part. They pay their tax. They're in small business. They make their reporting through their BAS, their annual returns and their company reports. And they carry the weight of this country. They're the ones who actually do the right thing. They're the people we should be backing. But we should be making sure that the people who don't do that, who wake up every day with their nefarious agenda of minimising tax—it's not just about minimising taxation, because invariably minimising taxation comes off the back of doing other illegal activity as well, though you can do it without engaging in illegal activity—or finding pathways or loopholes to try to keep more money in their pocket. By the way, I do understand that; I'm a small-tax person—big time. But everybody has to share the obligation of carrying the burden of supporting the structure to keep our country strong, safe and united and to provide support for those people who can't support themselves.

This bill, like all the other measures about the black economy, is designed to cut any loophole or any pathway where somebody can seek to undermine that degree of responsibility they have not just to themselves, not just to their country but to their fellow citizens. That's what this bill is about. It's not about grand political posturing by the opposition or the member for Fenner, because he wants to be able to get up and talk about how apparently there's some sort of problem in this government because it inherited a disastrous budgetary circumstance and the opposition has stopped pretty much any attempt to repair it. That's a thing they forget and don't like to draw people's attention to. Every time we try to reduce spending or reduce the debt, they get in the way, but then they sit on the side of this chamber and crow with their moral authority, the farcical basis of any economic credibility that this opposition has, and then use it to perpetuate the myths and the ideas that, if they were to come to government after the next election, somehow magically they would do away with their habit since the foundation of the modern Labor Party, which is that there is nothing that they're afraid to spend money on, there is no set of fiscal rules they're not prepared to break and there is no sense of responsibility to the Australian people that they're not prepared to trade off.

They're suddenly going to become model citizens, model custodians of the Commonwealth, adhering to tight fiscal rules in the same way that they farcically deceived the Australian people when Kevin Rudd promised in 2007, in the election lead-up, that he was an economic conservative. He only went on then to trash the inheritance that he got—trash it completely. We were one of the few countries in the entire world that had not just a budget

surplus but cash in the bank. They then went on and spent more money and then legislated even more spending, stopped at every single point, any opportunity to bring the budget back and then had the temerity to sit on the other side of this chamber and lecture people about fiscal prudence, as we heard from the member for Fenner—

**Mr Dick:** Why the debt double? You've been in government five years. The debt's doubled.

**Mr TIM WILSON:** as we are hearing right now from the member for Oxley.

I don't mind if you want to come into this place and continually vote for more and more spending and to stop every single effort for the government to show any sense of prudence for the Australian budget. If that's your objective, that's fine. Just own it. Just be honest with the Australian people. There are people out there who will vote for that deception, that dishonesty, that misinformation, that irresponsibility. There are people out there who enjoy it because they see the benefit for themselves. I'm not one of those people. I like prudence; I like responsibility; I would like the taxes to be kept as best as possible for my constituents. I like to make sure that future generations won't inherit the legacy and profligacy of the member of Fenner, the member for Oxley—members who sit on the other side—and particularly the member for Lilley. Some of us actually believe in this and we're quite happy to stand up for it. The bit that's the exception is the absolute incompetence of the former government, who sit there and lecture us.

The party on the other side, the opposition, at their heart have no economic integrity. They do not have an economically prudent bone in their body or their infrastructure—in any part of their objective in seeking to govern this nation. They will always find an excuse. They will deceive the public before the election and find an excuse afterwards. The Australian people actually aren't that dumb. Nobody looks at the member for Oxley and says, 'He's a very prudent man, you know.'

**Dr Mike Kelly:** That's why they voted against you in every by-election.

**Mr TIM WILSON:** Very prudent! He actually believes in consistent themes in the narrative, except for the fact that he's always arguing why he should spend more money. They don't look at the member for Eden-Monaro either and say, 'At his heart, the integrity of his policy platform is prudence and responsibility and wanting to keep more money in our pocket.' They look at them and say, 'No, it's more about the big hand of government in their pocket.' People see through it, so just own it.

We're being responsible, we're taking the steps, we're taking the measures to improve the status of the budget and relieve the burden that sits on the kitchen tables of this nation. People get their payslip at the end of the fortnight or the month—these days they're emailed—and what they see is a government that wants to reduce their tax burden, wants to reduce the liability and wants to say to the people who do the right thing, 'We're going to reward you,' not turning a blind eye to those doing the wrong thing, as has occurred sometimes in the past. That's the foundation of what these bills are about and what the government is about: backing those who have a go. I'm proud to stand for that, but I'm not sure there's any pride in the chicanery and games of those who sit opposite.

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

**Mr DICK (Oxley) (18:42):** I'm disappointed the member for Goldstein is leaving the chamber, because I wanted to start where he finished—about how he's doubled the debt under the Liberal-National government and that gross debt has now crashed through half a trillion dollars for the first time in the nation's history. I will put it on record as part of tonight's debate, while we debate these Treasury laws, that the national gross debt is at a record \$540.1 billion. Net debt has doubled, gross debt has gone through half a trillion dollars and both kinds of debt are growing faster under the Liberals than under the previous Labor government. I understand the member conveniently left out of the equation, over the last 10 years, a minor international economic collapse—as we call it, 'the global financial crisis'. It was conveniently left out of the argument tonight. We will not take any lectures from the government—the alleged or phantom so-called 'economic managers' of this nation's fortunes—when our national gross debt is through half a trillion dollars and net debt has doubled. That is a fact. That's not spin; that's not messaging. That is a simple statement of fact.

I rise to speak on the Treasury Laws Amendment (Black Economy Taskforce Measures No. 2) Bill 2018 and the Excise Tariff Amendment (Collecting Tobacco Duties at Manufacture) Bill 2018 before the House tonight. They concern the black economy and collecting tobacco duties, both of which will have a positive effect on the nation's budget, which is a rarity when it comes to this government. On this side of the House, we support measures to tackle the black economy, which refers to people who operate entirely outside of the tax and regulatory system or who are known to the authorities but do not correctly report their tax obligations. It encompasses a wide range of practices which, at the end of the day, penalise honest taxpayers, undermine the

integrity of Australia's tax and welfare systems and create an uneven playing field for the majority of small businesses, who are doing the right thing. Labor welcomes the government extending the use of measures introduced by the previous Labor government to tackle tax avoidance in the black economy, such as those we are debating today.

I want to spend some time going through the schedules, as the previous speaker seemed more intent on giving us a history lesson than actually talking about the bill tonight. Schedule 1 of the black economy bill denies an income tax deduction for certain payments if the associated withholding obligations have not been complied with. Withholding payments such as pay-as-you-go earnings can currently be claimed as a deduction even if the required withholding obligation has not been met. Schedule 2 of the black economy bill requires entities providing road freight, IT or security, or investigation or surveillance services that have an ABN to report to the ATO information about transactions that involve engaging other entities to undertake those services for them. This is an expansion of the taxable payments reporting system introduced, as I said, by the former Labor government for the construction sector, which has already been expanded by the government to courier and cleaning services, with this side of the chamber's support.

Both of these measures were recommendations of the Black Economy Taskforce's final report, which was handed down in October last year. I want to read to the chamber the chair's remarks in that report:

The black economy is a significant, complex and growing economic and social problem. In our opinion, it could have increased in size by up to 50 per cent since 2012.

The report also mentions:

In 2012, the Australian Bureau of Statistics estimated that the black economy equated to 1.5 per cent of GDP, with the illicit drug industry adding a further 0.4 per cent of GDP. This estimate is now outdated. We consider that the black economy could be as large as 3 per cent of GDP (roughly \$50 billion)—

Think about it: \$50 billion!

given the trends we identify in this Report—

which I believe is a fairly accurate measure. Whilst Labor welcomes the government's efforts to crack down on the black economy, I believe there are some sneaky measures contained in these bills. The sneakiest thing of all in the most recent budget is taxing tobacco 12 weeks earlier, upon entry into Australia, rather than when it leaves the warehouse as at present. This will boost tax receipts once and once only, in 2019-20, by \$3.27 billion, which is convenient because it means the government is able to pull a rabbit out of a hat and return the budget to surplus a year early. What a coincidence, as Deidre Chambers would say. Without that timing trick, the return to surplus would be pushed back a year to 2021. Let me remind the House that this is a government which came to power on the back of a supposed debt-and-deficit emergency, which no longer seems to ever, in any shape or form, raise a mention from those opposite. We had debt trucks driving around Australia. We had billboards, leaflets, direct mail letters and TV ads about the debt-and-deficit emergency in Australia. Perhaps it's not mentioned now, because this government has taken a wrecking ball to the nation's budget and things have blown completely out of control since then.

I would like to put on the record that despite the member for Goldstein's valiant efforts he is in a state of denial when we talk about the budget blowout being four times worse than forecast in the Liberals' first budget. Gross debt has crashed through half a trillion dollars, net debt has doubled since they came to office and both kinds of debt are growing faster under the Liberals than under the previous Labor government, which we all know had a global financial crisis to contend with. Keep in mind that there have been very favourable global conditions and billions of dollars of extra revenue rolling into the budget, and the government has still managed to substantially worsen the budget position. So that's right—things have picked up, but the budget position has got substantially worse.

The world is taking notice of this as well, with the IMF last week downgrading the economic growth expectations for Australia and raising several risks for our future outlook. With heightened global challenges on the horizon, the IMF is urging countries to build up 'fiscal buffers' and, urgently, to adopt policies for strong and inclusive growth. Well, if the government is going to produce this strong, inclusive growth they had better get cracking. Wages growth, as we know, remains at historic lows, coming off an all-time high record of around 1.9 per cent last year, which we know has led to inequality being at a 75-year high.

I want to say clearly tonight, on the record, that this is not a government for working Australians. This is a government for the top end of town and which is out of touch with what the community expects. But there is an alternative, with this side of the chamber bringing cumulative services over the forward estimates. We will have a better plan to pay down debt and to put the budget on a more structurally sound footing with reforms that, as we

know, are being outlined by the shadow Treasurer and the shadow Assistant Treasurer around a whole range of issues pertaining to negative gearing, capital gains tax, dividend imputation and trusts.

I want to talk briefly in the time remaining to me tonight about the government's inaction on offshore tax havens, and I thank the member for Fenner for raising the second reading amendment. Globally, around \$600 billion of profits are estimated to be shifted to tax havens, representing almost 40 per cent of multinational profits. Tax havens are used by drug runners, extortionists and money launderers. Basically, they are used to hide fraud, corruption and tax evasion. According to one estimate, around four-fifths of money in offshore bank accounts is there in breach of other countries' tax laws. So the government must start taking action on tax havens.

Again, I say to the government that we offer to work in a constructive, bipartisan way on that. I call on them to adopt Labor's comprehensive package of tax haven reforms. I will briefly go through those and put them on the record tonight. They include an integrity measure, targeting people who shop for citizenship in tax havens. Under this system, passports or citizenship for sale by tax havens are deliberately structured to undermine the OECD's base erosion and profit-shifting program, particularly the Common Reporting Standard. Under a Labor government, if we are privileged to be elected, all individual Australian taxpayers would need to notify and declare to the ATO if they have residency or citizenship of any other jurisdiction, and the name of that jurisdiction.

Other measures of Labor's tax haven transparency include: mandatory shareholder reporting of tax haven exposure; government tenderers must disclose their country of tax domicile; all firms tendering for Australian government contracts worth more than \$200,000 must state their country of domicile for tax purposes; developing guidelines for tax haven investment by superannuation trusts; and establishing a publicly-accessible register of the beneficial ownership of Australian listed companies. This will allow everyone to find out who really owns our firms. Shareholders should not be able to use complex structures and sham ownership to avoid complying with corporate transparency rules. There are also public reporting of country-by-country reports, whistleblower protection and rewards and ATO disclosure of settlements and reporting of aggressive tax minimisation. When revenue gets lost to tax havens Australians ultimately have to pay higher taxes or suffer cuts to vital services.

In closing, Labor welcomes the introduction of these bills by the government and we support these measures to tackle the black economy. Despite the government slipping in some accounting tricks, as we've identified tonight, to enhance the budget's bottom line for a single year, I'm happy to say that these measures are sensible and practical in order to crack down on the black economy. But I close my remarks tonight by saying that we on this side, under the leadership of the Leader of the Opposition, the shadow Treasurer and the member for Fenner, recognise, and will continue to make sure, that the work still to be done is done, because more work still has to be done in this area.

**Mr COLEMAN** (Banks—Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs) (18:54): Firstly, I would like to thank those members who have contributed to this debate. In the 2018-19 budget, the government responded to the Black Economy Taskforce's final report by announcing measures to address the growing economic and social problem of the black economy. These bills introduce the 2018-19 budget measures.

Schedule 1 to the Treasury Laws Amendment (Black Economy Taskforce Measure No. 2) Bill 2018 introduces changes to deductibility rules, denying a tax deduction for certain payments where an entity such as an employer fully fails to comply with their withholding and reporting obligations, therefore encouraging non-reporting or underreporting of incomes by their employees and contractors. It will send a message that certain black economy behaviours are not legitimate activities by removing deductibility where the obligations are disregarded.

Schedule 2 to the bill extends the taxable payment reporting system to the road freight, security and IT industries, since contractors in these industries are considered by the ATO to be at higher risk of not reporting their income.

Schedule 3 to the black economy bill, along with the Excise Tariff Amendment (Collecting Tobacco Duties at Manufacture) Bill 2018, is designed to combat illicit tobacco. Schedule 3 to the black economy bill 2018 alters the Excise Act 1901 to change the point at which tobacco is taxed to more effectively combat illicit tobacco activity. The excise tariff amendment bill alters the Excise Act 1901 to enable the calculation of duty payable once the taxing point is moved. With this change and complementary Customs amendments, all tobacco entering the domestic market will already have had tax paid, removing the opportunity for untaxed tobacco to make its way from warehouses to the illicit market.

Through effective tobacco control policy, Australia has become a world leader in reducing smoking rates. This has improved the health and wellbeing of Australians and reduced the social costs associated with smoking. It is important to support Australia's tobacco control policies with effective measures to combat illicit tobacco, which is a major source of funding for criminal organisations, and to ensure that tobacco products are taxed correctly to

continue reducing the prevalence of smoking. These amendments will help to restore the integrity to our tax system. The government is committed to countering black economy practices in Australia. I commend this bill to the House of Representatives.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bird):** I remind the House that it was the decision of the House to have a cognate debate, so now I'll deal with the first bill before us, which is the Treasury Laws Amendment (Black Economy Taskforce Measures No. 2) Bill 2018. The original question was that this bill now be read a second time. To this, the honourable member for Fenner has moved as an amendment that all words after 'That' be omitted with a view to substituting other words. The immediate question is that the amendment be agreed to.

Question negatived.

Original question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

### Third Reading

**Mr COLEMAN** (Banks—Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs) (18:57): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

### Excise Tariff Amendment (Collecting Tobacco Duties at Manufacture) Bill 2018

#### Second Reading

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

### Third Reading

**Mr COLEMAN** (Banks—Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs) (18:58): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

### Treasury Laws Amendment (2018 Measures No. 5) Bill 2018

#### Second Reading

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

**Dr LEIGH** (Fenner) (18:59): I move the second reading amendment that has been circulated in my name:

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

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

(1) notes that the Coalition Government has had six Ministers responsible for charities over the last five years; and

(2) expresses its disapproval of the appointment of prominent anti-charity advocate Gary Johns as chair of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission".

Labor will be supporting this bill in the House. Schedule 1 of the bill makes a number of technical refinements to the income tax law so that the new tax system for managed investment trusts operates as intended. Following recommendations made by the Board of Taxation in its report on the Review of Tax Arrangements Applying to Managed Investment Trusts in 2016, the new tax system for attributed managed investment trusts was enacted. Labor supported that legislation. The new tax system was designed to increase certainty, provide flexibility, reduce compliance costs for managed investment trusts and improve the competitiveness of Australia's fund management industry.

The amendments in this bill clarify the operation of the income tax law applying to managed investment trusts and attributed managed investment trusts and make a number of modifications. Those amendments are technical and non-controversial. Schedule 2 updates the list of specifically listed deductible gift recipients, adding the Australian Sports Foundation Charitable Fund, the Australian Women Donors Network, the Paul Ramsay

Foundation Ltd, the Q Foundation Trust, the Smile Like Drake Foundation Ltd and the Victorian Pride Centre Ltd. Labor supports the listing of these organisations.

Schedule 3 provides that entities that promote Indigenous languages may be endorsed as deductible gift recipients. The income tax law currently provides support to cultural organisations that have a principal purpose of, among other things, promoting the arts of Indigenous peoples, but prior to these amendments this category didn't include organisations with a principal purpose of promoting the languages of Indigenous Australians. Given that there are estimated to be 250 original Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and over 600 dialects, it is vital that we as a nation put measures in place to prevent the loss of these languages. One such measure is to extend deductible gift recipient status to organisations with a principal purpose of promoting Indigenous languages. I had many differences with the former Prime Minister, but one thing that I did admire about Malcolm Turnbull was his use of Ngunawal language in this place in delivering the Closing the Gap statements. It is a small way in which we, as non-Indigenous Australians, can acknowledge the rich Indigenous culture of this land, a culture going back 60,000 years, tens of thousands of years before the civilisations of ancient Greece and Rome, and joined to the present day through those traditional Indigenous languages. Organisations that support those languages should be supported in this way.

Schedule 4 makes changes to the Competition and Consumer Act, removing the exemption for conditional licensing or assignment of intellectual property rights, such as patents, registered designs, copyright and eligible circuit layout rights, from prohibitions on restrictive trade practices. The Productivity Commission's intellectual property arrangements inquiry report and the Harper review recommended that this subsection be repealed, largely because the rationale for the exemption has fallen away. The number of arrangements that are affected by removal of the exemption is likely to be small. Intellectual property rights do not of themselves have significant competition implications, and indeed the repeal of subsection 51(3) brings Australia into line with jurisdictions such as the United States, Canada and Europe, which do not provide an exemption from competition law for conditions of intellectual property transactions. In those jurisdictions, and in ours following the passage of this bill, intellectual property assignments and licences and their conditions will be assessed under competition law in the same way as we assess other commercial transactions.

I come now to the substance of the second reading amendment. We read in *The Australian* newspaper today that the charities commissioner, Gary Johns, has raised questions about the work done by environmental charities. This is not the first time that Mr Johns has criticised environmental charities. He said, for example, in *The Australian*, on 8 April 2015, when speaking about parliament's inquiry into environmental charities, that that inquiry 'should question the presumption of public benefit in environmental charities'. And today in *The Australian*, the head of the charities commission has said:

What I will say is that if governments don't like the present regime, which is built around a purposes test, then they have to have something else. And that's probably an activities test.

If governments want charities to butt out of partisan politics, then they'll have to think about whether the purposes test is strong enough.

So, we are seeing here the charities commissioner reverting to type, reverting to his role not as a supporter of charities but as a chief critic of charities, again showing that he is somebody whose role as a critic of charities is his primary focus.

We have seen from the charities commissioner a whole host of attacks on charities. He said in *The Australian* on 2 December 2014: 'The Abbott government should deny charity status to the enemies of progress.' He said in his book, *The Charity Ball*, 'The idea of public benefit needs to be trimmed and tested'. He said in that book, 'there is a great deal of impure altruism in the charities business.' He has attacked Indigenous reconciliation charity Recognise, describing it as 'the officially sanctioned propaganda arm of the Australian government.' He has criticised beyondblue, an organisation supported by the vast majority of members here on both sides of the House, as being an organisation which 'does no dignity to the national debate'. That's what the head of the charities commission says about beyondblue.

The charities commissioner is quoted today as saying, 'You don't want a commissioner who runs around like a bull at a gate.' Indeed, it is not the first time that he has used a bovine analogy when it comes to referring to public policy issues. He said on *The Bolt Report* on 12 July 2015, 'Look, a lot of poor women in this country, a large proportion of whom are Aboriginal, are used as cash cows, right.' That is our charities commissioner, and this is why the head of the Community Council of Australia described putting him in charge of the charities commission 'as a bizarre appointment' which 'sends a signal to charities the government is out to get them'.

As my second reading amendment details, this government have now gone through six ministers responsible for charities. They spent five years trying to shut down the charities commission. They have waged war not just on the environmental charities, as we've seen in inquiries involving the Liberal backbench, but also attacks on

social service charities with the re-introduction of gag clauses, a measure which Senator Pratt has spoken out against strongly. There were then attacks on legal charities for their attempt to become engaged in the public policy debate. This is a government that believe that charities should have the ability to serve soup in a soup kitchen but not to talk about poverty and inequality; to plant trees but not talk about the root causes of deforestation; to help a client in a community legal centre but not talk about the root causes of rising incarceration.

Mr Johns was indeed a Labor member of parliament last century but he is no more Labor today than Billy Hughes was at the end of his career. The fact is that the government is continuing its war on charities. We have had two open letters to the Prime Minister complaining about attacks on charities, the most recent signed by Volunteering Australia, Carers Australia, the Australian Conservation Foundation, the Community Council of Australia, Justice Connect, Philanthropy Australia and the Starlight Foundation. The Liberals are great at bringing charities together. The only problem is, when they bring charities together, they are bringing together charities united against the Liberal government. We have seen possibly the only time in Australian history that GetUp! and the IPA have signed on to resist the same measure, which is the government's attempt to include charities in its ban on foreign political donations. That brought together the Hands Off Our Charities campaign and led to significant reform of those laws. Again, this was charities having to spend time campaigning against the ATM government, rather than getting on with helping the vulnerable.

We've seen a survey from Pro Bono Australia which found that two-thirds of Australian charities find it harder to be heard by the federal government than they did five years ago. Part of the reason for that is they don't know who to speak to. They've had six ministers in five years. It has been a revolving door of ministers responsible for charities in the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison government. They have changed charities ministers twice as fast as they've changed prime ministers, and that's saying something! Now we've had appointed as head of the charities commission—following on from Susan Pascoe, a woman well-respected across the sector—Gary Johns, whose appointment is akin to putting Ned Kelly in charge of bank security. It's akin to putting Bronwyn Bishop in charge of transport for politicians.

The fact is that Gary Johns is somebody whose appointment was announced in the hours after this House's historic same-sex marriage vote. People in this House will be familiar with the expression 'taking out the trash'. It is when governments look for a moment in which the public is focused on another issue to make an announcement they don't want to draw attention to. Well, the appointment of Gary Johns fits that description to a tee. Making that announcement in the hours following the same-sex marriage vote shows how nervous the government were about the response that they knew charities would deliver. This is somebody who believes in the scrapping of the Charities Act 2013.

The House should be clear about what happens if we scrap the 2013 Charities Act: we take charities law back to the 1600s. I'm sure there were good things about the 1600s. It was, after all, the Shakespearean era, and there were beautiful things going on at the Globe at that moment. But I'm not so sure that our charities want to be regulated by charities law of the 1600s, and yet that's what the head of our charities commission believes. As Brad Chilcott, the founder of Welcome to Australia, said, 'The message that charities should not be involved in advocacy is akin to saying you can plant a tree but you can't protect a forest.'

We on this side of the House don't want to put a velvet rope across the entry to the public square. We believe that Indigenous charities should have a role in talking about Indigenous policy and about redressing disadvantage. We on this side of the House believe that social services charities have a valuable role to play. Indeed, I pay tribute to UnitingCare, whose important report mapping the geography of child social exclusion came down this week, Anti-Poverty Week. It is another example of what you get when you're not scared about charities getting involved in the public domain.

When those opposite see charities talking about rising carbon emissions, about the threats to the Great Barrier Reef, they don't deal with the root causes of those problems. No, they put their tail between their legs and look to their hand-picked, unpopular-with-charities charities commissioner to try to shut down those voices. But the fact is we have Australian emissions rising, and, as every child in every school around Australia can tell you, Australia needs to tackle climate change. We need to tackle climate emissions, and attempting to shut down the advocacy work of important environmental charities is simply putting your head in the sand. Those targeted, according to *The Australian's* story, are Greenpeace, the Australian Conservation Foundation and 350.org. These organisations are no cheerleaders for the Australian Labor Party, but we on this side of the House are robust enough to believe in a healthy public debate.

We also support stronger reform to charities laws. We support the fixed fundraising campaign. We support the notion of the charities commission as a one-stop shop, removing duplicate state and territory reporting. We've held 16 Reconnected forums across Australia, talking to the leaders of more than 1,600 charities about rebuilding

social capital in Australia. Labor wants to work with charities. The coalition is waging a war on charities, and at the helm of that war is the charities commissioner himself, Gary Johns.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bird):** I thank the member. The member has moved an amendment. Is the amendment seconded?

**Mr Albanese:** Yes.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I call the member for Grayndler to speak to the amendment to the motion for the second reading?

**Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler) (19:15):** I am pleased to speak on the amendment to the motion for the second reading of the Treasury Laws Amendment (2018 Measures No. 5) Bill 2018 because I am very pleased to support the member for Fenner. One of the things that is happening in this parliament, as you might have noticed, Madam Deputy Speaker Bird—as we see when we look at the list every day, as with the next bill, the Maritime Legislation Amendment Bill 2018, which I am responsible for, and then the Shipping Registration Amendment Bill 2018—is that there is no-one from the government prepared to defend their record, just as there is no-one from the government prepared to speak on this legislation, which deals with some minor amendments, but which provides an opportunity for this amendment to be moved about the failure of the government to understand that a strong civil society requires, and indeed is strengthened by, groups in the charity sector that are able to advocate particularly for the vulnerable in our community—and that's what charities do. The figures raised by my colleague the member for Fenner, that two-thirds of Australian charities find it harder to be heard, stand in stark contrast to what those opposite would have us believe is their ideology—the ideology of Menzies, which is about the individual and respecting individuals. The fact is that those opposite do not do that.

They want to shut down the capacity of people who don't agree with them to have a voice. That's why so many charities feel that this government has been more determined to intimidate them than concerned with actually listening to the issues that arise in our society. The fact is that many people in our community are much better off than they were decades ago, but it's also a fact that a lot of people feel as though they are being left behind. They are being left behind and they are increasingly reliant upon charity for themselves and their families, just to get by from day to day. It's also the case that the community sector should be able to have the capacity to speak out on a range of issues. That doesn't hurt us. I've been a government minister and had to deal with community sector people who mightn't agree with every issue. Every time you build an infrastructure project there will be someone who is adversely affected. What you need to do, though, is not to ignore them. You need to listen to them.

It's the same across the board. Sometimes you need to make decisions in which some people feel aggrieved, but, if they have had an opportunity to put their view, they at least will feel like they have been heard. What's more, it may well be that they come up with better solutions.

One of the things about a democracy, as opposed to a totalitarian regime—which I think those opposite sometimes resemble in the way that they conduct their affairs—is that a democracy allows for different voices, including dissenting voices, which strengthens outcomes.

Here we have, though, the quite extraordinary situation, as the shadow Assistant Treasurer has raised, of the appointment of the anti-charity advocate Gary Johns as Commissioner of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission. It is quite extraordinary that we have someone who has advocated over this entire century—since he had his conversion!—having done quite well out of life himself, just as all parliamentarians are relatively well off!

Gary Johns did very well out of life. He got to be a minister. As a former minister, he's on a parliamentary pension which is significant. Yet he feels as though it is legitimate for him to essentially deride and ridicule and undermine those people who are not as well off as he is. The fact that this announcement was made public at the time that the marriage equality vote was being celebrated in this parliament says it all.

This was literally taking out the trash, when it comes to Gary Johns and when it comes to his attitude towards charities. It is quite indefensible, having been the darling of the new Right movement in Queensland and, indeed, nationally. He has regular columns in *The Australian* which, of course, continually mention he is a former minister for a Labor government. Quite frankly, so what? Lots of people change their views. Mark Latham, who is now a member of a far Right party, once sat in this chamber in a Labor caucus with me. I was never a fan of Mark Latham, I've got to say, and I was never a fan of Gary Johns. I was right on both occasions. This appointment wasn't appropriate, but it says a lot about the cynicism of this government. By all means, Gary Johns may well have been appropriate for a pro resources sector job or—I'm not quite sure; I'm trying to help him out here, but I can't think of much.

Certainly it's the amendment I'm speaking to, and it's a very good amendment by the member for Fenner, it must be said. I think the government is considering supporting this as they listen to the strength of our arguments.

**Mr Falinski:** You'll have to do a better job than this to convince us!

**Mr ALBANESE:** The member for Mackellar, you can tell, was ready to cross the floor as soon as the member for Fenner raised his predecessor. The bells went off in his head and he was ready to walk across the chamber.

The fact is that in Anti-Poverty Week it is appropriate that the member for Fenner has moved this amendment. It is appropriate that we consider this government's attitude towards charities and not-for-profits. People who work for not-for-profit organisations, by and large, do it out of absolute commitment to their fellow Australians. They don't do it for the income that members of parliament receive for the job that we do; they do it out of their commitment. I know so many people who work in that sector who end up giving their own money to people when there's not enough money in the till for the particular fund, and I pay tribute to them. Of course, they rely on volunteers to keep those organisations going, to feed the homeless, to look after people or to visit elderly Australians in their homes. Many ethnic communities in my electorate rely upon volunteers who speak the language of the people concerned because many people, as they get older, lose their English and go back to their first language. People who work in youth work, looking after people who might be affected by drugs and alcohol, are trying to get them on the right track. There are organisations like Reclink, which I've had a lot to do with. There are people like Bill Crews and people like Father Chris Riley. These are the inspirations. When we look at the charity and not-for-profit sector, they could have done better than to have Gary Johns as their head. I commend the amendment moved by the member of Fenner to House.

**Mr IRONS** (Swan—Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister) (19:24): Firstly, I'd like to thank those members who have contributed to this debate, and the member for Grayndler for jumping up—even though he wasn't on the list! But I thank him for giving us enough time to finish off the summing up.

The government is continuing with important reforms to improve Australia's taxation regime for the managed funds industry. We are committed to setting an appropriate legislative framework for what is the largest managed funds industry in our region. Schedule 1 to the Treasury Laws Amendment (2018 Measures No. 5) Bill 2018 provides for a package of technical amendments that will clarify the law, provide industry with increased investment certainty and assist those entities considering whether to opt in to the attribution-managed investment trust regime. The schedule also includes an integrity measure that prevents investors in managed investment trusts from excluding certain income amounts from their cost base, to ensure that investors are paying the appropriate amount of tax.

Schedule 2 to this bill updates the list of specifically listed deductible gift recipients to include: the Australian Sports Foundation Charitable Fund, the Australian Women Donors Network; the Paul Ramsay Foundation Ltd, The Q Foundation Trust, the Smile Like Drake Foundation Ltd, and the Victorian Pride Centre. These changes ensure that taxpayers who make gifts or donations of \$2 or more to these entities can claim an income tax deduction.

Each of these organisations promotes important aims. The Australian Sports Foundation Charitable Fund supports projects where sport is the vehicle to achieve charitable aims. The government is supporting the Australian Women Donors Network to provide a voice for gender-inclusive philanthropy across all focus areas, including education, health, disability, youth and the arts. The Paul Ramsay Foundation Limited pursues one or more of the following charitable purposes in Australia: advancing health, advancing education and advancing social or public welfare. The Q Foundation Trust advances education and engagement in science and technology in Australia.

By granting deductible-gift-recipient status to the Smile Like Drake Foundation Limited, the government is supporting research into preventing drowning. It provides water safety education programs for schools. The Victorian Pride Centre will own and operate a centre in the state of Victoria that will facilitate and host support services, facilities and resources for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or intersex community. Specifically listing these organisations will give them the certainty they need to fundraise successfully.

Schedule 3 to this bill extends deductible-gift-recipient status to entities promoting Indigenous languages. This extension of the deductible-gift-recipient status provides appropriate assistance through the tax system for the public to make donations to these organisations. This measure will enable entities promoting Indigenous languages to be endorsed as deductible gift recipients under the category of cultural organisations, subject to the entities meeting the other requirements for their deductible-gift-recipient status. This will enable taxpayers to claim an income tax deduction for donations of \$2 or more to those entities. There are estimated to be 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and over 600 dialects. The extension of the deductible-gift-recipient status to entities supporting Indigenous languages is just one measure that the government has in place to prevent the loss of these languages.

Schedule 4 of the bill repeals subsection 51(3) of the Competition and Consumer Act 2010. The Productivity Commission recommended repealing subsection 51(3) in its 2016 intellectual property arrangements inquiry report. The 2015 Competition Policy Review also recommended repealing subsection 51(3). Subsection 51(3) of the Competition and Consumer Act 2010 exempts licencing or assignment of intellectual property from most of the prohibitions of anticompetitive conduct under the Competition and Consumer Act. The Productivity Commission found that the rationale for the exemption has largely fallen away, as intellectual property rights and competition are no longer thought to be the fundamental conflict. The measure will ensure that commercial transactions involving intellectual property rights, including the assignment and licensing of such rights, will be subject to the prohibitions on anticompetitive conduct in the Competition and Consumer Act.

The measure will take effect on the day after the end of the period of six months, beginning on the day the bill receives the royal assent. This transitional period will allow individuals and businesses time to review existing arrangements to ensure they comply with the competition law. I commend this bill to the House.

**The SPEAKER:** The original question was that the bill be now read a second time. To this the honourable member for Fenner moved as an amendment that all words after 'That' be omitted with a view to substituting other words. The question now is that the amendment be agreed to.

Question negatived.

Original question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

### Third Reading

**Mr IRONS** (Swan—Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister) (19:30): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

### ADJOURNMENT

**The SPEAKER** (19:30): I propose the question:

That the House do now adjourn.

### Launceston General Hospital

**Mr HART** (Bass) (19:30): In August last year I said in this place that the failure of the Tasmanian health minister, Michael Ferguson, to provide adequate resources to alleviate bed block within the Launceston General Hospital and to move admitted patients out of a stressed Emergency Department was creating a crisis—a well-documented ramping crisis—for our ambulance service. In February of this year I said that it is a very sad fact that we are currently facing a crisis in the Tasmanian health system.

Eight months have passed since then. The crisis at the Launceston General Hospital has escalated. Yesterday the latest Tasmanian health service annual report was formally released. It cast an ever-worsening shadow on the state of the state's second largest public hospital, the LGH, and its under-resourced emergency department. Of course, I acknowledge that this is a snapshot on an annual basis of the performance of a significant public health resource, a vital resource for people in Northern Tasmania. Less than 65 per cent of emergency department presentations are seen within the recommended time frame—less than 65 per cent! Emergency department staff at the LGH have reported publicly that they've had to contend with huge numbers of presentations to the department, even before the winter flu season, with almost continuous bed block. They've been forced to attend to—of necessity—unstable patients in the waiting room of the emergency department. In one 24-hour period there were up to 60 patients in the emergency department, up to 24 patients waiting for access to inpatient ward beds, up to eight ambulances ramped at one time, and, at one point, up to five category 2 patients in the waiting room. Category 2 patients are those with imminently life-threatening conditions. These patients should be seen by a treating doctor or nurse within 10 minutes of arriving.

I cannot say enough here tonight in this chamber to reflect my respect and admiration for and my thanks to the tireless and overworked staff at the LGH, with their dedication to patient care in such dire circumstances. To highlight the unacceptable pressure and their dedication to patient safety, members of the ANMF have been holding rolling vigils outside the LGH every day for over 100 days as part of their Bring Your Own Bed Campaign. This commenced prior to winter falling in Northern Tasmania. I've attended a number of these vigils. They are held every afternoon at the shift change for the LGH Emergency Department, rain or shine, but they always emphasise patient safety and quality of care. I've heard firsthand of the utter stress, the anxiety and the uncertainty that this untenable situation has caused.

I am concerned and Northern Tasmanians have joined me in expressing their concern that, while patients and staff are suffering, the Tasmanian government sits idle and refuses to fund permanently open beds. Over the last six years the LGH has seen an increase in presentations of over 1,500 annually and a significant increase in patient acuity. An additional 100 resuscitation presentations and 1,106 category 2 presentations have occurred during this time. This means that there are, potentially, an additional 1,200 patients requiring access to inpatient beds. These patients are presenting sicker and with multiple acute conditions. As I said earlier, staff have engaged in industrial action since March this year to highlight the continuous pressures on the ED and, indeed, the entire hospital, as a result of bed block. Their goodwill and their stamina is maintaining this health system within Northern Tasmania.

Their daily vigils show their support for their colleagues and, importantly, their patients, as an increasing sign of desperation to have this dire situation addressed by the state government. The present situation is only enabled by the incredible commitment of this staff to their patients and their amazingly cohesive team. In other words, this hopeless Tasmanian Liberal state government misuses the goodwill and professionalism of dedicated nursing and support staff to achieve safe health outcomes. This cannot be sustainable. There will be a time when even their absolute best at some point will not be enough.

It is not good enough. Northern Tasmanians deserve better. Our nurses, doctors and support staff deserve better—a government and a health minister that care about supplying resources to enable the hospital to function safely and effectively. You cannot rely on the goodwill and dedication of staff going above and beyond their duty.

### **Armenian Genocide**

**Mr FALINSKI** (Mackellar) (19:35): There are few speeches I will give in this House that will mean as much to me as this one. I rise to speak on a motion moved by the member for North Sydney in the Federation Chamber. As Adolf Hitler was considering committing the Holocaust, many in his country and around the globe warned him that it would be a legacy that Germany would never be forgiven for. He said, infamously, that it would not matter—for who, after all, remembers the Armenians? Well, we must, this House must, and our nation must. For there to be justice, first there must be truth.

Australia's first major humanitarian effort can be traced back to 25 April 1915, when Australian soldiers responded to calls from persecuted survivors of the Armenian genocide. For there to be justice, first there must be truth. With that, it is regrettable that Australia has not recognised important parts of our own history, which happened to cross over with the Armenian genocide. We haven't been able to do justice to the memory of our diggers, who witnessed and journaled what was being committed against the Armenians, Greeks and Assyrians. We haven't been able to honour the many instances of heroism when members of our Anzac forces saved Armenians, Greeks and Assyrians struggling through persecution and terrain during this tragedy. We haven't been able to formally recognise the myriad stories from across the nation which detail Australians giving so generously to a people in need.

In June this year, my colleague the member for Goldstein called on us all to speak of the tragedy's name: genocide. I join in this call. This taboo needs to end. This is why I am speaking today to add my voice in support of the motion of 25 June. It was a significant step in the right direction. My electorate is home to a large number of Armenian Australians. As recently as last month I visited Galstaun College and met with students at the Armenian school. The vast majority of these great contributors Australian society are descendent of survivors of the Armenian genocide. As proud Australians from Armenian background, they want nothing more than this country, our country—all of it.

Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh were on the verge of suffering another tragedy in the 1980s and early 1990s. This time, the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh defended their homeland and exercised their right to self-determination by voting for independence for the Republic of Artsakh. I joined the Armenians of Mackellar in congratulating the Republic of Artsakh, which was declared independent 27 years ago. All sides of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict should follow the processes set by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to achieve peace in the region with the non-use of force, territorial integrity and people's right to self-determination. Thank you to the Armenian National Committee of Australia and their youth advocates, who came to see me today here in the chamber and are here in the chamber tonight.

I want to refocus on the motion I stand to support, which recognises Australia's first major international humanitarian relief effort. When those who came before us helped the Armenians in need, the reason they knew to help them was in part due to the accounts by various Anzacs who reported what they had witnessed. Sir Thomas White was a pilot in the Australian Flying Corps. He was captured by a Turkish soldier on 13 November 1915 while on a mission to cut telegraph wires near Baghdad. He observed:

A number of Armenian women and children of all ages sat outside the church on bundles of clothing. They looked very sad and miserable, and little wonder, for their menfolk had been killed, their houses and furniture confiscated and now they were being turned into the street from their last possible sanctuary.

I salute the member for North Sydney's motion debated in the Federation Chamber on 25 June. I look forward to the day that Australia's formal position reflects that will. As Diana and Sarine told me this afternoon, at school as proud Australians they celebrated Gallipoli, but, as Australians with Armenian background, it felt strange that we ignored our nation's effort in Armenia in that same campaign. If one of us feels excluded, are not all of us excluded? Are we whole as a nation of people?

### **Philippines: Human Rights**

**Mr HAYES** (Fowler—Chief Opposition Whip) (19:40): Last week, at the invitation of Brother Armin Luistro, I had the privilege of addressing the law students at the De La Salle University in Manila. The trip was a great opportunity to engage with the issue of human rights, reinforcing our collective need to act and not just despair when human rights principles are at stake. When I first mentioned to others that I intended to take this visit to the Philippines to discuss the issue of human rights, many suggested I should rethink my plans based on issues of personal safety. However, in the words of Kenneth Roth, Executive Director of Human Rights Watch:

Human rights standards provide guidance but become operational only with champions among governments and ordinary people.

Any attack on human rights is an attack on our collective humanity, and this is why I did decide to take the trip to the Philippines. We must never remain silent when human rights are being attacked. Silence only encourages those who seek to undermine human rights principles and structures and our democratic institutions.

While it is important for leaders to show commitment where there are threats to the wellbeing of a community, action should be proportionate, evidence based, subject to appropriate oversight and, most importantly, compliant with the rule of law. Extrajudicial killings have been the principal concern of human rights in the Philippines for some time, particularly under the nationwide antidrug campaign. Summary and lethal justice based on mere suspicion has claimed the lives of thousands, with some sources claiming the number could be as high as 20,000 over the last two years alone. A key aspect of President Duterte's policy on extrajudicial killings is reliance on a watch list of suspected people. These lists provide police and, somehow, vigilante groups with a licence to kill. The lack of due process in police operations and the fact that these deaths are not being transparently investigated, I've got to say, is of great concern.

During my trip, I spent time with students, representatives, academic staff and religious leaders at the De La Salle University. I met with the human rights commission; Australia's ambassador, Amanda Gorely, and her staff; senior members of the legal profession engaged in human rights advocacy; members and senators of the Philippine parliament; and, most importantly for me, the families of victims.

It was a particularly emotional trip, with the situation in the Philippines best described as depressing. There was much discussion about the existence of a bounty system. An estimate is made of the number of people involved with drugs, a district quota is determined and funds are then allocated to police or vigilante groups on the basis of each killing they carry out.

Apart from the grave issues surrounding the policy of extrajudicial killings, President Duterte has also launched a crackdown on civil society, threatening to abolish their Commission on Human Rights, banning news organisations who are critical of him, castigating United Nations officials and, most recently, withdrawing from the International Criminal Court.

One critic who has publicly spoken out about the president's murderous campaign on drugs is Senator Leila de Lima. Senator de Lima has been in prison since February 2017, charged with drug related offences associated with her term as Secretary of the Department of Justice. The evidence against her consists of untested statements from prison inmates, police and prison officials. I attempted to visit Senator de Lima whilst I was in Manila but I was advised that she's been denied all access to visits from foreign officials. On my last day in the Philippines, I wrote to Senator de Lima and I pledged to raise her plight in the Australian parliament. In part, I said, 'I trust you know you have many friends in the international community as you are seen as a vanguard of truth and justice, a protector of human rights and one who profoundly believes in the rule of law.' Mr Speaker, I would seek to table a copy of the speech I delivered to the De La Salle University on 9 October this year.

Leave granted.

### **Dairy Industry**

**Mr LLEW O'BRIEN** (Wide Bay) (19:45): Coles and Woolworths have completely bastardised the proposal put forward by Queensland Dairyfarmers Organisation to introduce a 10c per litre levy on all milk to help drought

affected dairy farmers. When these supermarket giants, which have a \$62.2 billion share of a \$90 billion Australian grocery market, initially agreed to the 10c per litre drought levy, I said it was a welcome first step. But instead they have quarantined the levy, applying it only to some of their privately labelled milk, taking consumers away from branded milk.

Coles and Woolworths deserve condemnation for their tricky and cynical move. Coles also was caught out for serious, deliberate and repeated misconduct towards its suppliers when in 2014 it copped a \$10 million fine. In the same way we are having a royal commission into misconduct into the banks, the evidence is mounting that we need a royal commission into the predatory purchasing practices and pricing policies of these supermarket giants that are destroying our Aussie farmers. Indeed, my experience with the dairy industry has shown me that those who deal with these supermarkets are fearful of speaking out because of the unfair treatment that they will receive. A royal commission would change this oppressive culture.

With all of the Coles and Woolworths self-serving promotion and fanfare saying, 'Look at us; we're looking after the farmers,' the reality is they are not. The slick marketing campaign causing private-label milk to fly out of their fridges is making the plight of dairy farmers worse. Supermarket private-label milk, even packaged with a drought levy, is worth less to dairy farmers than branded milk. The best way to ensure that value for farmers is preserved and maintained through the supply chain is to buy branded milk.

It is very telling that the National Farmers Federation walked away from the Coles dairy drought relief fund. The fund is a farce. It may look good and may sound like Coles is doing something to help farmers, but the fund undermines the effort to ensure dairy farmers receive a fair price for their product. If a farmer wants to benefit from the Coles fund, they need to make an application, and the application process is overseen by the multinational auditing company PwC. You have to ask yourself: how much is this costing to administer and shouldn't that money be going back to the farmers?

But there's more. Coles and Woolworths are so pathetic, they are only applying the 10c per litre levy to their three-litre bottles of milk. They continue to sell their private-label two-litre bottles for \$2. They refuse to let go of their dairy-destroying \$1 a litre milk. If you do shop at Coles, where they try to seduce you with their hypnotic Coles radio tunes into packing more and more into your trolley, spare a thought for struggling Aussie farmers, who are trying to make a buck. Until the supermarket giants play fair and show that they are fair dinkum, I encourage everyone to shop independently. Boycott private-label milk and give dairy farmers the best chance of a fairer return by buying branded milk.

Once you strip away all of the Coles and Woolworths promotional spin and blame shifting, they cannot escape the fact that the retailer collects the cash from the consumer. They determine the value of the dairy supply chain. They use their marketing power to squeeze every last cent from the processor, leaving little to nothing for the poor Aussie dairy farmer.

Coles and Woolworths's refusal to play fair highlights the need for the government to step in. While the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission chose not to take action against the supermarket giants over their dollar-a-litre-milk price war, it did recommend the implementation of a mandatory code of conduct. The government must now act strongly and swiftly on that recommendation and commence the process for a mandatory code that covers producers, processors and retailers and ends Coles and Woolworths's tyrannical behaviour. I reiterate: I strongly believe that a royal commission covering the practices of Coles and Woolworths would be good for suppliers and consumers alike.

### Overseas Students

**Mr HILL** (Bruce) (19:50): International education is Australia's third most valuable export sector, and onshore students contribute \$32 billion annually now, supporting over 240,000 jobs, with additional value in offshore delivery. The sector's soft-power value is incalculable, yet community support is at risk due to the Prime Minister's desperation in chasing populist headlines by suggesting that students can be forced to study in regional towns away from ranked universities, employment and diaspora support.

We should encourage more students to experience regional Australia, but we have to use incentives and work with the sector, not bash it. The PM blames international students for congestion to distract from his own failure to invest in infrastructure. Bizarrely, though, this damaging rhetoric comes as unis are told to go and recruit more students to make up for his \$2.2 billion funding cut. This cut is fuelling a risky dependency and a war over market share as universities are forced to cannibalise each other and chase lower-quality students.

Our success is a truly remarkable national achievement: over 2.5 million alumni across the world, many rising to the top of Asian societies. Australia is set to overtake the UK next year to become the world's second-most-popular study destination. Yet warning signs are growing that all is not well. Complacency is a major risk; global competition is growing; and problems with student quality, student experience and voracious education agent

behaviour are not being properly addressed. The Liberal government have also gratuitously insulted China and Chinese students, our largest market, for their own base political reasons.

International education is far more sensitive to government policy changes than other economic elephants such as iron ore and coal. Government by thought bubble could quickly wipe out billions of dollars of value if students simply choose to study elsewhere. This sector deserves more attention from the parliament, and I'll share a few ideas in the interest of debate.

First, do no harm. Rule out damaging measures such as visa caps, reducing work rights or pretending you can force students to study where they don't want to. We can't control the Aussie dollar, so, as a relatively high-cost study destination, our future success will rely on ruthless enforcement of quality and a great student experience.

The minister's claim last week that regulatory arrangements protect the sector's high-quality reputation is rubbish. Quality problems are well known, especially in some less-reputable for-profit providers. VET especially is at a tipping point. Some private colleges are excellent, but at the bottom end the student visa is fast becoming a work visa. This is not what the community expects.

Radical action is needed, as periodic inspections by ASQA are not working. We should follow the lead of other countries and trial a radical separation of the training and the assessment functions of the highest risk VET courses, such as cooking, aged care and security. An independent training validation assessment could see a small number of high-quality providers registered as assessors, with others then required to send their students for moderated assessment. Let's test the students to find the cooking schools where no-one can cook, so ASQA can go and shut them down.

We should reconsider the need for firmer minimum attendance rules for international VET students. Changes to the 20-hours-per-week rule since 2007 have had unintended consequences, helping to fuel growth in non-genuine students and RTOs. VET students are meant to be practising their skills, so, if they're not attending class, why are they even here?

The overconcentration of students must be addressed. Let's mandate full transparency to inform student choices via mandatory public reporting of the number of international students and source countries—every course, every provider.

Seventy-five per cent of students come through an education agent, yet dodgy agents can't be banned, unlike migration or real estate agents or financial advisers. Australia needs an agent registration scheme like New Zealand. Some will screech, but it's doable if designed carefully and collaboratively. Agent risk could then be built into the student visa framework as the third leg alongside country risk and provider risk.

Australia invests far less in collaborative initiatives than competitors such as the UK's British Council. Australia needs a better mix of marketing effort by governments and providers. Universities' annual spending on student acquisition costs now exceed \$1.5 billion. Given the benefits that accrue to providers, there is a strong case for contributions on a modest per-student basis to an international education marketing and quality assurance fund matched by government support. Fund design and administration could be overseen by the national council.

For a better student experience, a great idea comes from China, and that is a nationally auspiced, community driven, international student weekend. This brings real engagement with Australian families welcoming international students into their homes for a barbecue or outing and building awareness of the benefits of international ed and helping national marketing efforts.

Finally, stronger action is needed on workplace exploitation. Part-time work is a critical part of the student experience and a competitive advantage for us. Weeding out the non-genuine students and colleges will help, but we can explore a simple online registration for any business employing international students and other temporary migrants. This could enhance enforcement without tying business up in red tape.

### **Flynn Electorate**

**Mr O'DOWD** (Flynn—Deputy Nationals Whip) (19:55): I rise this evening to talk about my electorate of Flynn and how important it is to the Australian economy. Flynn was created in 2006 after a redistribution of seats in Queensland. It covers eight shires: Gladstone, Banana, North Burnett, South Burnett, Central Highlands, Woorabinda Shire, Rockhampton and Bundaberg. Flynn was named after the founder of the Royal Flying Doctor Service, the Reverend John Flynn. Its approximate size is twice as big as Tasmania, at 133,000 square kilometres. It constitutes about 100,000, with a population of 155,000 in 2016. There are almost 40,000 families in Flynn. They all deserve cheaper living costs, they all deserve cheaper energy costs and they all deserve job security.

The electorate of Flynn has 15 operating coal mines. They produce our thermal and metallurgical coal—what used to be called coking coal—for both the domestic and export markets. Flynn sits in the Bowen Basin. The Bowen Basin contributed 211.2 million tonnes of coal in 2017-18. Three of Queensland's largest coal-fired power

stations sit in Flynn: Gladstone, Stanwell and Callide B and Callide C. We need to invest in coal rather than demonise it. I hope the banks are listening to this. I believe we need to start planning for a new coal-fired HELE plant ASAP.

We have two major commercial goldmines in Flynn, at Cracow and Mount Rawdon. Mining commenced at Cracow in 2004 and has produced over 1.1 million ounces of gold. The Rawdon mine and Mount Perry has produced around 100,000 ounces of gold per annum since 2002—12.6 million ounces since 2001. The gold from Mount Rawdon has been used to make this year's Melbourne Cup, a cup worth about \$200,000.

The gemfields produce sapphires known all over the world.

We have three gas plants on Curtis Island, and they draw their gas from the Surat Basin.

The port of Gladstone is the largest multicommodity port in Queensland and the fifth largest in Australia. It's the world's fourth largest coal exporting terminal. The port handles over 30 different products, including coal, aluminium, cement, LNG and grain crops. Coal exports account for 70 per cent of the total cargo exported through the port, exporting to countries like Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, India, Italy and France.

We have a base water plan for Flynn. Increased water storage will increase agriculture. Agriculture is going gangbusters in Flynn. We have a large livestock industry in Flynn, with a larger group of cattle than anywhere else in Australia. Our livestock service all over Australia and the world. We must protect and drought-proof the future. We don't value water until the well runs dry. We must invest in agriculture; it's our future. I have many water projects in Flynn that need addressing, and they need addressing now. Drought is real and drought is tragic.

In closing, I am currently in the process of building a plan to make a bigger and better Flynn by building stronger roads, creating and securing jobs, lowering energy prices and making sure there is a strong future for our kids and grandkids.

**House adjourned at 20:00**

#### **NOTICES**

**Mr Frydenberg:** to present a Bill for an Act to amend the *Commonwealth Grants Commission Act 1973* and the *Federal Financial Relations Act 2009*, and for related purposes.

**Mr Fletcher:** to present a Bill for an Act to amend the *Copyright Act 1968*, and for related purposes.

**Mr Littleproud:** to present a Bill for an Act to amend the law relating to agricultural and veterinary chemicals, and for related purposes.

**Mr Robert:** to present a Bill for an Act to amend the *National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation Act 2018*, and for related purposes.

*Wednesday, 17 October 2018*

The **DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hogan)** took the chair at 10:00.

### **CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS**

#### **Chifley Electorate: Community Events**

##### **Chifley Electorate: Broadband**

**Mr HUSIC** (Chifley) (10:00): In a day and age where people feel like they hardly have the time to catch up with their own neighbours, community festivals provide a really good way of bringing people together. I saw that in action recently with two festivals that I had the opportunity to attend, the first being at Woodcroft. The Woodcroft Lake Festival, which has been held for 14 years now, brings together people to enjoy song, dance and music, and there is plenty of delicious food to enjoy as well and some great stalls. It's been brought together by a great organising committee, led by my friend Lucas Cayan and a whole bunch of volunteers who work year in, year out to make sure that it's such a success. I want to congratulate them on another terrific event, and I look forward to many more of their festivals.

Another festival that I got to see that had recently been relocated was the Willmot Festival, which was held on 29 September. Again, it was another great opportunity for great company, great food and great entertainment, with a range of activities being held there. It's always been a highlight in the local community calendar. It wouldn't be possible without a dedicated team from the Willmot community group led by their president, the community legend Peta Kennedy. I want to thank her for all her efforts. The deputy mayor, Tony Bleasdale, state MP Prue Car and I had a great time there.

An issue that's constantly coming up in my talks with residents locally is the frustration with broadband and, in many cases, the lack of service. Whether it's for the kids' homework or running the home business, broadband is essential for many of us. We rely upon it, and the coalition just doesn't seem to get that. The simple fact is: this government's delivering an NBN that costs more, does less and leaves consumers worse off. The rollout itself is years behind its promised delivery, and it's just not good enough. The people of Chifley deserve better, and time after time I've stood up in this place to share stories of locals who are either getting ridiculous speeds or being told that their homes will be connected to the NBN and then are still left waiting.

To give locals the chance to discuss their concerns and sort out their issues, I'm hosting a community forum on Wednesday, 7 November at the Marayong Community Centre. I want to take this opportunity to invite anyone in the Chifley electorate who's got concerns with their broadband service to come along to that forum and to speak with me. The service provider representatives will be present on the day, and they'll give updates on what's happening with the rollout in our area. We know the Morrison government will be just as woeful as the Turnbull government and just as woeful as the Abbott government in getting this rollout sorted out, but we can't afford to have Chifley residents left behind. We won't rest until our area gets the services that it deserves. The forum is on 7 November at the Marayong Community Centre, and I encourage everyone to come along. Please don't hesitate to contact my office for further details.

##### **Boothby Electorate: Community Events**

**Ms FLINT** (Boothby) (10:03): There are so many wonderful volunteers in my electorate of Boothby working hard to support some very worthy causes. Last month the Blackwood Action Group held their inaugural Blackwood Boutiques on Parade event at the Blackwood Community Centre to raise funds for Beacon. Beacon is an interchurch emergency-relief service which supports local families in their time of need, and the Blackwood Action Group and our local community certainly came together to support these wonderful volunteers and the families that they help. The parade was compered by Tracey Yeend and City of Mitcham Lady Mayoress Tracey Spear, with Mayor Glenn Spear also helping out on the day. I was delighted to attend with my state colleague Sam Duluk MP.

I'd like to put out a huge thank you to local businesses Snazzi Boutique, Habitat, Accolades Boutique, Fairley's and Willywags and their fabulous models, who showcased some of their fantastic spring and summer fashions on the day. Thank you also to the many local businesses and groups who donated afternoon tea, contributed to the door prizes or provided decorations, lighting or entertainment to truly make this a wonderful community event. A very special thanks must go to the Blackwood Action Group and, particularly, Pauline Dodd for organising the parade. The \$2,000 raised by the Blackwood Boutiques on Parade event demonstrates the wonderful spirit in our community, and I again thank everyone involved.

I was also delighted to attend the Mitcham City Brass Band Concert for a Cause last month at the historic Vogue Theatre in Kingswood with my state colleague, Sam Duluk MP, and the mayor of Mitcham, Glenn Spear.

The Mitcham City Brass Band were joined by special guest vocalists the Raymond Sisters and guest conductor Bruce Raymond, and we were treated to a wonderful evening of music and entertainment. The event raised money for the Flinders Foundation, a charitable partnership between the Flinders Medical Centre and Flinders University, which supports vital medical research and patient care. In particular, the Mitcham City Brass Band wanted to raise funds to support kidney research. This is a cause very close to their hearts, with a member of the band having received treatment in the Flinders Medical Centre's renal unit. They have, therefore, seen firsthand the wonderful care and support provided to kidney patients.

Our award-winning Mitcham City Brass Band—they won second place at the 2018 Australian National Band Championships—are a staple at local community events and special functions, including a recent performance at Government House. Their success and popularity in our community is a credit to all of the band members, and I commend them on their fantastic fundraising efforts for the Flinders Foundation. Congratulations and thank you to Mitcham City Brass Band musical director, Steven Packer, chairman Peter Milter and all of the very talented musicians who performed on the night. A wonderful time was had by everyone in attendance.

### **Werriwa Electorate: Miller Technology High School**

#### **Werriwa Electorate: The Welcome Choir**

**Ms STANLEY (Werriwa) (10:06):** I rise today to speak about some of the great things that are happening in my electorate of Werriwa. At the end of term 3, year 12 students finished 13 years of schooling to prepare for their Higher School Certificates and make plans for their future. Many want to go to university but still more others are looking at other career paths such as TAFE.

It was a privilege to join the graduating class of Miller Technology High School on Wednesday, 26 September for their final school assembly. Graduation day was an enriching and emotional day for the students, their parents and the teachers. The children they had nurtured for so long readied themselves to face the challenges ahead. I was honoured to present the leadership group with books to acknowledge their hard work. I had met the captains and vice-captains earlier this year when they visited me in Parliament House. Many of the students, including the leadership group, are graduates of the Intensive English Centre at the school. Some of them have been speaking English for only the past three years. The results and achievements of this graduating class are amazing given how quickly they've learned English.

These young people are role models not only academically but also in leadership and citizenship roles in Australia. I thank Dr Ken Edge for the invitation to join the assembly, and recognise the outstanding work of Ms Sally Atkins and the other teachers at the school. I give my best wishes to year 12 at Miller Technology High School and to all the other year 12s in Werriwa about to embark on their HSCs. I know you're ready and will achieve exceptional results.

Earlier this month I spent Sunday afternoon, against my better judgement, singing Aretha Franklin's 'Chain of Fools' at the Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre with the Welcome Choir. Not wanting to let the member for Grayndler or the member for Sydney have all the fun in Newtown, the Welcome Choir has now begun meeting on the first Sunday of each month in Casula. The choir brings together singers of all ability—I being one of those!—from semiprofessionals to shower singers to those of us who might be much better at scraping paint off walls with our voices. All the singers learn a song together, and then they perform it for YouTube—so, therefore, it's probably up there somewhere!

It was a really wonderful afternoon. I congratulate Craig and his team at CPAC for bringing this initiative out to the south-west of Sydney. There were about 40 people who turned up for this first event, and I'd like to let everybody in my electorate, in the wider south-west of Sydney, know that it will happen again on the first Sunday in November. Come along and have a go. You get to meet lots of wonderful people.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hogan):** I call a person who can belt out a tune: the member for Durack.

#### **Waste Management**

**Ms PRICE (Durack—Minister for the Environment) (10:09):** Today I want to take the opportunity to update the House on the government's efforts to improve Australia's waste management. The coalition has led the debate in 2018 to develop a solution to Australia's waste problem. It's something I'm very proud of. The Australian public are very motivated about reducing waste not only in my electorate of Durack but across the country. We all create waste in our day-to-day lives. Most of us put multiple bins out on the curb on Sunday night or Monday night—whenever it might be—and we want to know that our waste is being managed properly.

Australians generate about 64 million tonnes of waste a year. I think you'd agree it's an extraordinary figure, Deputy Speaker Hogan. Sixty per cent of that waste is recycled, but a significant portion of that cannot be recycled due to contamination. That's a simple matter of Australians being confused about what goes where and

what to do with their waste; it's those fleeting moments when we're standing at that bin deciding what goes where, and those few seconds are what count the most. Last month I launched the Australasian Recycling Label alongside the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation. It's a simple labelling system to guide Australians at that critical time. It will prevent the wrong waste contaminating our recycling system. More than 50 Australian businesses are already using the label, and I expect that number will grow significantly. It's a move by industry—and I want to congratulate industry—in response to the signals that are being sent by our government.

Earlier this year environment ministers from every state and territory agreed to set an ambitious target, and that is to make all Australian packaging reusable, recyclable or compostable by 2025. Our government is also in the process of updating Australia's National Waste Policy.

*A division having been called in the House of Representatives—*

**Sitting suspended from 10:11 to 10:23**

**Ms PRICE:** Importantly, this government recognises the need to reduce the amount of waste that is generated in Australia whilst increasing our domestic recycling capabilities and demand for recyclable products. I'm particularly excited about our commitment to halve food waste by 2030. Ultimately, we've got to have a flexible approach to waste management and we simply have to do better.

I think most Australians would be astounded to know that some communities in regional Australia don't have curb-side recycling collections. It's something I'm very aware of as a regional Australian. Not every community has access to the same facilities. Regional solutions will be a critical part of developing new businesses that use recycled material. Sensible management of waste will deliver better outcomes for Australia's environment, but there are other benefits here as well. A much stronger domestic industry means more local jobs. This is what our government believes in: keeping the economy strong and backing those Australian businesses. *(Time expired)*

**Petition: Lobethal ANZ Bank**

**Ms SHARKIE (Mayo) (10:24):** In my hand is a petition signed by more than 1,800 people from my electorate who are angry that the ANZ bank is closing its branch in Lobethal next month. The petition was organised by local businessman Garry Hughes from GE Hughes Construction, one of the major employers in the district and in my electorate. Garry told me he plans to take his banking elsewhere because he feels so betrayed by ANZ. Businesses and community leaders down on the south coast feel equally aggrieved because the ANZ has shut the doors on its branch in Goolwa. For the people of Lobethal, the closure is particularly insulting because the ANZ put out a statement saying that they consulted with the community, but they didn't. When the community went to them with a plea to postpone their decision for just 12 months, the ANZ wasted no time in saying no. That no was delivered even though Garry went to see them with an offer to buy the bank building and then lease it back to ANZ so they wouldn't have any impediments to a trial.

The reason our community is so upset is because banks are anchor facilities in our communities. When they close, it has such a negative effect on all of us. People drive further to a bigger town to do their banking and face-to-face transactions, and then they do the remainder of their shopping there rather than in their local town. This has consequences for small towns and for my small towns in Mayo. For those who can't drive and don't have public transport access, which we don't have in much of my community, it makes it even more difficult.

The ANZ said, 'Everybody's doing their banking online.' Well, I question that reasoning. Online banking is not usually embraced by a significant number of our senior citizens. Mayo is the oldest electorate in South Australia and the sixth-oldest in the nation. Certainly every time I've been into the local branch, I've had to wait in line. The Lobethal branch is the biggest across the whole region. You would need to go more than 30 kays in every direction to find another branch. It is also across from one of the biggest retirement villages in the community.

Last year, Shayne Elliott, the chief executive of ANZ, was reported as saying in the media that 'the role of banks in the community extends well beyond financial services' and that the 'banks must be responsible for the social and environmental impacts their operations have' on society. I call on Mr Elliott and the ANZ to live up to their social corporate responsibilities and not leave my community high and dry. I seek leave to table this petition.

Leave granted.

*The document read as follows—*

*The document was unavailable at the time of publishing.*

**Ms SHARKIE:** I look forward to ANZ hopefully having a change of heart with regard to the closure of our ANZ bank. Mr Elliott, I am keen to talk to you and I hope that you get to see this video from the parliament.

### **Swan Electorate: Lathlain Park**

**Mr IRONS** (Swan—Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister) (10:27): I rise to speak about a local project in my electorate of Swan. It is the Perth Football Club grandstand, which, I must add, is anything but grand. First, I'd like to give a shout-out to the fantastic win by the West Coast Eagles in the AFL grand final. It was the best grand final in a few years, and I was incredibly proud to be a Western Australian. Collingwood played well in the first quarter, but the West Coast Eagles boys demonstrated an unwavering strength and stamina to pull ahead at the final siren. It was great to have the Prime Minister in Perth the following week, and the member for Curtin and I were delighted to take him to the West Coast Eagles club headquarters to congratulate the boys on an outstanding performance.

I'll return to the grandstand at Perth Football Club. I've spoken about this grandstand a number of times in the chamber. It's decrepit, riddled with concrete cancer and no longer fit for the purpose of holding not only the members of my community of Swan but those who support the Perth Demons as well. The grandstand is located at Lathlain Park. It is home to the Demons, and the West Coast Eagles football club is going to move their administration and training facilities to Lathlain Park. In 2016, the coalition government provided \$13 million towards the \$68 million development of Lathlain Park to support economic growth in the Victoria Park area. It's a fantastic project, and it's something our whole community is very proud of. I will add that it's coming along very nicely, and the West Coast Eagles expect to move there early next year.

The project has a community focus to ensure my constituents will have access to some of the incredible facilities going up in the new facility. It is also supporting great organisations such as the Special Air Services Resources Trust and the Wirrpanda Foundation. That brings me back to the grandstand. It was originally built in 1959, a year after I was born. I've just had my 60th, to save you the maths.

**Ms Flint:** You're holding it together!

**Mr IRONS:** Yes, I'm holding it together—thank you, Nicolle! But the grandstand has become an eyesore amongst the Lathlain Park development and is unfit to hold the growing communities of Victoria Park, Lathlain and, more broadly, Swan. I worked closely with the Perth Football Club CEO, Marty Atkins; club president, Daryle Mann; and the West Coast Eagles to discuss the needs of the club and the community. With more than 10,000 kids involved in sport activities at the facility on an annual basis, it's time to demolish the old grandstand and build a new standalone facility which will take the Perth Football Club and Lathlain into the next century.

I look forward to continuing to work closely with both clubs, the community and the Town of Victoria Park to ensure the growing needs of our community are addressed. I'll be working hard in my electorate to deliver on local issues like the Perth Football Club grandstand. It was convenient I caught up with the Treasurer for Western Australia, Ben Wyatt, last week. I tried to get him on board to support the new Perth Football Club grandstand.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr McVeigh):** Before I call the next member, I want to state that, if no member present objects, constituency statements may continue for a total of 60 minutes, which will take us to 11 o'clock.

### **Nepean Football Association**

#### **Lindsay Electorate: National Rugby League School to Work Program**

**Ms HUSAR** (Lindsay) (10:30): The popularity of football in my area continues to rise. There are two fantastic organisations in my community I'd like to recognise today. One is the National Rugby League and the other is the Nepean Football Association.

The Nepean Football Association is responsible for over 1,000 teams with over 12,000 registered players and 31 affiliated clubs. The Nepean FC representative football club, the Nepean Referees Group and the Nepean Dragons special needs football club are also vital aspects of the sporting and recreational culture that is rapidly growing and fostered by the Nepean Football Association. The association also stands to promote leadership, friendship, skills, team work, fair and respectful play as well as skills development.

Local sporting and recreation in my electorate of Lindsay has never been more important. Research shows nearly six in 10 people in the Nepean Blue Mountains area are overweight or obese, according to expert figures. Getting active and healthy has never been more valued in our area. I'd like to formally recognise the great work the Nepean Football Association does to keep our community active and foster the important values we can all be proud of.

The Penrith Football Club, an institution in our community, was recognised for having reached 50 years. The Henry Lawson Club was recognised for having reached 40 years and the Glenmore Park Football Club for 25 years. Thank you to the volunteers who keep those clubs running.

I'd like to recognise the following people who make great the work that the Nepean Football Association does: the chair, Frances Refalo, and the directors, Greg, Stacey, Gail, Martin, Di and John. I also recognise Laurie

Solomon, who has served the club for 30 years with the Nepean Football Association, and James Rankine, who has accredited over 600 coaches. I thank Linda Cerone, who has given 20 years to our local community in her role. Thanks to Colleen, Alicia, Caitlin and Ryan as well. I want to say a big thank you to all of the volunteers, parents, coaches and managers who turn up week in, week out.

I'd like to mention the valued work that's done by the NRL through their School To Work Program, which is an education and employment program that supports and encourages young Indigenous Australians to stay at school and aspire to their goals. It assist them with transitioning to further education and employment. The program has supported more than a thousand Indigenous students since 2011, with a 95 per cent success rate. I think that we'd all agree that that is quite significant. We've had over 1,000 Indigenous kids since 2011 who have gone on to do some amazing things. Young Indigenous kids are often left behind and face obstacles in our education system. I think we are all too well aware of that.

I'd like to take this opportunity to recognise the class of 2018 from my electorate: Bayley Blackmore and Mitchell Nicholls from Jamison High School; Jay-Renee Hardy and Shivahni Nair from Colyton High School; Louise Neville and Jack Wheatley from Cambridge Park High School; and Lily Popovich and Ashley Bridge from Caroline Chisholm College, alumni of my former school. I commend the graduating class and wish them all the best for their bright futures, and I thank Jaymes Boland-Rudder, the NRL's head of government and community relations, for bringing these individuals to my attention and always inviting me along.

### **Westminster School**

#### **Brighton and Seacliff Yacht Club**

**Ms FLINT** (Boothby) (10:33): My electorate of Boothby is home to one of Adelaide's most beautiful stretches of coastline. As we head into summer, there will be hundreds of yachts on the water during the week, every week. The chances are that some of those yachts are being sailed by the members of the Westminster School sailing team, many of whom are also members of the Brighton and Seacliff Yacht Club. Over the past four years the team has gone from strength to strength, taking out the South Australian school sailing championships three years in a row. The team has also qualified for the national championships every year for past four years, including the 2018 championships.

In July the team travelled to Victoria to compete against 23 other schools from around Australia in a four-day regatta. The hard work of Westminster's young sailors paid off, with the team claiming victory and qualifying to compete against New Zealand in their home waters, north of Auckland, at the Inter Dominion School Team Sailing Championships held earlier this month. Over seven round robins, with three boats from both Australia and New Zealand in each round, the championship was decided by the team with the most wins in each contest. With the knowledge that no Australian team had ever defeated the New Zealanders on their home waters, the Westminster team fought hard to stay near the top of the leaderboard throughout the week-long regatta. The final race came down to just metres, but the skill and sportsmanship of the team allowed them to hold on and take out the championship. In a historic turn of events, second place was won by a team from Hobart, leaving the New Zealanders to take third place on the podium for the very first time.

I'm sure everyone in this chamber is always very excited when Australia beats the Kiwis, whether it's in the rugby, the netball or the school sailing championships. I would like to recognise the fantastic effort of the Westminster sailing team and I congratulate the following members, many of whom I recently met at the Brighton and Seacliff Yacht Club season opening: Captain Alexander Higgins, Matthew Meaney, Angus Higgins, Quinn Aurich, Chelsea Higgins, Harry Higgins and Byron Robertson. Congratulations and thanks must also go to Coach Sandy Higgins and Team Manager Mike Martin, whose leadership and support have cemented the success of the team. Thanks also to the Brighton and Seacliff Yacht Club, who have provided support and coaching for the young team over the past few years. My personal special thanks to local legend Nancy Higgins, who alerted me to the team's wonderful achievements when we were out planting some plants in the Marino Conservation Park recently. Finally, congratulations again to the Westminster School sailing team. I look forward to hearing of their continued success as they work together as a team to do their very best for one another, for the Westminster School and for the Brighton and Seacliff Yacht Club.

### **Solomon Electorate**

**Mr GOSLING** (Solomon) (10:37): I want to take the opportunity this morning to talk about my electorate and the economic situation that we find ourselves in. Confidence is very important, as all honourable members know, when it comes to our electorates. We all want our constituencies to have plenty of jobs and the economy to be going well. I just want to outline how we are perhaps a bit different to the large east coast capitals when it comes to our economy in Darwin.

Whilst populations—as we hear quite often—are booming in Sydney and Melbourne, in particular, up in the north we're actually going backwards a little bit in population, and that is a real problem for us. We need some focus on that. Every person who leaves the Northern Territory costs us, in GST, \$11,000 per person per annum. That is a huge loss, because obviously we have an enormous landmass that we need to provide services across, and every time we lose a person it hits us hard. I'm pleased that we fought for a legislated guarantee on GST that no jurisdiction will be worse off. It's very important.

We need federal investment in the north, and I'm afraid that reannouncing small amounts of road funding is not going to do it. It's not going to cut it. We heard from the Minister for Resources and Northern Australia last night, with the Annual Statement on Developing Northern Australia, and, yes, the NAIF has funded small amounts of money to aid projects in the north, but it is not enough. It's now been 547 days since a city deal was promised for the north. Unfortunately this divided Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison government has not been able to deliver a city deal for the north, for Darwin. On top of that, we've had 39 per cent of our federal Public Service jobs cut—39 per cent in a capital city of the north where the Public Service is incredibly important. I think all members will agree that that is unacceptable.

Now, on the eve of cyclone season, we are hearing that they're even going to start cutting jobs from the BOM and sending them to the east coast! That is obviously unacceptable, and it's something that I have asked the Minister for the Environment to review. I have not heard back from her at this point, but it is vital that those services aren't cut.

### **Men's Shed Week**

**Mr TED O'BRIEN** (Fairfax) (10:40): Recently, I visited some amazing men's sheds in my electorate of Fairfax for national Men's Shed Week. I was delighted to announce federal funding commitments for the men's sheds at Coolum and Sunshine Valley.

Men's sheds around Australia now number more than 1,000, and this milestone comes at a critical time. Australia is a great country, and we have much to be proud of. However, we do face a number of serious social issues, from suicide to substance abuse and homelessness, to name but a few. While lasting solutions to these problems prove elusive, there is also an increasing reliance on government to meet these challenges. Such difficulties are further compounded by a corresponding weakness of the traditional pillars of civil society—an erosion that we've seen especially over recent decades. While rebuilding civil society may be critical to finding lasting solutions, any idealistic attempt to simply turn back the clock to a time when the family unit, the church, and the traditional volunteer organisations were dominant in the social landscape is not the answer. This is where the men's sheds movement comes in.

While efforts to address today's social challenges have met with mixed success, men's sheds have played an increasingly relevant role, especially when it comes to issues of mental health and social inclusion. By tackling such issues head-on yet in an understated way, the men's sheds are becoming the standard-bearers of a new type of civil society. But government must catch up. Government must catch up by recognising the value of such organisations and adjusting public policy to support their expanding role. This includes changing their tax treatment. While continuing to support one-off grant applications from individual men's sheds, a lasting solution can only come from extending deductible gift recipient, DGR, status to all men's sheds so future donations to them can be tax deductible. I've witnessed the frustration of men's sheds which are routinely denied DGR status, despite political activist groups enjoying such status. I encourage the government to consider a more comprehensive approach to supporting Australia's men's sheds by effectively granting them a special DGR listing in their own right. This would be value for money and help rebuild civil society.

### **Houldsworth, Mr Henry**

**Mrs ELLIOT** (Richmond) (10:43): It was my absolute privilege recently to present the Legion d'Honneur to Mr Henry Houldsworth of Banora Point in my electorate of Richmond. The order is France's highest military decoration, and it recognised Mr Houldsworth's service as a diver in the British Royal Navy in World War II. The presentation occurred at the Winders Place nursing home, where, to Henry's surprise, a number of proud family and friends had gathered to celebrate this amazing honour. Henry had no idea he was about to be presented with this prestigious award. At 94 years of age, he, along with the others present, was overcome with emotion with him receiving such a high honour.

Henry was an apprentice fitter and turner, and on completion of his apprenticeship he joined the British Royal Navy. After training, he was posted to the small boat squadron of special forces in Dartmouth. After almost a year in the Royal Navy, Henry saw a notice calling for volunteers with mechanical knowledge to undertake a diving course. The course taught the use of underwater welding, salvaging and clearance of explosives. The divers wore

a one-piece green rubber suit, a charcoal bag on the chest and an oxygen bottle on the back. In the Royal Navy, the suit was referred to as 'the slimy green suit of death' because it was so incredibly dangerous.

On completion of the course, Henry was posted to the Landing Craft Recovery Unit as a diver, and it was with this group that he went to D-Day. Upon landing at Sword Beach, all they had was a truck, bulldozer, a jeep, a motorbike and approximately 20 personnel. The group's main assignment was to clear the beach of any sunken or damaged vessels and to clear the underwater obstacles so that vessels could land directly on the beach. To clear the underwater obstacles, Henry would locate them and the bulldozer would drag them onto the beach. Low or high tide, this had to be completed for beach approaches. They were under some artillery fire for several days and were subjected to a strafing from a German fighter who took several passes at them. They were able to save themselves by lying parallel to the seawall. They were on the beach for nine weeks and were billeted in Lion-sur-Mer, the first village in France to be liberated.

Two of Henry's brothers, Danny and Bill, were also at D-day, while another brother, Bob, died as a prisoner of war in Burma. In 1950, Henry migrated to Australia with his wife, Pat, and son, John, who also, later, served in the Navy. His grandson Steven served in the Army. Henry was a top football player as well and represented the Royal Navy numerous times.

On the day of the presentation, as well as being presented with the award, Henry received a letter from the French ambassador which read:

France will never forget the thousands of soldiers, like you and your two brothers, who were there on D-day, who came to fight on French battlefields and we still remain grateful today.

It was in this regard the President of the French Republic opened the Legion of Honour to World War II veterans who risked their lives for the liberation of France.

Thanks so much to Henry Houldsworth for his service, and special thanks to his family for inviting me to be a part of a very special occasion in presenting the Legion of Honour to Henry Houldsworth.

#### **Hinkler Electorate: Fuel**

**Mr PITT** (Hinkler) (10:46): I rise to talk of something of concern to all of us in this place around the cost of living, and that is the current price of fuel, particularly in regional areas. This is an issue which has been raised with me and, I am sure, raised with all colleagues right around the country. Previously, I've written to the ACCC. At the time, Minister Bilson had taken action, but it's time to look again. The RACQ's September 2018 fuel prices guide showed that the average price for unleaded in Bundaberg was 149.2 cents per litre. In Hervey Bay, at the other end of my electorate, about an hour and a half south of Bundaberg by car, it was 156.4, and in Maryborough, which is in the neighbouring electorate of Wide Bay, it was 150.3. That is already a differential of six cents between two centres not that far apart. In 2017, those prices were 126 cents in Bundaberg and 127 cents in Hervey Bay. Clearly, the distance hasn't changed. I'd suggest the wholesale price of fuel would be the same for all providers. So how could there be such a large differential?

In terms of how much concern this is causing my constituents, this is an email that we received just this week from one such constituent in the southern end of the electorate. He said:

What appears to be price gauging by the fuel industry across the country is getting out of hand. In my mind what is being blamed for the rising costs don't seem logical. So-called rising oil prices and a falling Australian dollar do not cause fuel prices to rise so rapidly. The people in your electorate are hurting badly.

As I've spoken about in this place on many occasions, the statistical area of Wide Bay has the lowest per capita income in the country, at just \$34,000 per year, and has had for some two decades. They cannot afford increases in costs of living such as this.

This week, I've written to Senator Michaelia Cash, the Minister for Small and Family Business and to the head of the ACCC asking for the ACCC to take more action on the price of fuel. We originally took action under Bruce Billson, which did cause a reduction at that time, back in December 2014. But, clearly in my mind, these prices do not add up. They simply do not add up. In regional areas, the people I represent cannot afford to continue to pay such high prices for fuel.

We've seen in recent times a royal commission into banks. We now have a royal commission into aged care. There's been noise about a royal commission into electricity. Perhaps it is time for a royal commission into fuel pricing. Because once again, major providers—and it is not our local retailers; they have a very fixed margin—the wholesale price is what adjusts. That is what is causing the change. We should be looking much more closely at the price of fuel in regional areas.

### Canberra Electorate: Drone Trial

**Ms BRODTMANN** (Canberra) (10:49): 'I dread the weekends.' That's the view of Andrea, one of my constituents, in response to the drone trial that is currently taking place in Bonython in my electorate. It is a trial that was conducted with little or no consultation, just notification to some households—not everyone in the suburb. It's a trial that is delivering burritos and coffee and croissants to households from 8.00 am on Saturday and Sunday, up to 10 in an hour. It's a trial that is driving the majority of people in Bonython simply crazy. I understand the benefits of drones for crisis situations, for emergency situations, for humanitarian situations and for remote and regional communities, particularly in the delivery of medicines and monitoring farms; however, I fail to understand the benefits of drones run by a multinational company for the delivery of fast food produced by large companies that are based outside Canberra.

The drone trial has been underway for a couple of months now, and here's what some of my constituents have to say. Back to Andrea, who said:

I can only pray that we don't have any veterans in our area who have post traumatic stress and I am sure this will trigger them off—plus other people with mental health issues.

Briana said:

I was walking in the Pine Island area when one of the drones appeared and hovered over me and the person I was walking with. We both moved several steps to the side and the drone appeared to follow us, moving in the same direction and then hovering again. It then flew back towards the launch site area near the dog training facility. This encounter has left me feeling uneasy and 'watched'—surely this can be considered harassment as I felt very uncomfortable and didn't know what the drone was doing—was it taking pictures of us ...

Laura said:

When you get home from a weekend away and find a drone delivery of old hot chocolates sprayed all across your driveway. Not happy. I have children! What if this was someone's medication and they got in to it! Dangerous and disrespectful!

Nev said:

One came down in an uncontrolled manner in a driveway not far from the primary school. It was a crash. Apparently someone came by in a ute and collected it. What if a small child was underneath it? Or any person really?

Wing acknowledged the incident, but said it was not a crash.

I'm concerned about the impact of the drone trial on my community, and I'm concerned about the approval process for this trial. Drones are regulated in Australia, but the trial was exempted from those regulations by CASA. Why was the trial granted an exemption? Who granted the exemption? Did the minister grant an exemption? On what grounds? For how long was the exemption granted? I ask because, when asked about it a month ago, Wing advised that there was no end date to the trial, and yet recently updated us and said it was going to end in February 2019. Is that the case? What sort of trial has no end date? I also want to know whether an independent review will be conducted once the trial is over, if, in fact, it does cease in February 2019. Wing has also been vague about the data, which is causing considerable concern in the community. I understand the data is being held offshore for 30 days. My constituents have been told by Wing that this is the way of the future. I just wonder: is this a future that you want, Canberra? (*Time expired*)

### Calare Electorate: Food Champions

**Mr GEE** (Calare) (10:52): As you know, Calare is the food basket of the nation and home to some of Australia's most iconic tasty treats. The Tic Tacs or Nutella that you enjoy were made in Lithgow, and, of course, Bathurst is the home of the iconic Chiko Roll, despite the spurious claims of other members in this chamber. But our delights don't stop there. Calare is now home to the winner of the Great Aussie Pie Competition and champion sausage kings.

Matthew Clarke, a chef at the Hill End General Store, was awarded a gold medal for his Irish stew pies in the commercial bakery section of the Royal Bathurst Show, which gave him the confidence to tackle the Great Aussie Pie Competition. He entered numerous pies into the competition, and many of them did very well, with every pie placing with a medal, but, in a very exciting finish, he received gold for his lamb Irish stew creation. There is certainly nothing more iconic than a great Aussie meat pie. You can taste his delicious creations at the Hill End General Store, along with other tasty treats, such as Brendan White's Bellazza Ice Cream, which is also stocked there.

I can't sit down without mentioning the great work of Roy Roach and Sam Webb of the Gulgong Butchery, who were recently crowned regional New South Wales sausage kings for the second year in a row.

**An honourable member:** You're kidding!

**Mr GEE:** I kid you not! An Australian pork sausage entered into the open gourmet category, as well as a traditional Australian sausage, were the two award-winning creations. The Gulgong kings also took home second prize for a sweet chilli and orange chicken sausage in the poultry category as well as a lamb roast, sweet potato and caramelised onion sausage in the lamb category.

The Gulgong Butchery has been operating for close to a decade now and, in that time, Roy and his team have collected awards in eight of the 10 years. They were recently providing Gulgong with blue-coloured snags in honour of the Gulgong Terriers making the Castlereagh League grand final. At the recent opening of the Bungaba hall, not too far from Gulgong, I had the pleasure of tasting one of the famed blue sausages, and I can tell you that they were first class. Can I congratulate all of our food champions in the Calare electorate on their work in not only operating small businesses but also making the products from our electorate famous around the nation.

#### **Bass Electorate: Launceston General Hospital**

**Mr HART (Bass) (10:55):** I'd like to report to the House an issue that has arisen, particularly in my constituency of Bass. Last Friday I attended a very special event held at Ockerby Gardens, which is on the fringes of the Launceston General Hospital's campus in Launceston. This was a rally held by the ANMF and other associated health unions, and of course other unions, in support of their industrial action. The rally was held to commemorate, if that's the right word, 100 continuous days of a vigil that's been undertaken by the emergency department staff of the Launceston General Hospital.

The Launceston General Hospital is a well-respected institution within Bass. It's relied upon by many of the constituents within my electorate, and for good purpose. But the emergency department is suffering under significant strain, and the Tasmanian state Liberal government has refused to adequately resource the hospital. We have the extraordinary situation where we have dedicated emergency department staff holding a vigil for 100 days during the course of a Tasmanian winter—I don't need to remind members in this place as to what a Tasmanian winter might involve. Every day, rain or shine, those members of the emergency department have been holding a vigil under what they call their Bring Your Own Bed campaign.

Unfortunately, the Launceston General Hospital emergency department has some of the worst statistics in the nation for compliance with emergency department waiting times. This is something which is absolutely disgraceful but not something that can be visited upon the dedicated staff within the Launceston General Hospital. The blame for this purely lies with a state government which is wilfully blind and refuses to listen to the concerns of the workers at the Launceston General Hospital. In any one 24-hour waiting period there may be up to 60 patients in the emergency department, which may consist of: up to 24 patients waiting in inpatient ward beds; up to eight ambulances ramped at any one time; and, at one point, up to five category 2 patients in the waiting room. This creates enormous stress and anxiety for those who work on the frontline of our health system. It's something that can't be ignored. It is a crisis. It's a crisis that needs to be addressed by a state government which is wilfully blind and refuses to listen.

#### **Groom Electorate: Infrastructure**

**Dr McVEIGH (Groom) (10:58):** I want to talk briefly in this chamber about infrastructure in the electorate of Groom. We are very pleased and recognise progress with the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing; the promise of Inland Rail and the benefits that that will bring; continued upgrades on the Warrego Highway, particularly west of Toowoomba; and the fact that this work, supported by governments at all levels, is complimented by significant private investment as well. There is FKG's Toowoomba Technology Park, with the Pulse Data Centre; the Wellcamp Airport, which has captured national and international attention; and the efforts of many local developers such as renowned philanthropist Clive Berghofer and many others.

We have a region that enjoys at present a significant growth rate and low unemployment. Business and job opportunities in the years to come abound. But we must support such growth, particularly in regional Australia. I want to briefly address access to the Wellcamp Airport, in Groom, directly from the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing. Unless we work together to finalise that, we'll simply have to retrofit with millions and millions of dollars of work in the years to come. Now is the time to do it.

I want to talk about Brimblecombe Road, that access from the Warrego Highway across to Cecil Plains Road and on to Wellcamp Airport. I'm on the record in *The Oakey Champion* newspaper as saying that Brimblecombe Road, largely a gravel road at the moment and certainly the major access from the west, requires upgrading. I note that, just in recent weeks, there has been a tragic accident at the corner of Brimblecombe Road and Warrego Highway, with the loss of life of a young lady and her mum who were travelling through our region. This is about freight and passenger access to the airport and, particularly, safety.

In relation to Warrego Highway savings, I've been campaigning towards work on the culverts at East Creek and West Creek in Toowoomba—the last piece of the jigsaw puzzle, if you like, for flood mitigation following the tragic 2011 flood events in Toowoomba that captured national and international attention.

Regional development must be supported. All levels of government must work together. I've been campaigning on that for some years. I'll continue to fight, but I implore our mayor; our relevant state ministers, particularly Minister Bailey; and our federal minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, Michael McCormack, as Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, to do just that: to work together to ensure that these pieces of the jigsaw puzzle in Groom, which has so much to offer, are being addressed—for freight, passengers and safety.

### **Whitlam Electorate: McKell Awards**

**Mr STEPHEN JONES** (Whitlam) (11:01): It's such a privilege and an honour to stand in our Commonwealth parliament and pay tribute to three friends, colleagues and constituents—Robert Turner, Tom Ward and Charlie Gibbs—who were awarded McKell awards for their service to the Australian Labor Party. The three were nominated by the Port Kembla branch, and each application was supported by the state member for Wollongong, Paul Scully; the federal member for Cunningham, Sharon Bird; and me. All three award recipients are active local members of our community.

Robert, or Bob, Turner joined the Labor Party in 1994. He is a committed community campaigner. If there is a rally, an event or a protest against cuts to the Illawarra region, you'll find Bob there every day, all day. Bob has been the president of the Port Kembla branch and served in a number of positions in the branch. He is also a proud member of the Maritime Union of Australia and volunteers for the Port Kembla Mission to Seafarers, where he is a regular driver of its community bus.

Tom Ward joined the Labor Party in 1999 and has been a valued local branch member ever since. He has a wealth of knowledge of the Illawarra region and the steelworks, where he worked for many, many years. Tom has always been a great asset to local campaigns. He works closely with local MPs, fighting for improved health services, disabled access and local union campaigns. Tom has been an active campaigner to improve support for dementia sufferers and their carers and is always volunteering to help the Memory Walk & Jog.

Charlie Gibbs has been a member of the Labor Party since 2003, when he joined with his beloved late wife, Maria. Charlie is an active member of the Berkeley community. He has also served in the labour movement over many years with distinction. You can always rely on Charlie to turn up to events and get involved, and he is always the last one standing at any function. Charlie has represented the Port Kembla branch at the FEC and SEC level and can be relied upon to organise a branch raffle every month, raising funds to support local campaigns. Charlie has done important work in the local community as a tireless advocate for dental health.

Bob Turner, Tom Ward and Charlie Gibbs form a strong local campaigning trio in the Illawarra and Port Kembla district. Their dedication to the Labor Party and the Illawarra region will always be cherished and valued by local members. It's a great honour to be able to stand in this place and pay tribute to wonderful members of our party and our community such as them, but it's an even greater honour to know and to support these great men and to receive their support in return.

### **HMAS *Darwin***

**Mr ROBERT** (Fadden—Assistant Treasurer) (11:04): The government is once again delivering for the Gold Coast. Yesterday I called Mayor Tom Tate to tell him that the government will make HMAS *Darwin* available by the end of the year to be sunk as a dive wreck. The ship is available right now. The opportunity is there for the Gold Coast right now. The government is delivering for the GC right now. I am here in parliament to urge the state government in Queensland to work with Mayor Tom Tate to make this project a reality. The council are on board. They're on board with serious money—in the millions of dollars. I now call on the Queensland state government to join us to make this great project a reality.

The diving industry is conservatively worth about \$2.2 billion to the Australian economy. This is no chump change. This is a serious industry. Despite the fact that the Gold Coast has one of the nation's most active diving communities, the area has received little investment to date. Hence, the Gold Coast is an outstanding location to sink the mighty HMAS *Darwin* as a dive wreck. We are one of the great tourism hotspots of the country. We are ready to support, promote and service this attraction and the associated industries.

Previous wrecks have not always had the benefit of established full-time tourism industries to gain maximum benefit. That's not the case with the Gold Coast. We are ready, willing and able. Diving businesses are established and tourism businesses are well and truly established. There are over 300 days of sunshine. We have our own international airport. Brisbane is only an hour down the road. An ex-Navy warship will greatly increase the

number of domestic and international tourists to the Gold Coast and increase their length of stay to dive this amazing wreck.

The Gold Coast is on board. The Gold Coast Tourism chair is on board. The diving industry is on board. The local council is on board. Local state MPs are on board. Federal MPs are well and truly there. This ship is now available. Let's go get it.

Previous Gold Coast city council modelling suggests that it would add \$5.4 million in direct and indirect economic benefits to the city if the wreck were provided—circa \$10 million, that is a 50 per cent ROI. It doesn't get any better than this. The council's modelling in 2016 suggested an immediate 73 full-time jobs, with the flow-on to create a further 81 positions and a further \$6.1 million within three years. That doesn't take into account associated spending from other areas and other supporting industries. Numerous studies undertaken show that this will see at least 7,000 divers come each year. This will have flow-on effects to the economy. The HMAS *Darwin* dive wreck is a great opportunity for the Gold Coast to build on its international reputation. Come on, Queensland state government, let's get this done.

**Colvin, Ms Jenny**

**Murray, Ms Ruth**

**Mr BYRNE** (Holt) (11:07): I rise today to praise and recognise the work of two outstanding community champions: Jenny Colvin and Ruth Murray. About two months ago Ruth and Jenny came into my office to talk to me about the drought. Doveton is a long way away from farming communities, but they were profoundly affected by the footage of the drought and the drought-affected farmers. Like many Australians, they wanted to help in any way they could. That's the Australian way.

Being very special people, they decided to embark upon a fundraiser. These are people of limited means. They have been known in the Doveton area for many years for putting on an incredible Christmas light display, which they handmade. Many people from all over the region would come to see this incredible Christmas light display. But because of the health of one of the two people I've mentioned, they could not proceed with that, so these two people from Doveton decided to mount this fundraising event with basically no money. They organised an event in the John Pandazopoulos Hall on 7 October. They organised bands, who donated their time free of charge. They did some fundraising. They had a garage sale. They sold their own things and they raised \$400.

As I said, they arranged this event on 7 October. It was attended by many hundreds of people. It was an amazing event. When I turned up on Sunday, 7 October it was hard not to be impressed by the sheer level of organisation, persistence and hard work. It paid off. Two normal people wanted to make a difference, and they did. The live bands had people on their feet dancing. It was a great afternoon. The volunteers who turned up brought plenty of homemade cakes, sandwiches and Devonshire tea. The leftover food that wasn't sold was donated to a local charity for those who are less fortunate. The raffle prizes and auction items that were donated by the volunteers and local businesses raised money. How much do you think they raised? They raised \$8,000. These were two very special people of limited means, who, basically, went there, organised a hall, organised for the bands to donate their time free of charge and then raised \$8,000 which went to this great relief body called Drought Angels. They are farming women who decided to help farmers in need and distress. In the south-eastern region of Melbourne, if something goes wrong—for example there have been some difficulties in Lynbrook—you read about it on the front page of *The Age*, but you never read about this, about two Australians who just wanted to make a difference and to help farmers. So to Ruth and Jenny, on behalf of the community, thank you again. You are true community champions.

### **Bennelong Electorate: Residential Property Development**

**Mr ALEXANDER** (Bennelong) (11:10): I've spoken many times in this chamber about decentralisation, overdevelopment and matters of planning. I do this because development is one of the biggest issues facing our community. Our roads are clogged and our sports fields are disappearing as our suburbs grow from single-storey dwellings to blocks of units that rise over 20 floors. I'm not against high-rise in principle, but, as discussed in my last inquiry, development without sufficiently planned infrastructure only compounds the problems we face in our crowded suburbs.

A case in point is the unfolding tragedy of the giant new building, fondly known as 'Laxale towers', that will tower over our community. Laxale towers is a 60-storey residential development proposed for 112 Talavera Road, Macquarie Park. It is causally named after the Labor mayor of Ryde, who has described this proposal as the best deal for ratepayers that council could manage. Laxale towers will devastate our already overdeveloped community in Macquarie Park. The city of Ryde has failed to follow any advice on coordinating planning with infrastructure. Anyone who has tried to drive up Talavera Road during peak hour will know that it's not just congested but represents a chance for cheap parking. You can stay there for an hour or so without having to move your car.

Talavera Road serves the local businesses. Placing hundreds of new residents and their cars on this road will only lead to greater congestion. This tower is not just tall by local standards, under the leadership of Mayor Laxale. The tower that has been proposed will eclipse even Sydney's tallest building, Chifley tower. With the ground floor 83 metres above sea level and the top level stretching 200 metres into the sky, Laxale towers will become Sydney's highest building, not far off the size of Trump tower in New York. It is so tall that it requires approval from the aviation industry, despite it being more than 20 kilometres from the airport.

You would think a development of this scale would come with a record contribution to community infrastructure, but, no, we don't even have this consolation. In an overall complex of 1,556 apartments the best this mayor seems to have been able to secure is an upgrade to an existing park and a handful of affordable housing units, minuscule benefit that will profit developers not the community. Laxale towers is a symbol of hypocrisy and has been condemned widely by residents. I join with my community in opposing this development and urge the mayor to do the same.

**Federation Chamber adjourned at 11:14**

## QUESTIONS IN WRITING

### Mental Health

#### (Question No. 1041)

**Ms Keay** asked the Minister for Health, in writing, on 16 August 2018:

In respect of his announcement during the campaign for the by-election in the electoral division of Braddon on 4 July 2018 to provide \$200,000 for additional services for people with complex mental health needs in the western end of the North West Coast and to extend the service to King Island, will this be honoured; if not, why not; if so,

- (a) when will the funding commence,
- (b) what period will the funding cover,
- (c) to whom will this funding be paid, and
- (d) from where will this program be delivered.

**Mr Hunt:** The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

a) Funding will be provided to the primary health network called Tasmania Primary Health in late September 2018. Tasmania Primary Health has commenced discussions with the mental health nursing service regarding funding arrangements.

b) Funding of \$50,000 will be provided each financial year for four years from 2018-19 to 2021-22 a total of \$200,000.

c) and d)

Tasmania Primary Health has responsibility for commissioning a suitable provider and determining where the program will be delivered, taking into consideration local need and stakeholder consultations.

### National Disability Insurance Agency

#### (Question No. 1009)

**Ms Sharkie** asked the Minister for Social Services, in writing, on 14 August 2018:

- (1) How many complaints have been lodged with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) since 26 March 2017.
- (2) What is the breakdown of the number of complaints lodged with the NDIA since 26 March 2017 in (a) South Australia, (b) Victoria, (c) NSW, (d) Queensland, (e) Western Australia, (f) Tasmania, (g) Northern Territory, and (h) ACT.
- (3) How many applications for internal review of a decision by the NDIA have been made since 26 March 2017.
- (4) What is the breakdown of the number of applications for internal review of a decision by the NDIA since 26 March 2017 in (a) South Australia, (b) Victoria, (c) NSW, (d) Queensland, (e) Western Australia, (f) Tasmania, (g) Northern Territory, and (h) ACT.
- (5) How many decisions by the NDIA have been reviewed by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal after the internal NDIA review process.
- (6) How many people are currently undertaking the new participant pathway pilot for the National Disability Insurance Scheme that began in December 2017 in Victoria; and on what basis were the Victoria East and Victoria North regions chosen to participate in the project.
- (7) Has consideration been given to rolling out this pilot in South Australia; if so, when; and if not, why not.

**Mr Fletcher:** The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

(1) There have been 20,510 complaints to the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) reported since the start of transition to 30 June 2018 (this includes 17,356 complaints received since 31 March 2017).

(2) The table below breaks down the 20,510 complaints by jurisdictions.

Jurisdiction	SA	VIC	NSW	QLD	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	N/A
Complaints	3,195	3,980	9,770	1,442	203	379	19	1,154	368

*\*The NDIA business system does not require a jurisdiction to be recorded when a complaint is made. For complaints made by or on behalf of a participant, jurisdiction has been inferred from the participant's residential address. Jurisdictional data is not available for complaints from other sources.*

(3) The NDIA improved data recording processes from 26 October 2017 for applications for internal review of a reviewable decision made by the NDIA. In the period from 26 October 2017 to 30 June 2018, NDIA records indicate that 7,148 applications for internal review were received from participants or prospective participants.

(4) A breakdown of those applications for internal review by jurisdictions is set out in the table below.

Jurisdiction	SA	VIC	NSW	QLD	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	Total
Internal reviews*	858	1,083	3,474	963	116	205	11	438	7,148

*\*Based on data as at 30 June 2018, but noting that data inconsistencies are currently being investigated.*

(5) Certain decisions made by NDIA delegates are subject to independent internal review. Depending on the outcome of these internal reviews, some decisions are then reviewed by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT). The table below shows a financial year breakdown of how many AAT applications have been received by the NDIA.

Financial year	AAT applications received by NDIA.
2013-14	18
2014-15	19
2015-16	46
2016-17	181
2017-18	758
Total	1,022

(6) 1,536 people had completed pre-planning in the initial participant pathway pilot in Victoria at its conclusion, on 27 July 2018.

Decisions about pilot locations are based on various operational requirements, including demographics, staffing, availability of appropriately-skilled and experienced Local Area Coordination partners, and the progress of each prospective site's transition to full Scheme.

(7) Evaluation of the initial pilot, and evaluation of subsequent pilots of the new pathways, will inform decisions about the national rollout and the scope of refinements required. It is likely that a number of system and process design improvements will be required prior to broader deployment. The NDIA is committed to ensuring a quality experience for participants, in-line with the improved outcomes the pathway review is striving to achieve.

In the interim, the NDIA has implemented a series of immediate initiatives across all regions as a result of the pathways review. This includes face-to-face planning meetings as the preferred planning method, improved communication products and training resources, and expanded disability-awareness training of NDIA staff.

States and territories, including South Australia, have expressed interest in being involved in further pilots of new pathway features, and the NDIA is working closely with these jurisdictions.

### **Recommendation 21**

#### **(Question No. 1012)**

**Ms Sharkie** asked the Minister for Energy, in writing, on 14 August 2018:

Question 1012 - Ms Sharkie: To ask the Minister for Energy -

(1) In respect of recommendation 10 of the December 2017 report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on the Environment and Energy *Powering our future* (a) what is the Government's response, and (b) will an audit been undertaken as per the recommendation; if not, why not.

(2) What is the Government's response to recommendation 21 of the same report, and what steps has the Government taken towards real-time settlement.

**Mr Taylor:** The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

The Government's response to recommendations from the report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on the Environment and Energy, *Powering our Future*, is under consideration.

### **Mental Health**

#### **(Question No. 1038)**

**Ms Keay** asked the Minister for Health, in writing, on 16 August 2018:

In respect of his announcement during the campaign for the by-election in the electoral division of Braddon on 4 July 2018 to provide \$1.6 million to Psychology CAFE for additional psychological services in Devonport and surrounding areas for people with moderate to high complexity mental health issues, will this be honoured; if not, why not; if so,

a) when will the funding commence, and

b) what period will the funding cover.

**Mr Hunt:** The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

a) Funding will be provided to the primary health network Tasmania called Primary Health Tasmania in late September 2018. Primary Health Tasmania has commenced discussions with Psychology CAFE regarding funding arrangements for the delivery of these additional services.

b) Funding of \$400,000 will be provided each financial year for four years from 2018-19 to 2021-22 a total of \$1.6 Million.

### **Mental Health**

#### **(Question No. 1039)**

**Ms Keay** asked the Minister for Health, in writing, on 16 August 2018:

In respect of his announcement during the campaign for the by-election in the electoral division of Braddon on 4 July 2018 to provide \$2.4 million for a new extended hours Devonport mental health nursing service to support regional residents with more complex mental health needs, to help them avoid hospitalisation, will this be honoured; if not, why not; if so,

(a) when will the funding commence,

- (b) what period will the funding cover,
- (c) to whom will this funding be paid, and
- (d) from where will this program be delivered.

**Mr Hunt:** The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

c) Funding will be provided to the primary health network in Tasmania called Tasmania Primary Health in late September 2018. Tasmania Primary Health has commenced discussions with the mental health nursing service regarding funding arrangements.

d) Funding of \$600,000 will be provided each financial year for four years from 2018-19 to 2021-22 a total of \$2.4 million.

c) and d)

Tasmania Primary Health has responsibility for commissioning a suitable provider and determining where the program will be delivered, taking into consideration local need and stakeholder consultations.

### **Tasmania Primary Health**

#### **(Question No. 1040)**

**Ms Keay** asked the Minister for Health, in writing, on 16 August 2018:

In respect of his announcement during the campaign for the by-election in the electoral division of Braddon on 4 July 2018 to provide \$600,000 for a new psychology service for Burnie residents, will this be honoured; if not, why not; if so,

- (a) when will the funding commence,
- (b) what period will the funding cover,
- (c) to whom will this funding be paid, and
- (d) from where will this program be delivered.

**Mr Hunt:** The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

e) Funding will be provided to the primary health network in Tasmania called Tasmania Primary Health in late September 2018. Tasmania Primary Health has commenced discussions with the psychology service regarding funding arrangements.

f) Funding of \$150,000 will be provided each financial year for four years from 2018-19 to 2021-22 a total of \$600,000.

c) and d)

Tasmania Primary Health has responsibility for commissioning a suitable provider and determining where the program will be delivered, taking into consideration local need and stakeholder consultations.