



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Hansard

THURSDAY, 1 JUNE 2023

CORRECTIONS

This is a **PROOF ISSUE**. Members may suggest corrections to their own speeches within 15 non-sitting days by contacting the Hansard office.

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

FORTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

Governor-General

His Excellency General the Hon. David John Hurley AC, DSC, FTSE (Retd)

House of Representatives Office Holders

Speaker—Hon. Dugald Milton Dick MP

Deputy Speaker—Ms Sharon Catherine Claydon MP

Second Deputy Speaker—Mr Ian Reginald Goodenough MP

Members of the Speaker's Panel—Dr Michael Randolph Freeland MP,
Mr Ross Xavier Vasta MP, Mr Steven Georganas MP, Mr Andrew Damien Wilkie MP,
Ms Rebekha Carina Che Sharkie MP, Hon. Scott Andrew Buchholz MP,
Ms Lisa Marie Chesters MP, Ms Maria Vamvakinou MP,
Mr James William Stevens MP, Mr Terry James Young MP,
Dr Michelle Ananda-Rajah MP and Ms Alicia Emma Payne MP

Leader of the House—Hon. Anthony Stephen Burke MP

Deputy Leader of the House—Hon. Mark Christopher Butler MP

Manager of Opposition Business—Hon. Paul William Fletcher MP

Deputy Manager of Opposition Business—Hon. Kevin John Hogan MP

Party Leaders and Whips

Australian Labor Party

Leader—Hon. Anthony Norman Albanese MP

Deputy Leader—Hon. Richard Donald Marles MP

Chief Government Whip—Ms Joanne Ryan MP

Government Whips—Mr David Philip Benedict Smith MP and Ms Anne Maree Stanley MP

Liberal Party of Australia

Leader—Hon. Peter Craig Dutton MP

Deputy Leader—Hon. Sussan Ley MP

Chief Opposition Whip—Mr Albertus Johannes van Manen MP

Opposition Whips—Hon. Melissa Lee Price MP and Mr Rowan Eric Ramsey MP

The Nationals

Leader—Hon. David Kelly Littleproud MP

Deputy Leader—Senator Perin McGregor Davey

Chief Nationals Whip—Hon. Mark Maclean Coulton MP

Nationals Whip—Mr Samuel James Birrell MP

Printed by authority of the House of Representatives

Members of the House of Representatives

Members	Division	Party
Albanese, Hon. Anthony Norman	Grayndler, NSW	ALP
Aly, Hon. Dr Anne	Cowan, WA	ALP
Ananda-Rajah, Dr Michelle	Higgins, Vic.	ALP
Andrews, Hon. Karen Lesley	McPherson, Qld	LP
Archer, Mrs Bridget Kathleen	Bass, TAS	LP
Bandt, Mr Adam Paul	Melbourne, Vic.	AG
Bates, Mr Stephen James	Brisbane, Qld	AG
Bell, Ms Angie Marion	Moncrieff, Qld	LNP
Birrell, Mr Samuel James	Nicholls, Vic.	NATS
Bowen, Hon. Christopher Eyles Guy	McMahon, NSW	ALP
Boyce, Mr Colin Einar	Flynn, Qld	LNP
Broadbent, Mr Russell Evan	Monash, Vic.	LP
Buchholz, Hon. Scott Andrew	Wright, Qld	LP
Burke, Hon. Anthony Stephen	Watson, NSW	ALP
Burnell, Mr Matthew Paul	Spence, SA	ALP
Burney, Hon. Linda Jean	Barton, NSW	ALP
Burns, Mr Joshua Solomon	Macnamara, Vic.	ALP
Butler, Hon. Mark Christopher	Hindmarsh, SA	ALP
Byrnes, Ms Alison Joy	Cunningham, NSW	ALP
Chalmers, Hon. Dr James Edward	Rankin, Qld	ALP
Chandler-Mather, Mr Max	Griffith, Qld	AG
Chaney, Ms Katherine Ella	Curtin, WA	IND
Charlton, Dr Andrew Henry George	Parramatta, NSW	ALP
Chester, Hon. Darren Jeffrey	Gippsland, Vic.	NATS
Chesters, Ms Lisa Marie	Bendigo, Vic.	ALP
Clare, Hon. Jason Dean	Blaxland, NSW	ALP
Claydon, Ms Sharon Catherine	Newcastle, NSW	ALP
Coker, Ms Elizabeth Ann	Corangamite, Vic.	ALP
Coleman, Hon. David Bernard	Banks, NSW	LP
Collins, Hon. Julie Maree	Franklin, TAS	ALP
Conaghan, Mr Patrick John	Cowper, NSW	NATS
Conroy, Hon. Patrick Martin	Shortland, NSW	ALP
Coulton, Hon. Mark Maclean	Parkes, NSW	NATS

Members of the House of Representatives

Members	Division	Party
Daniel, Ms Zoe	Goldstein, Vic.	IND
Dick, Hon. Dugald Milton	Oxley, Qld	ALP
Doyle, Ms Mary Judith Jacinta	Aston, Vic.	ALP
Dreyfus, Hon. Mark Alfred, KC	Isaacs, Vic.	ALP
Dutton, Hon. Peter Craig	Dickson, Qld	LP
Elliot, Hon. Maria Justine	Richmond, NSW	ALP
Entsch, Hon. Warren George	Leichhardt, Qld	LP
Fernando, Ms Cassandra Juanita	Holt, Vic.	ALP
Fletcher, Hon. Paul William	Bradfield, NSW	LP
Frelander, Dr Michael Randolph	Macarthur, NSW	ALP
Garland, Dr Carina Mary Lindsay	Chisholm, Vic.	ALP
Gee, Hon. Andrew Robert	Calare, NSW	IND
Georganas, Mr Steven	Adelaide, SA	ALP
Giles, Hon. Andrew James	Scullin, Vic.	ALP
Gillespie, Hon. Dr David Arthur	Lyne, NSW	NATS
Goodenough, Mr Ian Reginald	Moore, WA	LP
Gorman, Hon. Patrick Possum	Perth, WA	ALP
Gosling, Mr Luke John Anthony	Solomon, NT	ALP
Haines, Dr Helen Mary	Indi, Vic.	IND
Hamilton, Mr Garth Russell	Groom, Qld	LNP
Hastie, Hon. Andrew William	Canning, WA	LP
Hawke, Hon. Alexander George	Mitchell, NSW	LP
Hill, Mr Julian Christopher	Bruce, Vic.	ALP
Hogan, Hon. Kevin John	Page, NSW	NATS
Howarth, Hon. Luke Ronald	Petrie, Qld	LP
Husic, Hon. Edham Nurredin	Chifley, NSW	ALP
Jones, Hon. Stephen Patrick	Whitlam, NSW	ALP
Joyce, Hon. Barnaby Thomas Gerard	New England, NSW	NATS
Katter, Hon. Robert Carl	Kennedy, Qld	KAP
Kearney, Hon. Gerardine Mary	Cooper, Vic.	ALP
Keogh, Hon. Matthew James	Burt, WA	ALP
Khalil, Mr Peter	Wills, Vic.	ALP
King, Hon. Catherine Fiona	Ballarat, Vic.	ALP

Members of the House of Representatives

Members	Division	Party
King, Hon. Madeleine Mary Harvie	Brand, WA	ALP
Landry, Hon. Michelle Leanne	Capricornia, Qld	NATS
Lawrence, Ms Tania Natalie	Hasluck, WA	ALP
Laxale, Mr Jerome Alexandre Alain	Bennelong, NSW	ALP
Le, Ms Dai Trang	Fowler, NSW	IND
Leeser, Mr Julian Martin	Berowra, NSW	LP
Leigh, Hon. Dr Andrew Keith	Fenner, ACT	ALP
Ley, Hon. Sussan Penelope	Farrer, NSW	LP
Lim, Mr Bon Cheng	Tangney, WA	ALP
Littleproud, Hon. David Kelly	Maranoa, Qld	LNP
Marino, Hon. Nola Bethwyn	Forrest, WA	LP
Marles, Hon. Richard Donald	Corio, Vic.	ALP
Mascarenhas, Ms Zaneta Felice Antoinetta	Swan, WA	ALP
McBain, Hon. Kristy Louise	Eden-Monaro, NSW	ALP
McBride, Hon. Emma Margaret	Dobell, NSW	ALP
McCormack, Hon. Michael Francis	Riverina, NSW	NATS
McIntosh, Mrs Melissa Iris	Lindsay, NSW	LP
McKenzie, Ms Zoe Anne	Flinders, Vic.	LP
Miller-Frost, Ms Louise Jane	Boothby, SA	ALP
Mitchell, Mr Brian Keith	Lyons, TAS	ALP
Mitchell, Mr Robert George	McEwen, Vic.	ALP
Morrison, Hon. Scott John	Cook, NSW	LP
Mulino, Dr Daniel	Fraser, Vic.	ALP
Murphy, Ms Peta Jan	Dunkley, Vic.	ALP
Neumann, Hon. Shayne Kenneth	Blair, Qld	ALP
O'Brien, Mr Edward Lynam	Fairfax, Qld	LNP
O'Brien, Mr Llewellyn Stephen	Wide Bay, Qld	LNP
O'Connor, Hon. Brendan Patrick John	Gorton, Vic.	ALP
O'Neil, Hon. Clare Ellen	Hotham, Vic.	ALP
Pasin, Mr Antony	Barker, SA	LP
Payne, Ms Alicia Emma	Canberra, ACT	ALP
Pearce, Mr Gavin Bruce	Braddon, TAS	LP
Perrett, Mr Graham Douglas	Moreton, Qld	ALP

Members of the House of Representatives

Members	Division	Party
Phillips, Mrs Fiona Evon	Gilmore, NSW	ALP
Pike, Mr Henry Jon	Bowman, Qld	LP
Pitt, Hon. Keith John	Hinkler, Qld	NATS
Plibersek, Hon. Tanya Joan	Sydney, NSW	ALP
Price, Hon. Melissa Lee	Durack, WA	LP
Rae, Mr Samuel Thomas	Hawke, Vic.	ALP
Ramsey, Mr Rowan Eric	Grey, SA	LP
Reid, Dr Gordon James	Robertson, NSW	ALP
Repacholi, Mr Daniel Peter	Hunter, NSW	ALP
Rishworth, Hon. Amanda Louise	Kingston, SA	ALP
<i>Vacancy</i>	Fadden, Qld	—
Roberts, Ms Tracey Gardner	Pearce, WA	ALP
Rowland, Hon. Michelle Anne	Greenway, NSW	ALP
Ryan, Dr Monique Marie	Kooyong, Vic.	IND
Ryan, Ms Joanne Catherine	Lalor, Vic.	ALP
Scamps, Dr Sophie Anna	Mackellar, NSW	IND
Scrymgour, Ms Marion Rose	Lingiari, NT	ALP
Sharkie, Ms Rebekha Carina Che	Mayo, SA	CA
Shorten, Hon. William Richard	Maribyrnong, Vic.	ALP
Sitou, Ms Sally	Reid, NSW	ALP
Smith, Mr David Philip Benedict	Bean, ACT	ALP
Spender, Ms Allegra May	Wentworth, NSW	IND
Stanley, Ms Anne Maree	Werriwa, NSW	ALP
Steggall, Ms Zali	Warringah, NSW	IND
Stevens, Mr James William	Sturt, SA	LP
Sukkar, Hon. Michael Sven	Deakin, Vic.	LP
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
Thompson, Mr Phillip Bruce	Herbert, Qld	LNP
Thwaites, Ms Kate Lynne	Jagajaga, Vic.	ALP

Members of the House of Representatives

Members	Division	Party
Tink, Ms Kylea Jane	North Sydney, NSW	IND
Vamvakinou, Ms Maria	Calwell, Vic.	ALP
van Manen, Mr Albertus Johannes	Forde, Qld	LP
Vasta, Mr Ross Xavier	Bonner, Qld	LP
Violi, Mr Aaron Anthony	Casey, Vic.	LP
Wallace, Mr Andrew Bruce	Fisher, Qld	LNP
Ware, Ms Jennifer Lesley	Hughes, NSW	LP
Watson-Brown, Ms Elizabeth	Ryan, Qld	AG
Watts, Hon. Timothy Graham	Gellibrand, Vic.	ALP
Webster, Dr Anne Elizabeth	Mallee, Vic.	NATS
Wells, Hon. Anika Shay	Lilley, Qld	ALP
Wilkie, Mr Andrew Damien	Clark, TAS	IND
Willcox, Mr Andrew John	Dawson, Qld	LNP
Wilson, Mr Joshua Hamilton	Fremantle, WA	ALP
Wilson, Mr Richard James	O'Connor, WA	LP
Wolahan, Mr Keith	Menzies, Vic.	LP
Wood, Hon. Jason Peter	La Trobe, Vic.	LP
Young, Mr Terry James	Longman, Qld	LNP
Zappia, Mr Antonio	Makin, SA	ALP

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—C Surtees
 Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services—R Stefanic
 Parliamentary Budget Officer—S Helgeby

ALBANESE MINISTRY

TITLE	MINISTER
Prime Minister	The Hon Anthony Albanese MP
Minister for the Public Service	Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher
Minister for Women (Vice-President of the Executive Council) (Manager of Government Business in the Senate)	Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher
Minister for Indigenous Australians	The Hon Linda Burney MP
Cabinet Secretary	The Hon Mark Dreyfus KC MP
<i>Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister</i>	<i>The Hon Patrick Gorman MP</i>
<i>Assistant Minister for the Public Service</i>	<i>The Hon Patrick Gorman MP</i>
<i>Assistant Minister for Indigenous Australians</i>	<i>Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy</i>
Minister for Defence (Deputy Prime Minister)	The Hon Richard Marles MP
Minister for Veterans' Affairs	The Hon Matt Keogh MP
Minister for Defence Personnel	The Hon Matt Keogh MP
Minister for Defence Industry	The Hon Pat Conroy MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Defence</i>	<i>The Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP</i>
<i>Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs</i>	<i>The Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP</i>
Minister for Foreign Affairs (Leader of the Government in the Senate)	Senator the Hon Penny Wong
Minister for Trade and Tourism (Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate)	Senator the Hon Don Farrell
Minister for International Development and the Pacific	The Hon Pat Conroy MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Trade</i>	<i>Senator the Hon Tim Ayres</i>
<i>Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs</i>	<i>The Hon Tim Watts MP</i>
Treasurer	The Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP
Minister for Small Business	The Hon Julie Collins MP
Assistant Treasurer	The Hon Stephen Jones MP
Minister for Financial Services	The Hon Stephen Jones MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Competition, Charities and Treasury</i>	<i>The Hon Dr Andrew Leigh MP</i>
Minister for Finance	Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher
Special Minister of State	Senator the Hon Don Farrell
Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations (Leader of the House)	The Hon Tony Burke MP
Minister for Skills and Training	The Hon Brendan O'Connor MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Employment</i>	<i>The Hon Dr Andrew Leigh MP</i>
Minister for Education	The Hon Jason Clare MP
Minister for Early Childhood Education	The Hon Dr Anne Aly MP
Minister for Youth	The Hon Dr Anne Aly MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Education</i>	<i>Senator the Hon Anthony Chisholm</i>

TITLE	MINISTER
Minister for Health and Aged Care (Deputy Leader of the House)	The Hon Mark Butler MP
Minister for Aged Care	The Hon Anika Wells MP
Minister for Sport	The Hon Anika Wells MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care</i>	<i>The Hon Ged Kearney MP</i>
<i>Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention</i>	<i>The Hon Emma McBride MP</i>
<i>Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Health</i>	<i>The Hon Emma McBride MP</i>
<i>Assistant Minister for Indigenous Health</i>	<i>Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy</i>
Minister for Climate Change and Energy	The Hon Chris Bowen MP
Minister for the Environment and Water	The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Climate Change and Energy</i>	<i>Senator the Hon Jenny McAllister</i>
Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government	The Hon Catherine King MP
Minister for Communications	The Hon Michelle Rowland MP
Minister for the Arts	The Hon Tony Burke MP
Minister for Northern Australia	The Hon Madeleine King MP
Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories	The Hon Kristy McBain MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Transport</i>	<i>Senator the Hon Carol Brown</i>
<i>Assistant Minister for Regional Development</i>	<i>Senator the Hon Anthony Chisholm</i>
Minister for Social Services	The Hon Amanda Rishworth MP
Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme	The Hon Bill Shorten MP
Minister for Government Services	The Hon Bill Shorten MP
Minister for Housing	The Hon Julie Collins MP
Minister for Homelessness	The Hon Julie Collins MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Social Services</i>	<i>The Hon Justine Elliot MP</i>
<i>Assistant Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence</i>	<i>The Hon Justine Elliot MP</i>
Attorney-General	The Hon Mark Dreyfus KC MP
<i>Assistant Minister for the Republic</i>	<i>The Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP</i>
Minister for Resources	The Hon Madeleine King MP
Minister for Industry and Science	The Hon Ed Husic MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Manufacturing</i>	<i>Senator the Hon Tim Ayres</i>
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	Senator the Hon Murray Watt
Minister for Home Affairs	The Hon Clare O'Neil MP
Minister for Cyber Security	The Hon Clare O'Neil MP
Minister for Emergency Management	Senator the Hon Murray Watt
Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs	The Hon Andrew Giles MP

Each box represents a portfolio. As a general rule, there is one department in each portfolio. However, there can be two departments in one portfolio. **Cabinet Ministers are shown in bold type.** *Assistant Ministers* in italics are designated as Parliamentary Secretaries under the *Ministers of State Act 1952*.

SHADOW MINISTRY

Title	Shadow Minister
Leader of the Opposition	The Hon Peter Dutton MP
Shadow Minister for Women	The Hon Sussan Ley MP
Shadow Cabinet Secretary	Senator the Hon Marise Payne
Shadow Minister for the Public Service	Senator the Hon Jane Hume
Shadow Minister for Indigenous Australians	Senator Jacinta Nampijinpa Price
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister to the Leader of the Opposition</i>	<i>Senator the Hon James McGrath</i>
Shadow Minister for Industry, Skills and Training (Deputy Leader of the Opposition)	The Hon Sussan Ley MP
Shadow Minister for Resources	Senator Susan McDonald
Shadow Minister for Climate Change and Energy	Ted O'Brien MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Manufacturing</i>	<i>The Hon Michelle Landry MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Climate Change and Energy</i>	<i>Senator Hollie Hughes</i>
Shadow Minister for Agriculture (Leader of the Nationals)	The Hon David Littleproud MP
Shadow Minister for Water (Deputy Leader of the Nationals)	Senator Perin Davey
Shadow Minister for Environment, Fisheries and Forestry	Senator the Hon Jonathon Duniham
Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs (Leader of the Opposition in the Senate)	Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham
Shadow Minister for Trade and Tourism (Deputy Manager of Opposition Business in the House)	The Hon Kevin Hogan MP
Shadow Minister for International Development and the Pacific	The Hon Michael McCormack MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Trade</i>	<i>Rick Wilson MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs</i>	<i>Senator Claire Chandler</i>
Shadow Attorney-General	Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash
Shadow Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations (Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate)	Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash
Shadow Minister for Small and Family Business	The Hon Sussan Ley MP
Shadow Minister for Education	Senator the Hon Sarah Henderson
Shadow Minister for Regional Education	The Hon Darren Chester MP
Shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education	Angie Bell MP
Shadow Minister for Youth	Angie Bell MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Education</i>	<i>The Hon Nola Marino MP</i>
Shadow Treasurer	The Hon Angus Taylor MP
Shadow Assistant Treasurer	The Hon Stuart Robert MP
Shadow Minister for Financial Services	The Hon Stuart Robert MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Competition, Charities and Treasury</i>	<i>Senator Dean Smith</i>

Title	Shadow Minister
Shadow Minister for Government Services and the Digital Economy	The Hon Paul Fletcher MP
Shadow Minister for Science and the Arts (Manager of Opposition Business in the House)	The Hon Paul Fletcher MP
Shadow Minister for Social Services	The Hon Michael Sukkar MP
Shadow Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme	The Hon Michael Sukkar MP
Shadow Minister for Housing	The Hon Michael Sukkar MP
Shadow Minister for Homelessness	The Hon Michael Sukkar MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Social Services</i>	<i>Pat Conaghan MP</i>
Shadow Minister for Health and Aged Care	Senator the Hon Anne Ruston
Shadow Minister for Sport (Manager of Opposition Business in the Senate)	Senator the Hon Anne Ruston
<i>Shadow Minister for Regional Health</i>	<i>Dr Anne Webster MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention</i>	<i>Melissa McIntosh MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Health, Aged Care and indigenous Health Services</i>	<i>Gavin Pearce MP</i>
Shadow Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development (Leader of the Nationals in the Senate)	Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie
Shadow Minister for Communications	The Hon David Coleman MP
Shadow Minister for Northern Australia	Senator Susan McDonald
Shadow Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories	The Hon Darren Chester MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Transport</i>	<i>Tony Pasin MP</i>
Shadow Minister for Defence	The Hon Andrew Hastie MP
Shadow Minister for Veterans' Affairs	The Hon Barnaby Joyce MP
Shadow Minister for Defence Industry	The Hon Luke Howarth MP
Shadow Minister for Defence Personne	The Hon Luke Howarth MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Defence</i>	<i>Phillip Thompson OAM MP</i>
Shadow Minister for Finance	Senator the Hon Jane Hume
Shadow Special Minister of State	Senator the Hon Jane Hume
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Finance</i>	<i>Senator the Hon James McGrath</i>
Shadow Minister for Home Affairs	Senator James Paterson
Shadow Minister for Cyber Security	Senator James Paterson
Shadow Minister for Emergency Management	Senator Perin Davey
Shadow Minister for Immigration and Citizenship	The Hon Dan Tehan MP
Shadow Minister for Community Safety, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs	The Hon Jason Wood MP
Shadow Minister for Child Protection and the Prevention of Family Violence	Senator Kerryne Liddle
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence</i>	<i>Pat Conaghan MP</i>

Each box represents a portfolio. **Shadow cabinet ministers are shown in bold type..**

CONTENTS

THURSDAY, 1 JUNE 2023

BILLS

Statute Law Amendment (Prescribed Forms and Other Updates) Bill 2023	1
First Reading	1
Second Reading	1
Creative Australia Bill 2023	2
Creative Australia (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2023	2
Second Reading	2
Third Reading	15
Creative Australia (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2023	15
Second Reading	15
Third Reading	15
Excise Tariff Amendment (Product Stewardship for Oil) Bill 2023	16
Customs Tariff Amendment (Product Stewardship for Oil) Bill 2023	16
Second Reading	16
Third Reading	18
Customs Tariff Amendment (Product Stewardship for Oil) Bill 2023	18
Second Reading	18
Third Reading	18
Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority Amendment (Disclosure of Information) Bill 2023	18
Second Reading	18
Third Reading	39

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Beecroft Rotary Club Youth Awards	39
Cricket ACT Hall of Fame	39
Health Care	39
Eating Disorders	40
Timms, Ms Maree	40
Racing Together	40
Climate Change	41
Pearce Electorate: Roads	41
Motor Neurone Disease	41
International Workers Memorial Day	41
Margaret River Pro	42
Chisholm Electorate: Friends of Damper Creek Conservation Reserve	42
Lindsay Electorate: Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme	42
Employment: Women	43
Flinders Electorate: Infrastructure	43
Climate Change	43
Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme	44
Live Animal Exports	44
Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme	44
Moreton Electorate: Africa Day Festival	44

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Budget	45
Early Childhood Education	45
Australian Defence Force	46
National Anti-Corruption Commission	47
Interest Rates	47
Wages	48
Ministerial Standards	48
Artificial Intelligence	49
Minister For Health And Aged Care	49
Infrastructure	50
Minister For Communications	51

Cybersecurity.....	52
DISTINGUISHED VISITORS	
Smith, Mr Thomas	52
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE	
Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety	52
Migration	53
Road Safety	54
Veterans	54
Student Debt	55
Commonwealth Procurement	56
Aboriginal And Torres Strait Islander Voice.....	57
Albanese Government.....	57
STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER	
Zolotto, Ms Belynda	58
STATEMENTS	
Personal Explanation.....	58
AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS	
Report No. 30 of 2022-23	58
DOCUMENTS	
Presentation	58
PRIVILEGE	
Economics Committee.....	59
MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE	
Energy	59
BILLS	
Trade Support Loans Amendment Bill 2023.....	69
Student Loans (Overseas Debtors Repayment Levy) Amendment Bill 2023	69
Second Reading	69
ADJOURNMENT	
Public Transport	71
Housing.....	72
Digital Economy	72
Premier of Western Australia	73
Western Australia Government.....	73
Canning Electorate: Lakelands Station	74
International Relations: Australia and Malaysia.....	75
FEDERATION CHAMBER	
CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS	
Indi Electorate: Health Care	76
Comrades Marathon.....	76
Wreck Bay.....	76
Bowman Electorate: Telecommunications	77
Hasluck Electorate: Cost of Living	77
AUKUS	78
Bruce Electorate: Visas	78
Deakin Electorate: Infrastructure.....	79
Cambodia.....	79
Bushfires	80
Swan Electorate: Roads	80
BILLS	
Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2023-2024	81
Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2023-2024	81
Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Bill (No. 1) 2023-2024.....	81
Second Reading	81
ADJOURNMENT	
PricewaterhouseCoopers.....	104
Environment	105
Queensland: Infrastructure.....	105
Vocational Education and Training	106
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.....	107
Silicosis.....	108
McEwen Electorate: Diamond Creek Junior Football Club.....	108

Thursday, 1 June 2023

The **SPEAKER (Hon. Milton Dick)** took the chair at 09:00, made an acknowledgement of country and read prayers.

BILLS

Statute Law Amendment (Prescribed Forms and Other Updates) Bill 2023

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by **Mr Dreyfus**.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr DREYFUS (Isaacs—Attorney-General and Cabinet Secretary) (09:01): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Statute Law Amendment (Prescribed Forms and Other Updates) Bill 2023 amends 85 Commonwealth acts to enhance administration and promote consistency across the statute book. It does this by amending references to prescribed forms in the statute law of the Commonwealth, making minor and technical changes to the Commonwealth statute book, and repealing certain obsolete acts and provisions of acts.

Statute law revision acts and statute stocktake acts have been passed since 1934 in order to remove obsolete and spent provisions from the statute book and correct drafting mistakes. They are traditionally non-controversial and are essential to keep the Commonwealth statute book accurate and up to date.

Statute law revision and update bills aim to enhance the clarity and efficiency of the statute book. The amendments are minor in nature and either make no change, or only minor changes, to the substance of the law.

This bill contains six schedules. Schedule 1 updates references to prescribed forms in 33 acts across the Commonwealth statute book.

The provisions amended by Schedule 1 currently provide for forms to be prescribed by regulations. Those forms generally impose requirements for things to occur, such as particular information to be provided. Modern legislative drafting approaches recognise that requiring forms to be prescribed in regulations can be unnecessarily restrictive. In some situations, it will remain important to provide for a form to be prescribed by, or set out in, an act or regulations. However, in other cases, it is more appropriate for the form to be approved by a specified person or body by notifiable instrument. This enables minor updates or significant improvements to be made to those forms, without requiring further regulations to be made. Where prescribed or approved forms are made by notifiable instrument they will still appear of the Federal Register of Legislation.

Schedule 1 of the bill amends provisions that require forms to be prescribed by regulations and replaces them with other approaches that are best suited to the context of the particular form. These amendments will ensure well-targeted requirements will apply, taking into account the best modern practices available in the relevant circumstances. They will ensure there is still oversight of the information to be provided while enabling flexibility in updating and improving forms.

Schedule 2 updates language relating to persons with disability to focus on the person, rather than the disability. These amendments give effect to the recommendations made by Economic Justice Australia in its August 2022 research report, *'Handicapped': Use of outdated terminology in Social Security law and policy*.

The object of the amendments in schedule 2 is to prevent negative impacts on the lives of people with disability resulting from the way they are referred to in particular legislative provisions. These amendments are not intended to change the way these provisions operate.

Schedule 3 updates references in Commonwealth acts and Northern Territory acts to make those references consistent with the way the Northern Territory now cites its acts.

Schedules 4 to 6 of the bill correct technical errors that have occurred in acts as a result of drafting and clerical mistakes and repeals spent and obsolete provisions of acts. The amendments in schedules 4 to 6 enhance readability, facilitate interpretation and administration and promote consistency across the Commonwealth statute book.

These ongoing improvements to legislation are important to ensure that the Commonwealth statute book remains up to date, accurate and user friendly. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Creative Australia Bill 2023
Creative Australia (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2023
Second Reading

Cognate debate.

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr KHALIL (Wills) (09:06): As the member for Wills, I know how important the arts are to my community and of course, more broadly, to society in general. Wills, in the northern suburbs of Melbourne, has a magnificent arts community. That's why it's so pleasing that the Albanese Labor government has finally been able to start designing and implementing a national cultural policy that will correct, reshape and make such a difference to the arts community. Implementing this policy will change so much of the arts community's treatment and the way that they have been neglected over the past decade.

A lot of people sometimes talk about the arts in economic terms. You hear that more people go to the National Gallery of Victoria than the MCG, and that's all well and good. There is certainly a commercial part of the arts that is important, but not all arts are commercially viable. That's just a fact. But that doesn't diminish the importance of those artists and their work, especially to society. In my view, the arts are such an integral part of who we are: our identity as a people, our society, our civilisation. The arts are really the heart and soul of any society, and so it is important to support the arts. Sometimes, if they're not commercially viable, artists and their artwork can be that heart and soul of a society as well. The Labor government has really valued and elevated the contribution of the creative industries to the social, cultural and economic life of this country. That contribution sometimes is intangible and can't be measured in economic terms, but it is so significant to who we are as a people.

Our artists, therefore, are too important to be ignored and neglected as they have been over the previous decade. It was really fantastic to have the Minister for the Arts, Tony Burke, visit my electorate a few weeks back and engage with local artists, the creative people who work in the creative arts, to discuss the national cultural policy. We had an event at The Moldy Fig, which is a jazz club in my electorate, in East Brunswick, run by a mother-daughter duo, Dorelle and Vivian, and they were wonderful hosts at that event. You can actually get some New Orleans, Louisiana cuisine there as well—jambalaya and so on. So we had a bit of jazz. We had a really good discussion around national cultural policy, all of the ins and outs of how the policy is going to be implemented and what it means for local artists. We had a local band called Hey Gringo, who were fantastic.

The arts are important to me and important to my community, clearly. The suburb of Brunswick in my electorate has one of the highest concentrations of artists in Australia. It is a thriving arts sector and it is the heart and soul of our community. As I said, the arts cannot be measured in traditional economic terms. These metrics are really intangible in some respects but it's pretty clear the social benefits are invaluable. The arts do matter. What we saw over the past decade of the former Liberal government was a consistent slashing of funding for the arts. As I said, we on this side have always elevated and valued the contribution of creative industries to Australian life, and to our social, economic and cultural life. Way back when, former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam established the Arts Council and outlined his vision for the arts. The arts community in Wills and the arts communities right across Australia continue to deserve support from governments, in my view.

The Albanese government's national cultural policy, Revive, is part of a new era of that type of support for the arts. It sets up and supports our arts, entertainment and cultural sector for the next five years. Because of that neglect the arts community had faced for far too long, this is such a significant step for the creative arts for them to start to get certainty around their work, certainty of Australian content. I will come to quotas for Australian content and how important Australian content is later. The policy will provide greater opportunities for talented artists who are up-and-coming as well, who might not be as commercially viable, by allowing an atmosphere where arts can thrive and grow, and where organisations can grow and fulfil their vision.

It's really important we support the community and continue to reach new audiences and tell those Australian stories, something close to my heart. I worked at SBS as executive director for corporate affairs and strategy for almost four years. One of the things that came through my time in the media at SBS was the importance of telling Australian stories, particularly multicultural stories, diverse stories of who we are. Seeing yourself, seeing your diversity reflected on the screen is such a powerful, powerful experience, because it tells you that you belong.

One of the aspects of the arts that is so important to me is this sense of belonging that it actually enriches. Telling our stories is so important. There is great content from around the world. We enjoy watching some Nordic drama here or there or some American television. There is some great content, some French films. I love all of that, but it's important we also tell our stories, because that tells us who we are. Australian children's content is so important

because they see their experiences reflected back to them. This is such an important part of the national cultural policy. Of course, First Nations people and First Nations artists and stories are so important. When NITV—the National Indigenous Television Network—first started, it came on board with SBS. NITV has had award-winning Indigenous content for children. That is such a powerful experience for Indigenous kids to have that positive experience of Indigenous stories their stories told on screen, as well as for all Australians to share in that cultural heritage. We are so lucky to experience those multicultural stories, those First Nations stories, here in Australia, and this is a very important part, a central part, of this national cultural policy—the importance of telling those stories and reflecting the diversity in our community.

I talked about how some of the economic metrics are not as tangible in this industry, but the fact is there are clear metrics that this is a \$17 billion industry. It employs 400,000 Australians. The Labor government's national cultural policy will provide funding over four years, including to establish Creative Australia. This Creative Australia Bill 2023 provides legislation to establish Creative Australia as a modern organisation that will carry this policy forward. It includes the establishment of Music Australia and Creative Workplaces. It will ensure our arts and entertainment are strongly supported through what is now a federal entity. The bill delivers specific elements of Revive, the government's cultural policy, which I've touched on.

On this bill the government has received 1,200 submissions from the sector as well as from consultations with over 800 individuals and organisations and 14 town halls across the country on the national cultural policy. It's going to do many great things for the sector.

Music Australia will support the industry to grow, will involve strategic initiatives, industry partnerships, research and training, and skills and development. Creative Workplaces will work with artists and employers to raise and maintain safety standards for all arts forms and for relevant matters to authorities, because those who work in the creative arts are important and they have been neglected for too long. That certainty in their work and feeling safe in their workplaces is just as important for any Australian in the workplace.

We'll set minimum standards and rates of pay for the sector, because people should not get away with being underpaid as artists. That has happened. You've got the classic cliché of the poor artist living in a shed doing their artwork, the genius artist—that's not good enough. That is a cliché, a stereotype. Artists and those who work in creative arts should be getting the pay that they deserve like any other Australian in any other sector.

We also need to ensure that our great talent is acknowledged, recognised and fairly remunerated. That's an important principle. There are new councils being set up to guide the work of all of this.

There will be an Australian Council board, which provides advice around the sorts of services and programs that should be delivered with the new funding. This bill demonstrates the government's commitment to the arts sector in ensuring it supports all of the artists and arts organisations across the country.

The arts and those who work in the creative arts have suffered for a long time. They've been really neglected, passed over, and the importance of what their contribution is to our society has not been acknowledged, in a sense. That has been shameful. There has been nothing really in place for a period of time to support the rich art and cultural basis of Australian creative arts in this country. That is no longer. It is wonderful to be part of a government that pays such attention, commitment and passion to the arts, because the arts are so important to who we are.

During the pandemic, musicians and artists provided us with the relief we needed in those hard times. They supported us during a difficult time. They were neglected. They weren't recognised as workers, and they couldn't benefit from the wage subsidies as they were intentionally excluded as artists and artworkers. That's a substantive point that I make about the neglect. They provided such an important part of our lives and a contribution to society, yet they were deliberately excluded from the wage subsidies that flowed through during that very difficult time. Because they contributed such a richness to this country, I think there's been a lack of respect for far too long and it's important for us to rectify that. This is what this policy and this bill is also about. We're committed to changing this. We're committed to backing artists.

Obviously Labor has a fine tradition in this space. The last two cultural policies were delivered under Labor governments, Creative Nation under Paul Keating and Creative Australia under Julia Gillard. While the arts sector is essential from an economic perspective—it is a \$17 billion industry and 400,000 Australians are employed—the sector is important from the culture and wellbeing perspective, from that perspective of being the heart and soul of our society and in many respects being part of identifying and telling the stories about who we are and why we are. The arts allow us to experience the world around us through a different lens, different perspectives and to provide us with a better understanding of the experiences of others as well. It is also very important for our mental health and wellbeing, and it helps preserve our culture. What is culture if it's not the stories we tell and the traditions we have?

Revival will ensure the arts sector can be treated with the respect that it deserves, because this government knows how important the arts are to our communities. Under Revive, our new national cultural policy, there will be a place for every story and a story for every place. This country needs to acknowledge that artists are creators and workers, and that's what we're doing as a government. Artists' working conditions need to reflect this. Their pay needs to reflect this. The way we support them needs to reflect this. This government is truly committed to bringing back respect, acknowledgement and real substantive support for our artists and for the arts sector. This bill will ensure that our artists and the arts sector are supported in a way that recognises the rich contributions artists make to our country and to our culture.

Ms SPENDER (Wentworth) (09:20): Next week the Sydney Film Festival will open with the premier of an Australian feature film *The New Boy*, directed by one of our most celebrated Aboriginal filmmakers, Warwick Thornton, and starring one of our most celebrated actors, Cate Blanchett. The film screens alongside around 30 other Australian features, documentaries and shorts in this festival.

Seeing Australian films like this, shown amongst more than 200 international pictures, brings a sense of pride in Australia's contribution to telling stories that foster understanding, tolerance and belonging worldwide. Indeed, Australia has a rich cultural history, which has long seen us punching above our weight internationally. Our filmmakers, actors, musicians, bands, writers and painters—too many to name—have a reputation for excellence, for storytelling and for capturing the hearts and minds of people in Australia and across the world.

But recent years have been tough. The past decade has seen neglect in funding of the arts, compounded by the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The livelihoods of many of our arts and cultural workers were threatened and in some cases suffered irreparable damage. Some of our national institutions were cut dramatically and so couldn't even maintain their current infrastructure. The support provided in the government's cultural policy and partially implemented in the Creative Australia Bill 2023 is therefore imperative to the sector's survival and ultimately to its thriving. It's long overdue, and it's critical that it's passed and then built on.

Research from the Australia Council shows that Australia is a creative nation. Nearly every Australian engages with arts and culture. I see the students up in the gallery, and I'm sure that arts, culture, music and drama are some of their favourite subjects at school. A growing majority acknowledge the positive impact of arts in our lives—on our communities, on our mental health and in our education system. They also acknowledge the myriad small businesses that are part of creating, distributing and supporting the sector, which together mean that our cultural and creative industries contribute more than \$112 billion to GDP.

Arts and culture are particularly valued in Wentworth. More than 92 per cent of all adults in Wentworth attend cultural events each year. Many of Australia's creative practitioners live in Wentworth, with more than 10,000 people working in the cultural and creative industries and more than 3,800 cultural businesses in the electorate. And we're blessed to have important creative venues like Bondi Pavilion, the Griffin Theatre, and Sculpture by the Sea, as well as many commercial and independent art galleries. Over the past year, many people in Wentworth have reached out to me regarding the cultural and creative sectors, and I'm delighted that this parliament has been able to deliver some of their many priorities, from restoring funding for Trove to strengthening incentives for film production through the location offset that was passed in the recent budget and is critical to the Disney studios, which are right in the heart of Wentworth and where I recently did a tour—being taken around the studio on a golf buggy—and seeing some of the absolutely world-class institutions that we have in Wentworth for making internationally acclaimed films as well as supporting the wonderful National Institute of Dramatic Arts, which is just outside Wentworth's borders.

We're taking positive steps, but there remains a long way to go. A key priority for people in Wentworth is supporting our independent screen sector and ensuring that we continue to tell Australian stories. A vital measure to achieve this is the introduction of Australian content quotas for streaming services. As more and more content is accessed via streamers like Netflix, Disney and Binge, access to Australian content is at risk. Without a legislative requirement for Australian content, these streamers may simply fill their schedules with cheaper repeats and international reality television. The cultural sector has long argued the importance of Australians being able to see and hear Australian stories, and I'm glad that the government shares this view. In launching its cultural policy the government stated that the arts are at the heart of our national life, and it is through the arts that we build our identity as a nation and a people. I couldn't agree more.

Telling authentic and diverse Australian stories helps us recognise who we are. They help create a sense of community and a sense of respect for our diversity, our history and our unique place. They help us understand each other and feel connected. I therefore welcome the minister's commitment to introducing content quotas for streaming services in the second half of the year. I urge the government to continue to listen to the independent screen sector, to protect Australian intellectual property and to ensure that original Australian stories continue to be seen on our screens.

Beyond screen quotas for streamers, there's still much to do to ensure our arts and cultural sectors flourish. Creativity, innovation, exploration and diversity are part of a dynamic arts sector, and we need this type of thinking to drive the experimentation and out-of-the-box ideas that help create both our sense of national identity and a society that is ready and willing to grasp the opportunities of the future. This parliament is moving in the right direction, and the government is rightly acknowledging both the social and economic importance of the arts, but we must not lose momentum. Reviving this sector is desperately needed.

I look forward to working with the government as it implements other aspects of its national cultural policy, including establishing a First Nations arts board, Writers Australia and the new Arts and Disability Associated Plan; providing greater support for commercial and philanthropic partnerships; and, absolutely critically, ensuring that funding goes directly to the artists, creative people and workers in the arts sector, who are the people we should be supporting through all these initiatives and whose ingenuity and creativity we are seeking to see flourish. I'm especially delighted that the minister has agreed to visit artists in my community of Wentworth later this year.

The national cultural policy rightly recognises the central role of arts and culture in developing a creative, innovative, respectful and successful society. I will work to ensure this government and future governments continue to help the sector thrive.

Ms MASCARENHAS (Swan) (09:27): Australian artists tell our nation's collective story. Albert Namatjira painted ghostly gums. AC/DC was a group of Fremantle boys who took the world by storm, singing about pubs along the Canning Highway in my electorate of Swan. And *Bluey*, Australia's favourite cartoon, which has a captive audience of both parents and children, has highlighted all things Australian. From the distinct architecture of the Queenslander to a script that has lifelong lessons for both children and adults, it captures in a unique Australian way our sense of who we are, our laidback attitude and our resilience, with good Australian humour.

There are talented Australian voices in *Bluey*, such as Leigh Sales, Bob Irwin and Anthony Field, the blue Wiggle. Bandit is voiced by David McCormack from the band Custard. The other thing that's beautiful about *Bluey* is the musical score. Each episode is a masterpiece of music, dialogue and art, weaving these multiple forms of art together. Another artist from my electorate of Swan is Jill Ansell, who was one of the finalists in the Archibald competition. Each are a source of national pride.

This government promotes and supports Australian artists because what they produce is more than a product. They give us a way we can learn more about different parts of ourselves and a way to project thousands of the beautiful intricacies of our national identity onto the international stage. The arts are also a part of Labor's identity. When the Dunstan Labor government in South Australia created the South Australian Film Corporation, it was when our film industry was floundering. It was an initiative that gave us *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, *Storm Boy* and *Breaker Morant*. The Whitlam government refined the process of providing funds to arts organisations through the Australia Council. Bob Hawke created Film Finance Corporation Australia, which we can thank for *Muriel's Wedding*, *Strictly Ballroom* and *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*. Australia's last two cultural policies were delivered under Labor governments: Creative Nation under Paul Keating and Creative Australia under Julia Gillard.

Some people perceive that science and maths are the opposite of art, but, for me as a scientist, I see them as two sides of the same coin. We both learn about the classics. We experiment using different parameters. Some of the work we do is edgy and groundbreaking. Some feel uncomfortable about the new space. Sometimes we create a work of art, but sometimes we don't and we learn from it. But both are needed for the future of humanity. I would say that there is a bias towards STEM, and it's because of this perception about creating products, but the truth is that we need both. As I said, it's like two sides of the same coin.

Australian creatives are incredibly talented people, but the seriousness of their work should not be lost on those opposite. It's a \$17 billion industry which employs an estimated 400,000 Australians. In my home electorate, there are about 2½ thousand people who work in the arts. On my campaign, I met Rebecca Thomson, a fantastic community campaigner. Bec and Izzy McDonald created Labor for the Arts in WA, and I want to take this opportunity to recognise their work in promoting the scale of the contribution that Australian artists make to our communities, as well as the work that they have done in engaging the Minister for the Arts in developing our national arts policy.

We know it hasn't been an easy time for those in our arts industry recently. The pandemic created different fortunes for the arts. The pandemic recreated the shared experience of watching TV series worldwide, which had been fading from our culture due to on-demand services. Many of us clicked on to streaming services and plugged into shows like *Squid Game*, *Tiger King* and *Bluey*, while also tuning into our premiers' daily COVID updates. For streaming services, podcasts and online content creators, this was a period that boomed and rapidly changed the way we interacted with the arts.

For our traditional in-person cultural mediums, the pandemic was a catastrophe, and many of those industries have yet to recover. Live music, theatre and even the mighty film industry suffered tremendously during this period. At the premiere of *Top Gun: Maverick*, Steven Spielberg was caught on camera saying to Tom Cruise: 'You might have saved the theatrical distribution. Seriously, *Maverick* might have saved the entire theatrical industry.' Such was the dire state of the industry with all its component feeder pieces. It was almost at the point of collapse. I know how badly live music and touring artists were smashed in this period. My husband's son loves electro ambient music so much that he DJ's on a community radio station called RTRFM and, occasionally, in venues around Perth. In the context of Australia and the world, WA was relatively unscathed by COVID, thanks to the policies of our outgoing Premier of WA and the then health minister Roger Cook. But, even the few lockdowns that did occur had major effects on the WA music industry that still cause ripples to this day. This has been seen through not only a reduced number of events but also the diversity of operators.

The loss of local theatre, live music and film diversity in Australia is a huge loss to the collective Australian identity. These mediums are how we tell our collective stories and how we define ourselves. This has never been more important to us as Australians. We live in an amazing age of connectivity to the world, but we need to be able to support artists to express themselves in telling our ever-evolving story as Australians or we risk losing this important part of our national history. These stories can be as simple as existential songs about friendship and the dangers of kangaroos when driving at twilight on country WA roads.

Methyl Ethel is a Western Australian band that has benefited greatly from the creation of Australian music's main cultural music incubator, Triple J. Gough Whitlam was the visionary who recognised that an evolving Australian nation needed more of its own art and culture and established Australia's first youth radio station in 1975. Eventually that evolved into Triple J, and the music economy around Triple J has been the primary means of developing and marketing new music to a mass Australian youth audience and has paid back its investment many times over. In an interview on Triple J in 1994, former Prime Minister Paul Keating noted:

... Triple J's big contribution has been in breaking in new Australian bands and not just the Coral Snakes today, but INXS, Yothu Yindi, Midnight Oil ...

I am thrilled to speak on this legislation that defines a new arts policy for Australia. The Morrison government not only failed to support the arts industry during the pandemic but kicked them while they were hurting. We are restoring \$200 million of cut funding to the sector. We are creating a new dedicated body, Music Australia, to support and invest in the Australian music industry. We know that an investment in Australian cultural industries comes back to us many times over in our cultural exports and a thriving local industry. We on our side of politics are lucky to have a Prime Minister and a Minister for the Arts who share a devotion to Australian music and culture and continuing a long Labor tradition of supporting the arts and cultural industries.

The Creative Australia Bill will establish Creative Australia as a modern entity with a new governance arrangement, including establishing Music Australia and Creative Workplaces. The arts aren't just a hobby. For thousands of Australians it's a workplace. It's how they pay for a roof over their head. Like any workplace, it has its own occupational hazards. Creative Workplaces will work with artists, industries and employers to raise and maintain safety standards for all art forms and ensure that matters are referred to relevant authorities as appropriate. Creative Workplaces will set minimum standards and rates of pay for the sector. Organisations seeking government funding will be expected to meet these standards and, as a government, we should be working to ensure that when we are allocating taxpayer funds through grants we are diligent in ensuring that the standard for the arts sector is what the community expects.

Former Minister for the Arts George Brandis created his own fund by taking money out of the Australia Council. He allocated it to major art companies through his own program. It was a slap in the face for smaller groups that make up part of the bigger cultural picture. This bill delivers on key elements of Revive, the government's national cultural policy, to establish Creative Australia and return the George Brandis cuts. The bill establishes a new board as the governing and accountable authority of Creative Australia, reconstituted with appointments made under this new legislation. Membership will be increased up to 14 members. It responds to the more than 1,200 submissions on the national cultural policy and the 14 town halls, attended by 800 stakeholders.

When we make policy, we should be listening to the communities, not talking to them from the top down. This is a lesson that we learned from the ongoing Voice debates. Following from this, I would like to commend this bill to the House because it's a policy that will set a new vision for our cultural landscape. We need this, but we need to do this with the support of the arts sector.

Mr BIRRELL (Nicholls—Deputy Nationals Whip) (09:39): I rise to speak on the Creative Australia Bill 2023. I'm a supporter of the bill. I would just like to make the point that, whilst I'm very happy to speak on this legislation, it is one of two debates I want to participate in today. The other one is the appropriations bill, which is important. It's the budget. I want to debate and talk about that on behalf of my constituents. There are 49 speakers lined up to

speaking on that in the Federation Chamber, and the government has decided that that debate will finish at the adjournment today. So it's very unlikely that I and a number of my colleagues are going to be able to speak on the appropriations bill, and I think that's a great shame. I'm informed by people who were here previous to me, who've been here a long time, that that was never something that the previous government would do. So I'd just make the point that I would like to be able to debate the appropriations bill.

However, I'm very happy to speak on the Creative Australia Bill 2023, and I'm a supporter of the bill as well. The arts are of great interest to me, and I'll go into that a bit later. Whether they're the performing arts, the visual arts, literature, or music, in my case, the arts are deserving of support and have received support from successive governments over a number of years.

This bill is unusual. It seeks to advance the government's legislative agenda to implement decisions announced as part of its national cultural policy. So far, the legislation which has passed has changed the name of the Australia Council to Creative Australia, so the Creative Australia Bill before the House gives effect to Creative Australia, an entity that will have expanded functions and responsibilities and a new governance structure, as the Creative Australia body replaces the Australia Council body.

This bill is also cognate with the Creative Australia (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2023, which will repeal legislation as it relates to the Australia Council—essentially, dissolving the entity of the Australia Council under law. And I'm getting a bit confused as well, if other people are. You would think this would mean that the new entity replaces the old and the Australia Council is consigned to history, but not quite. Creative Australia will be overseen by a group of people who will now be known as the Australia Council Board. The old board had 12 and this body will have 14. So the logic of this is not immediately apparent, but, when you consider that it was the Whitlam government which originally came up with the name Australia Council, you can understand the reluctance of those opposite to abolish it completely. The spectre of Gough remains. But that's okay.

I'd just make the point also that I think the Whitlam government did some good things in relation to the arts. But, if any of you have watched a movie called *Don's Party*, which is a great example of Australian filmmaking and a very entertaining show, the producers of that film actually had the former Liberal Prime Minister John Gorton appear in that film, as a nod to his support for and kicking off of the Australian film industry in the late sixties. I think Labor governments like to portray that they're the only ones who support the arts, but there has been a long history of successive governments supporting the arts, and I think the coalition government did some great things in the previous term. But I think this bill is good and deserving of support as well.

What's immediately apparent is that we will have, under this policy, more Commonwealth arts officials. I'm worried that that comes at the expense of actual artists. We'd like to see some of the money go into the pockets of artists and not of bureaucrats, although people have informed me that bureaucracy is an art in itself—something that I'm learning and seeing examples of here in Canberra.

According to the budget, the average staffing level for the Australia Council will increase by 32 per cent, from an estimated 108 in 2022-23 to 143 in 2023-24, and there have been programs that were funded under the previous coalition government that have been cut. I think that's a little bit disappointing. The point of arts funding is to deliver it to creative people who can, in turn, deliver something of cultural substance to audiences—including, particularly, regional audiences.

So, despite the fact that I do have some concerns and some criticisms, I support the government in this bill and in supporting the arts. I'm pleased that the member for Macquarie is going to come to my electorate and talk to some arts organisations in my community about how some of this funding will work and how they can get access to it.

Why are the arts important? Well, I launched, with the member for Higgins, yesterday, Parliamentary Friends of Men's Health, and I talked about three things as being critical for men's health in my view. I talked about diet—and I linked that to the great produce grown in my electorate and said that I will be fighting for policies that help farmers produce that great produce and will be fighting those, including some of those opposite, who are developing policies to destroy those farming industries—but I also talked about physical and mental health. Sport and the arts are two ways that I certainly sustain my mental health, through physical activity and also through my relationship with the arts.

There is a connection between the arts and healthy lives. The arts give us a chance to reflect on our place in the world, give us a chance to reflect on creativity and what creativity means, and can help us expand our imagination, particularly for me when I listen to music. If I listen to *Maiden Voyage* by Herbie Hancock, which is a great jazz album from the 1960s, I come away with my imagination and my mind enhanced and I sometimes do that. It helps me deal with life up here.

The arts are also important because they connect regional communities. There is a cultural exchange between arts from different backgrounds. You only need to come to a festival like the St Georges Road Food Festival and

creative festival in Shepparton to see all these diverse cultural and artistic backgrounds coming together. Regional areas have never been cultural deserts, though, and I can turn to the *Shepparton Advertiser* of 1897, which talked about the Shepparton minstrel club being hailed for an entertaining evening to benefit the Mooroopna Hospital. The Mooroopna brass band back then performed a song called *Think of me sometimes, Maggie*. The evening came to a raucous close with a farce called *Stewed Mice*, which, according to the reviewer 'Fairly convulsed the audience by their antics'. Regional communities have been involved in the arts and in creating art that reflects back the issues we have to grapple with.

I have been involved in some plays. I have appeared as an actor in some plays for the Shepparton Theatre Arts Group. I had to put on a upper class English accent for one of them but I won't do that now. There are some great plays written by local people about local issues. They help us explore what we're going through and are of great benefit to helping us understand who we are. There have been some great visual arts shows and arts hubs—the G.R.A.I.N Store in Nathalia or Customs House Gallery in Echuca—live performances, secret garden gigs. The secret garden gigs are a great example of entrepreneurship from a young woman called Jamie Lee, who hosts musical gigs in somebody's garden. I have hosted one. I have also performed in one, a version of Radiohead's *Subterranean Homesick Alien*—for those who are interested. We have a lot of creative groups, including the Shepparton Arts Group. They do it for love and enjoyment and to benefit the wider community.

I want to make a point about one of the really great initiatives in my region, one that was wholeheartedly supported by the former coalition government—that is, the Shepparton Art Museum. The Shepparton Art Museum has a significant collection, particularly of Namatjira artworks. It also has Kaiela Arts, which is a First Nations industry that has working artists. Some people come to see the more broad, more historical and more famous art, like Albert Namatjira. People can go into the art gallery and see more modern interpretations of art in our region and purchase those, and that sustains artists with an income. That is such a wonderful thing for my community, the Shepparton Art Museum, but it took a sustained effort from the local community and the support of the federal government. My predecessor, the former member for Nicholls, Damian Drum—some might know him as a footy coach with a love sport—was wholeheartedly supportive of and instrumental in getting federal government funding to help build that Shepparton Art Museum. It stands as a legacy for that coalition government, and I am very thankful for them for supporting that. There is also a number of other art museums. The Silo Art Trail—art works that are painted on wheat silos around the district—is fantastic.

I want to talk about art being able to help people express themselves in a unique way. I want to talk about a young man called Lee Nelson. Lee is autistic and he has found expression through his art. I saw his art works in an exhibition at a gallery in a place called Kyabram. I was really taken with the different way that he sees the world I don't like it when people refer to autism as a disability; Lee sees the world differently to a number of other people and he expresses that through his artworks. I was very moved and I bought a lot of his artworks, and they're proudly hanging in my electorate office in Shepparton. I think we need to foster places where new artists can develop, perform and make some income out of their artworks so that they can continue to create great art.

I'm interested to see how it works, but I like the idea of Music Australia and I want to see how that can get some money into the pockets of young, aspiring musicians, people who would have been able to sell records and CDs back in the day, but in the days of online streaming it's a bit harder. I'm interested to see how that works and I commit myself to working collaboratively with those opposite because I want to make that work. I was in a band called the Hunted back in the naughties. We put out an album and I wrote a song called 'Ballad of the Aimless Artist', about a guy who wrote a Japanese haiku poem and couldn't understand what it all meant, or what art meant. I'd really like to see a lot more support for young musicians, and I hope this bill can deliver that. I'll work with those opposite to help this happen.

These changes are part of the broader implementation of the government's national cultural policy. I'm a real supporter of the arts—it's one of the things I came up here for. I want to see regional arts continue to thrive. I believe they have done well under the previous coalition government, despite what some may say. I've had more than a few people from arts organisations come up to me and say, 'We're all lefties, we probably vote for Labor and the Greens, but I have to admit the coalition government probably supports the arts more than Labor governments, traditionally.' But I'm pleased with this bill and I'm pleased with the commitment. I think that's great and we're supporting the bill. I would also point out that I think this should lead to better outcomes for actual artists and not just bureaucrats, even though the art of bureaucracy is a beguiling one. I'm heartened by the indication that regional arts will receive some support and funding under this new national policy. I'm keen to see how and how much. I'm looking forward to working with the member for Macquarie, who is going to come to my electorate. Let's get on and work together. This should be a bipartisan one. We all believe in the arts. We all want to see artists do well. We all want to see creativity at the forefront of the Australian national identity. For me, as a regional MP, particularly seeing how that works for regional people and regional stories and regional arts, I indicate my support for the bill. I'd like to be able

to debate appropriations—I'll get that in before my time runs out, though it looks like I won't be able to and I'm disappointed about that. I commend the Creative Australia Bill and look forward to seeing if we can get some more action in regional arts.

Ms RYAN (Lalor—Chief Government Whip) (09:53): Before the member for Nicholls leaves the chamber, I'd like to bring to his attention the fact that the program for the appropriations bill consideration in detail was brought into this chamber and not opposed by those opposite. That timeline was set by this parliament. It hasn't been gagged in any way, shape or form. It has been on the list since the budget.

I welcome the member for Nicholls' comments around this important Creative Australia Bill 2023. I had the absolute pleasure on 30 January of joining the member for Watson, lots of our colleagues and the creative industry members in Melbourne at the Espy hotel to launch this policy. It's a pleasure to be in the parliament today to support the legislation going through and to commend this legislation to the House. As the member for Nicholls said so eloquently, everyone in this place supports the arts. I want to mention why I really like the title of this being Creative Australia. If you look at it through the lens of creativity, it broadens the conversation about the arts. It broadens that conversation. It takes that conversation out to suburbs like the suburb where I live and the suburb where I grew up. Creativity does need to be at the forefront of our thinking. Creating vibrant, young, creative minds and a place where they can thrive is the business I was in for 30 years before joining the parliament, because creativity happens in our classrooms. Creativity happens in the curriculum that we create and mandate for our schools. Space and time in that curriculum needs to be provided for the development of creativity young people.

I want to note, with my education hat on here, that we often hear—even yesterday I was listening to someone talk—about our skills shortage and VET and VCAL and training and the thinking that we should look to northern Europe. They mean Scandinavia. They've stopped saying Finland. But when people talk about how well Finland do in education, I always want to remind them that one of the things Finland made a decision about was mandating the creative arts to the final year of high school, and they did so because they understood that all of the learning, put together, without creativity, doesn't create a new future; it just continues the old.

So creativity here and supporting the workers in the creative industries is, I think, incredibly important. I note, too, the notion from the member for Nicholls about workers in the arts, or artists, being able to sustain themselves. I want to see them thrive, not sustain themselves. I want to see them earn from their creativity. I want to see them not just be celebrated—as we do celebrate them in Australia—for their quintessential Australian riffs that we all hear in our heads when we think of particular times in history. We can hear the music that went along with those periods in history—the quintessential Australian riffs. Those riffs vary, obviously, according to the era and the sound track of your life. My sound track is very different to lots of sound tracks in this place. My sound track is quintessentially suburban Australia. That needs to be celebrated, but we need the support in place to ensure that that Australian voice, that Australian riff, goes on being created for the next generation and the generation after that.

I began teaching at the beginning of the great years for the Australian film industry. That has also been referenced here. I remember watching Peter Weir movies and being absolutely in awe. I was seeing Australian stories on screen for the first time and, as a teacher, I remember being able to take them into classrooms and watch children's faces as they recognised the places, the accent, the voice. I remember sharing Tim Winton with year 8 children and asking them what it was about this piece of writing that excited them so much and watching them dig down until they started reading it aloud and realising that what they were reading was Australian. I remember putting another piece of text, a universal piece of text, in front of them, but having them realise that their voice wasn't in this piece. But in Tim Winton's work they found their voice, they found their speech, they found their patterns, they found their turn of phrase.

Supporting Creative Australia is incredibly important. As others have said, the workers in this industry were abandoned during the pandemic and were not supported in the way that other workers in this country were, to our national shame. I think this legislation turns and pivots Australia back to a place where there's going to be money to support the industry and the creatives in this country. But, more importantly, it will ensure that they have safe work places, because some of the stories that we've heard that have emerged out of our creative industries have also been distressing, and it's very important that we create safe work places.

I want to spend a bit of time talking about another issue. There are those who will go on and make a living in the creative arts and who will thrive in the creative arts. There are others for whom, as the member for Nicholls referenced, art is a way of finding expression. As one who worked in schools, I know the power of art therapy for young people. Finding a way to express themselves through arts can often lead to a more stable existence, a way to express themselves that stays with them for life and that they go back to time and time again in their lives to pull themselves out of a place of despair perhaps or a place of loneliness or a place where they're feeling less than hopeful. I've seen young people be involved in art therapy and, having known them across their lifetime, they still reference those periods in schools when art therapists were supported and paid well to come into schools and work

with young people to build their creativity and to help them tap into those things. So, like the member for Watson, I'm very excited about the Creative Australia funding and the policy, the pivot and the shift, the inclusion of safe workplaces as part of this program and the recognition of people involved in Creative Australia as legitimate workers who need to thrive in the industry in which they work.

Let's think about Australian music. If you're like me and you're from the suburbs—I've never been to the ballet and I've never been to the opera, and I'd probably never go to either, ever, but for me—the importance of Australian stories being told can't be overestimated. Whether it be through music, whether it be on stage, whether it be through film, whether it be through performance art, whether it be through any form of art, that recognition of yourself, of us as a country and of the place you live and having it celebrated or having the world presented to you through a prism that is your home can't be overestimated in terms of our own identity but also in terms of our self esteem.

As young teacher, I watched those Australian films in that period. I saw them on the big screen, and it filled me with a pride about who we are and the unique way that we see the world. Having our stories from our local communities being performed, whether that be locally or whether they end up on much larger stages or travelling the country, those moments are critically important, because it's through the reflection of those stories, through an art prism, that we come to new understandings about how we get things done, how we change things, how we celebrate things.

All of these things are incredibly important, and I'm really pleased to be member of this government. I notice the member for Watson has joined us in the chamber. I want to congratulate him, personally, and his team for the work that they are doing in this space. It's a lifetime of commitment for the member Watson. I know everyone has memories of election night, but I remember a moment when I went: 'We're back. Labor are back. The arts are back. Australians will feel proud of themselves again,' because the bottom line for me is that when we celebrate the arts, when our artists thrive, we get to feel pride in our country, in our way of life and in our unique way of seeing the world, as someone said yesterday, from the bottom of the world or the top of the world, depending on where the globe is turning. We like to think of ourselves on the bottom of the world and shining bright and much larger on an international stage. Our artists give us that.

In our lounge rooms, in our kitchens or at our backyard barbecues, we hear that quintessential Australian riff, whatever it is for you—it's not hip-hop for me; I believe it is for the Treasurer. It's not DJ Albo's music for me. It's likely to be a much more suburban version of all of those things for me, but, when you're at that barbecue and you hear that music—I can give you this moment. I've got friends at home, they're the netballers that I've coached for many years, and one of them is overseas and has been for some time. We get a phone call, and in the background someone changes the music, because the person on the end of that phone needs to feel homesick while they talk to us, they need to think about Melbourne, they need to think about the MCG. I can't imagine who we played! Everyone in this chamber knows! Those moments are really important, they fill me with pride.

When I walk into this place in the morning, it's Australian music in my ears. It's Australian music in my ears as I come through and walk along the road and look at the Australian flag above Parliament House, because we are all proud of our country, we're all here to create a better country, and this goes some way to delivering on all of those things. I'm really proud to be part of a government that is going to deliver it.

I want to congratulate the member for Macquarie, as well, for her role as the envoy. Her commitment is also quite amazing to watch and absorb. Her interests are much broader and wider than mine, but in terms of the arts, there's an artist in all of us; there really is an artist in all of us.

I'm a girl from Werribee. I grew up admiring lots of people and lots of people's creativity. I was involved in a grassroots campaign that went for about 2½ years. About a year after we'd won this campaign and defeated Jeff Kennett and CSR, the multinational that was coming to destroy our lives, a friend of mine said to me, 'Joanne, we should write the play.' This person is now thriving as a playwright. We co-wrote a play that was dramaturged by the MTC and had a week's screening at home in Werribee in our local arts centre and at La Mama Theatre. So, I had an 18-month period when I was embedded in the world of these artists and had the pleasure of meeting the actors who are so committed to their craft, to performance and to Australian stories and to work with them and watch them work. And then to sit and see our story on the stage at La Mama was the most extraordinary thing. It was incredibly special, and it also gave me an insight into the precarious nature of these workplaces, where, from one week to the next, they have to ask, 'Will I be working or won't I be working?'

Anything we can do in this parliament to support those creative people amongst us to do this work, to tell our stories and to share who we are and what we are is important. This is a fabulous first step around that. I love the wording; I love the phrasing. For me, it brings the arts right back into my backyard, at my barbecue. Thanks, Member for Watson. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms STANLEY (Werriwa—Government Whip) (10:06): It's my pleasure to speak on the Creative Australia Bill 2023 today, if not a little daunting to see the author of it in the House with us. Being creative is definitely good for the soul and it's fundamental to the way we as human beings work, live and start to thrive. We all know, as the member for Lalor discussed, that it is good therapy to create and express yourself, and we need places where we can do that. The former member for Werriwa, Gough Whitlam, was a great supporter of the arts. He said:

A society in which the arts flourish is a society in which every human value can flourish.

That's why, since 1975, the Australia Council has been the Commonwealth arts investment and advisory body. It was Whitlam who decided that *Blue Poles* was a good investment. Better still, it was the picture on his Christmas card that year, for every person he sent a Christmas card to—and from the Prime Minister, in the days before emails, that was a significant number. And Australians got to enjoy the good and precipitous decision to get *Blue Poles*. I remember the discussion at the time about how much it cost, but it is now invaluable to our community and it's something the National Gallery has on display all the time, for everybody to look at. That's just how wonderful arts are for our community.

This bill will restore and modernise the Australia Council, which, unfortunately—like so much in our economy over the past 10 years—has been undervalued and destroyed by previous governments. The new name will be Creative Australia. The bill will strengthen the capacity of the Australia Council and provide greater strategic oversight and engagement across the sector, ensuring that funding decisions continue to be made on the basis of artistic merit and at arm's length from government. It's not about whether or not I like the ballet or whether or not I like hip-hop; it's the fact that everyone in Australia will have a voice and all their artistic endeavours will be part of it.

In the electorate of Werriwa I have a fantastic arts facility, Casula Powerhouse. They put on so many different exhibitions and so many different plays. But, more importantly, they are a community arts facility that support my community and people that come from migrant backgrounds.

I have had the pleasure on so many occasions of going and seeing young people from Miller Technology High School who have come to Australia from the worst of circumstances, from refugee backgrounds, from places like Afghanistan and Iraq, where they had to leave under the cover of darkness and leave everything at home. There is a program at Miller Technology High School which helps them talk about that. It helps them address the trauma and the disconnect they have from the Australian society that they are now living in. All of a sudden, they know they are safe. There are no bullets or other things. But it is really hard, particularly for younger children, to be able to process that. These performances and discussions and the teachers that support them through that just makes so much difference to their lives. It also gives them an insight into what education can be and just how wonderful that is. So we need arts for every part of the community.

This bill will also include the establishment of independent bodies, funds for First Nations arts and culture, contemporary music and writers, as well as a Centre for Arts and Entertainment Workplaces. The implementation of the Australia Council reforms under the national cultural policy will be staged to allow for necessary consultation. This is something that this government is really invested in—that people get a chance to say what they want. Instead of talking at people, we will be listening and implementing. A number of these elements will require implementation from 1 July 2023. These are covered in this bill and will be the first tranche.

The bill provides for the Australia Council to operate under the name 'Creative Australia', and additional functions in this bill will also enable the Australia Council to commence work for the Centre for Arts and Entertainment Workplaces and Music Australia from 1 July. The Centre for Arts and Entertainment Workplaces will work with artists, industries and employers to raise and maintain safety standards for all art forms and ensure matters are referred to relevant authorities as appropriate. It's important that everyone has a safe workplace. These workplaces are no different, even though they are creative ones. Music Australia will support the Australian music industry to grow, including through strategic initiatives and industry partnerships, research, training, skills development and export promotion. A follow-up bill will be introduced later this year to establish these critical bodies. Ongoing consultation with the sector will inform this legislation.

The bill provides authority for the Australia Council to deliver Creative Partnerships Australia, including the ability to attract public and private support for the arts and undertake research on public and private investment for the arts. This increased access to private sector funding for the arts will maximise the impact of public investment and support a sustainable arts centre. The transfer of Creative Partnerships will leverage the Australia Council's expertise and bring together arts philanthropy and arts funding with one entity to create synergies between public and private partnerships as well as government and philanthropic investment. That is really important. The arts are for the whole of our community, and all of our community should be part of that.

This bill allows the Australia Council to assume responsibility for the Australian Cultural Fund from 1 July, including for all donations made prior to the transfer. The Australian Cultural Fund is an important mechanism used by Creative Partnerships Australia to deliver its objectives to grow the culture of giving to arts and culture, bringing donors, businesses, artists and organisations together. It's really important that these creative people, be they musicians, artists or whatever, get paid properly for their work so that it actually can be what they do, rather than having to sustain themselves with several other jobs.

Through this legislation, the Australia Council will assume responsibility for assisting Australian artists and arts organisations to attract and maintain support from donors and businesses, diversifying their sources of revenue, and encourage and celebrate innovation and excellence in giving to, and partnerships with, the arts and cultural sector. Under the bill, Creative Partnerships Australia Ltd will cease to exist and will be taken to be deregistered under the Corporations Act 2001 at the time of transition. The bill also includes transitional elements to support a smooth transfer of functions and ensure the continuity of business between Creative Partnerships Australia and the Australia Council.

I again thank the member for Watson for all he has done for our creative partnerships. I've seen firsthand in my electorate what a difference it makes when you fund everybody, from the community grassroots level to the big picture. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Prime Minister) (10:16): I am so proud to lead a government that follows in the footsteps of every Labor government that has recognised and respected the centrality of culture and the arts to our quality of life. After just one year in government, with the Creative Australia Bill 2023 and the associated legislation, we are keeping another important promise. In the process, what we're doing here is resetting the government's relationship with the arts sector—a sector that was neglected under the previous government and sometimes, indeed, openly held in contempt. This \$17 billion part of our economy was not considered worthy of their serious attention and certainly not their respect. But, of course, we can't reduce everything in life to dollar figures in the economy.

Quality of life relies upon cultural experience. It requires a lifting-up that the arts can sometimes give us in our lives, not only in giving us access to different perspectives but also in enriching the quality of life and the way that we engage with each other in our discussions, be it around the dinner table, at the local pub or in our community engagement. It is a way in which we can tell the Australian story, whether it be through the written story or the depiction of our landscapes, or whether it be through music, dance or other ways. I attended recently the commemoration of Qantas being such a long-lived airline. It was well overdue, of course. Their centenary was put off because of the pandemic. I saw a performance there of the Bangarra Dance Theatre that was uniquely Australian. The international visitors were uplifted. They were stunned by the quality of the dance—65,000 years in the making, but a modern depiction. That sort of work is, in my view, absolutely priceless.

A lot of hardworking Australians work in the arts sector. Not everyone in this sector is successful. So many do it because of the love that they have for it, not because of any pecuniary interest in it—indeed, far from it. But we need to make sure that they are valued. During the pandemic, very early on, of course, there was so little support. When it did come, it was very grudgingly given, even though people in that sector, by definition, couldn't work—not just the people who were performing, say, at the Enmore Theatre in my electorate, but also the people who work in areas such as lighting, stage management, producing and cleaning the theatres. Those people all found themselves being very much left behind because the very nature of the work is that it's casual in so many areas, with multiple employers as well. It took some time before there was any acknowledgement from the former government about the impact that was happening. This policy recognise that arts work is just that—work. It is employment as well—it's not just a hobby. It isn't just someone trying to make a difference as a hobby while they take a break from another job. It is real, meaningful, personal work that happens to make us wealthy in ways that extend far beyond the economic. It is the sort of wealth that enriches our spirit. As my friend the arts minister put it last week, the arts are: a pipeline into our hearts, one that lets us see and celebrate and reflect on who we truly are and can be and one that lets the rest of the world see Australia and its inner self.

The arts tell us stories. The arts ask questions, sometimes uncomfortable for those of us in public life, but that is a good thing. In the arts, we feel joy and celebration. We deal with pain and we reflect on truths that aren't always easily told. The arts lift us, individually and collectively, and they strengthen the bones of our communities. What the arts add up to is a never-ending journey of discovery. That is how the arts can bring us together. It is how they create shared understanding and common purpose. Without ever seeking to iron out the differences that make our nation so vibrant, strong and attractive, we will always seek out the common ground between us because that will always be the most fertile place to plant our dreams.

On Monday of this week I had the great honour of giving a eulogy for John Olsen at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney. I titled that 'A poet of the brush,' and indeed he was. I acknowledge that the arts minister and the shadow minister will both in attendance, as well as the New South Wales premier, at what was a joint

memorial from the Australian and the New South Wales governments. It was an extraordinary gathering of people from across the arts sector to celebrate an incredible life. One of the things that John Olsen did was persuade us to see Australia with fresh eyes, to look at this great landscape of ours, with all its familiarity and extraordinary antiquity, and see it in a new light. He summed it up himself in the opening of a retrospective on a career that for most of us was already in its maturity by the time we were born, and I quote,

We've got the richness of emptiness which for some reason was known as the dead heart ... That's a lie! That's not true! It is teeming with life. And this kind of thing is an exciting thing. To be an Australian artist is to be an explorer.

John Olsen is one of our greatest ever artists, and this was a celebration of his rich life and his contribution to lifting up all who have had the privilege of seeing his work, whether it be in an art gallery or, indeed, in his famous major artwork at the Sydney Opera House, for everyone who goes through that most magnificent of buildings—a piece of art as architecture, one that is revelling in its beauty. When I hosted President Obama just a month or so ago, we went for a walk around Government House and President Obama said, 'That is the world's best building.' And isn't it good that Australia can do that? It can aim high. That's what the arts can do. That's what Australian artists can do across the full spectrum of what the arts are, whether it is architecture, poetry, writing, music, culture, dance. It can be the best, and we can strive to really make a difference. It can be a way in which we reflect ourselves to the world.

Last Wednesday, when we hosted Prime Minister Modi at the Opera House as well, that depiction was shown to 1.4 billion people in India. That's good in and of itself—a source of pride and acknowledgement of the relationship between our two nations—but also an economic benefit from that as well. If a tiny, minuscule portion of the people who see that say, 'Yes, I'll go to Australia' rather than the alternatives then that's the best investment that you could ever possibly make.

That's why we needed to value the arts. When we announced with the minister the funding for the National Gallery to lift it up, I made the point that we have a piece of art there—*Blue Poles*, by Jackson Pollock—controversially purchased by Gough Whitlam, criticised at the time but a far better investment than any investment that's ever been made by a coalition government. It is worth \$500 million, and yet we have buckets to collect water from a leaky roof in the building that houses it. We must do better. Under this government, we will do better. It makes sense.

Earlier this year, we announced Revive, our comprehensive policy to revitalise this beloved sector. It's structured around five interconnected pillars, with 'First Nations first' because we recognise and respect the crucial place of First Nations stories at the centre of Australia's arts and culture. There is 'a place for every story', which reflects the breadth of our stories and the contribution of Australians as the creators of culture. The 'centrality of the artist' supports the artist as worker and celebrates artists as creators. 'Strong cultural infrastructure' provides support across the spectrum of institutions that sustain our arts, our culture and our heritage. The fifth pillar, 'engaging the audience,' is to ensure our stories reach people at home but, importantly as well, abroad.

The establishment of Creative Australia is a reimagined and properly funded Australia Council that will encompass new functions, including Music Australia to support the Australian music industry and the Centre for Arts and Entertainment Workplaces, within Creative Australia, to provide advice on issues of pay, safety and welfare in the arts and culture sector. There's more to come, including Writers Australia, which will provide direct support to the literature sector from 2025, and the establishment of a poet laureate for Australia. There will be a dedicated First Nations governance body within Creative Australia to invest in, create and produce First Nations works and with priorities and funding decisions determined by First Nations leaders.

We have a great nation here in Australia. We have incredible stories to tell, songs to sing and pictures to create. This government will keep doing things to put the even greater Australia that we know is possible within our grasp, and that's what this legislation that's before us today is aimed at doing.

Dr GILLESPIE (Lyne) (10:29): I rise to say a few words about this very important industry and the consequences of the Creative Australia Bill 2023, which we will not be opposing. I want to put on the record some of the achievements of the former coalition government. First of all, the national cultural plan that is at the heart of these changes is not a new idea. Many of us sat on the Standing Committee for Communications and the Arts and tabled a very significant report, *Sculpting a national cultural plan: igniting a post-COVID economy for the arts*, with the chair being Angie Bell. Yours truly was the chair during the creation of that report, but due to ministerial upgrades I wasn't there to table it.

During 2021-22, the coalition government spent \$1.07 billion on the creative industries and the arts, protecting it through COVID. Between 2019 and 2022, the total COVID support was \$1.153 billion: \$400 million for the Location Incentive, \$220 million for the RISE Fund, \$187 million of new funds for national collecting institutions, \$90 million for the Show Starter Loan Scheme, \$50 million for the Arts Sustainability Fund, \$50 million for the Temporary Interruption Fund, \$40 million for Support Act, \$33 million for Screen Australia, \$31.9 million for the

Australian Children's Television Foundation, \$31.4 million for regional and Indigenous arts and \$20 million of funding for independent cinemas. That is no mean feat.

The national cultural policy consists of quite a few re-announcements of policies that we announced and initiated, so of course we're going to support these changes. They've just rebadged it—they got rid of the Australia Council and called it Creative Australia. For instance, a 30 per cent tax offset for digital games production announced in the 2021 budget is announced as though it's something new in the national cultural policy. A commitment to stronger intellectual property protections for Indigenous arts and artists was also announced in October 2021, and a legislated requirement for Australian content on streaming video-on-demand services was announced in February 2022. We obviously lost the election, so we're not here to implement them, but a lot of these ideas had their genesis in that exemplary standing committee report that I mentioned and in the work of the former minister for communications and the arts.

My overriding concern with the re-creation and expansion is that I hope a lot of this money doesn't just go into more bureaucracy rather than supporting artists. I hope the new entities, Music Australia and the creative workplace entity, which will operate under the new entity, won't destroy the flexibility, nimbleness and freedom of the creative gig economy and turn it into a unionised workplace. As I said, the coalition won't be opposing this bill, but I want to put on the record all those matters and all the great work we did in the coalition, supporting the creative and cultural industries in this country. It is a huge industry. It deserves our support. We certainly did support it exceptionally through the dark days of COVID, let alone providing the support all the artists got out of JobKeeper.

Mr BURKE (Watson—Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, Minister for the Arts and Leader of the House) (10:33): I think we're done! I want to thank everybody from each side of the House and the crossbench who's contributed to the debate. In particular, I want to acknowledge the Prime Minister. Every post-war Labor leader has had cultural policy as part of the key legacies of their government in some way, but no Labor leader has brought it forward so early in a term as Prime Minister Albanese has done. That's because of his genuine commitment over his whole life to Australian storytellers and his resistance his whole life to the different attempts of culture wars to go after our storytellers, as we've seen too often.

I also want to pay tribute to the member for Macquarie, who is the Special Envoy for the Arts. A whole lot of the work with Revive was through a very intense and fast consultation process. To get an entire policy document like that together involved a lot of consultation and meetings. About half of those meetings were convened by me, but the member for Macquarie, as the arts envoy, very much took the lead in the other half. We would not have Revive without her work.

I want to also pay tribute to the many public servants. There have been different attempts in this debate by some to somehow denigrate 'bureaucrats'. It's a pretty noble term, 'public servant'—the concept of serving the public. And that's what those individuals did in making sure they met some time frames that were put forward by the government. They had every right to say, 'This is an impossible time frame,' because I said we'd get it done in six months; in fairness, it took seven. But we got there. What's happening now with this legislation will ricochet through communities around the whole of Australia. The evidence of that was seen in the different speeches given by people talking about the arts and the significance of it in their own electorates, including: members of the opposition, the members for Bradfield, Sturt, Casey, Nicholls and Lyne; members from the crossbench, including the member for Wentworth; and government members, the members for Macquarie, Lyons, Swan, Lalor, Werriwa and Wills.

Effectively what this legislation will do—presuming the Senate is kind enough to get through it in the same way we have—is give us a new organisation, Creative Australia, with the Brandis cuts returned and the funding that was meant to be there a decade ago finally possible again. We get a works-of-scale fund so that not only are they able to do the work for small and medium companies but they're able to start the investments that deliver the big works of the future. We get one organisation that brings the commercial, the government funded and the philanthropic funded together into the same body, instead of what it was for too long, which was that the Australia Council dealt with government funding, creative partnerships dealt with philanthropic funding and we just left the commercial world to look after itself—as though it wasn't the same workforce and as though it wasn't the same audience.

We then go one step further in the new organisation with Music Australia, acknowledging that, when most of us in this room were growing up, if you looked at the charts a good number were always Australian bands. There were a whole lot more venues back then. You'd listen to the radio and no matter what station you were on Australian music was absolutely part of the soundtrack to our lives. That, in so many ways, has slipped, and it's not because we don't have great artists. The artists now, if you go to a festival, are at least as good as and probably better than a whole lot of what we might have grown up with.

But we have the challenge now that the ways of making money that used to be there aren't there in the same way anymore. The number of venues isn't available, and opportunities for commercial success through album sales just

don't happen in the same way they used to. So, we need a body that is able to make the fast decisions that need to be made to really enrich the contemporary music sector. We can no longer have a view that contemporary music isn't part of what federal government has to take an interest in. Now it'll be there, and with Music Australia it'll be right at the core.

But it's also the case, with Creative Workplaces being established, that we need to acknowledge the different institutions we have for safe workplaces with reasonable remuneration haven't been delivered for the creative sector. They're different sorts of workplaces. They're itinerant workplaces. The method of engagement is often not an employment relationship. But to think that the storytellers we rely on to tell often difficult and challenging stories have been experiencing that in the very workplaces where they're doing that storytelling needs to be dealt with, and Creative Workplaces will do just that.

I want to thank the many artists who, in difficult times, spoke up, in particular in what's known globally as the Me Too movement—coming forward and telling stories, sometimes knowing that in doing the telling they risked being ostracised and finding it harder to get work. But a whole lot of artists took that step. Had they not, we wouldn't have known about the need to establish Creative Workplaces. I want those artists who stuck their necks out in different ways—those arts workers and their union, MEAA, who said these stories needed to be told—to know that they have been heard by the government. And, in this legislation, we're taking specific action to make sure that those workplaces can be safe and fair.

I didn't know the Prime Minister was going to make the references to the Sydney Opera House, but I'll just conclude with this, because I think it brings so many threads together. Normally I stay in Canberra on a Thursday night and have dinner with some friends. Tonight I'm heading off, and I will be at that building. Tonight will bring together the best building in the world with projections of art—the art of none other than John Olsen is going to be projected there. And the performance work that'll be done tonight, which will be difficult and challenging, is from the artist Deena Lynch, who performs as Jaguar Jonze. She's a visual artist, she's a photographic artist, she's a performance artist and she's a contemporary musician. She was one of the artists who spoke out and put herself in jeopardy in different ways by doing that. But all of that comes together, tonight, with one of the artists who helped drive the cultural policy that we're now implementing, at a building which has housed our storytellers ever since it was built and is globally iconic, while this building is having projected onto it the work of one of our greatest visual artists.

I want those stories to keep coming. I want those new artists to keep breaking through. I want people, when they think of Australia, to think not just of the natural beauty but of the stories that are still being told—the new stories, the new creativity, and the stories that have lived on this earth and on this continent ever since the first sunrise. That's what's possible, and that's a decision that the parliament is taking in now implementing the key recommendation of Australia's cultural policy, Revive.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Message from the Governor-General recommending appropriation announced.

Third Reading

Mr BURKE (Watson—Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, Minister for the Arts and Leader of the House) (10:42): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Creative Australia (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2023

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 BURKE (Watson—Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, Minister for the Arts and Leader of the House) (10:44): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Excise Tariff Amendment (Product Stewardship for Oil) Bill 2023
Customs Tariff Amendment (Product Stewardship for Oil) Bill 2023
Second Reading

Cognate debate.

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (10:45): I'm happy to rise today to speak on the Excise Tariff Amendment (Product Stewardship for Oil) Bill 2023. From the outset, I'd like to point out that it was a coalition government that devised the Product Stewardship for Oil Scheme and that we continue to support its existence. The relevant act, the Product Stewardship (Oil) Act 2000, was devised by the Howard government. That was primarily because the members of that government had realised that there was a need to encourage more recycling of oil, especially amidst an increasing awareness globally of the highly contaminable nature of oil. Indeed, at the time this scheme commenced operation in 2001, no oil recycling at all was being undertaken in Australia. The department website currently says: Since then, the amount of oil that Australia collects and recycles has risen from none to over 320 megalitres of base lubricating oil every year. That's more than half the oil sold in Australia each year.

This has been a levy benefits scheme that has worked extremely well for almost all of its history. It has not only significantly increased the incentives for the recycling of used oil in Australia but done so with great effect. It has fostered a sustainable used oil recycling industry, notwithstanding the difficulties that sector endured during the COVID period. It has also lowered the potential for and the various risks associated with many environmental and health problems that might have otherwise resulted from the poor storage and disposal of oil. Additionally, as has been noted in each of the four formal reviews of the scheme, including the most recent one completed by Deloitte in 2020, it has improved industry and community awareness and understanding that oil should not simply be regarded as a waste product. That's a substantial record of achievement.

It's important to add that, when it was established, the architecture of the scheme was carefully designed in such a way as to try to make it, at the very least, self-sustaining. This was so that the scheme, insofar as it remained successful, could continue long into the future without proving to be a financial burden to the federal government. Unfortunately, though, during the past four years, the returns to government from the scheme have been overtaken by the outlays. We understand the latest figure on this is that there has been an average deficit of approximately \$34.5 million annually. It's not unreasonable, therefore, for a government to be making the kinds of changes that are reflected in these two bills. The coalition respects that addressing these deficits through a levy rise was identified as one of the three recommendations of the Deloitte report.

In our consultations with stakeholders about the bills, it has become apparent that there are some mixed views about the best means of recovering the loss, including how to most appropriately set the levy rates. Likewise, there are some differing views about how the current government and future governments might best be able to continue to incentivise high-quality oil recycling in Australia whilst also minimising the potential impacts of levy changes on Australian consumers. Overall, though, there is general agreement that the cost recovery arrangements need to be brought back onto a more stable and sustainable financial footing.

Overall, though, there is general agreement that the cost recovery arrangements need to be brought back onto a more stable and sustainable financial footing. Given that these bills were introduced only last Thursday, we will, for now, take at face value the government's claims that the levy increase to 14.2 cents per litre or kilo will return to 139 million to balance—or very nearly balance—the recent losses. Obviously, if the changes in the bill don't deliver the expected outcomes and/or result in unintended consequences, then we will seek to revisit this matter.

For now though, we thank the government for bringing these bills to the parliament. We also thank the various stakeholders with whom we have spoken over many years in this policy area. In relation to these two bills specifically, I thank them for their detailed discussions with us in the very short time since the bills were introduced. Their insights and expertise have been invaluable in helping us analyse this pieces of legislation and to help inform our approach to them.

Mr BRIAN MITCHELL (Lyons) (10:50): I rise today in support of the Excise Tariff Amendment (Product Stewardship for Oil) Bill 2023 and the Customs Tariff Amendment (Product Stewardship for Oil) Bill 2023. These bills aims to rectify the persistent deficit and ensure that the costs of recycling oil are appropriately borne by its users. These bills are about ensuring a sustainable future that emphasises the importance of taking action on oil use and its recycling.

The scheme was established with a strong and clear intent to promote environmentally sustainable practices in the management, re-refining and reuse of used oil. The scheme does this through providing incentives to oil recyclers for the sale of consumption of Australia recycled oil. It operates on a levy-benefit model, wherein levies collected from refiners and importers offset the benefit payments to recyclers. However, despite the policy intent for the scheme to be fiscally neutral, self-funding its operations entirely, it has consistently operated at a deficit for several years, with benefit payments exceeding the duty collected through the scheme. The increasing investments across the refining sector have facilitated higher production of products that attract higher benefit rates. Unfortunately, the duties have remained static, resulting in a deficit averaging \$34½ million annually. This imbalance is not sustainable for the long-term success of the scheme, and it has been an issue that requires addressing.

The intent of the scheme is a strong and clear. It improves oil recycling, refinement and reuse. We just need to ensure that it is fully meeting the intended expectations and operates as a fiscally neutral scheme. The bills before the House represent a solution to this problem. By raising the excise duty and customs duty from 8½ cents per litre to 14.2 cents per litre respectively, these bills aim to bring the scheme out of its deficit and ensure that it operates as intended. The adjustment is necessary to align the duty rates with the greater cost of oil refinement, and it paves the way for a sustainable future for the scheme.

As part of this process, I must note that the Australian government is committed to refining benefit payments to align with the greater cost of oil refinement. It's a process that takes time, and it's ongoing as we speak under the watchful eye of the Minister for the Environment and Water. This scheme is vital for Australia because it guarantees that our industry takes responsibility for recycling waste oil and facilitates the creation of new products, such as base oils that can be repurposed as car engine oil. Over time, waste oil can accumulate hazardous by-products such as lead or arsenic, posing a severe threat to our environment and public health, if it's not effectively managed. Moreover, used oil releases harmful particles that we unknowingly inhale, further exacerbating the environmental and health risks. The scheme tackles these issues head-on by ensuring that waste oil is given that second life, minimising its negative impact on our environment and safeguarding our community health and wellbeing.

Since its inception, the scheme has successfully produced 5½ billion litres of recycled oil from waste oil. This could fill Lake Burley Griffin more than 150 times. I'm not suggesting we give it a go, but it could do it. This achievement is testament to the power of the circular economy, allowing waste engine oil to have a second life, being transformed into a valuable resource once again. The levy benefit model forms the foundation of this process, where levies paid on all importation or production, as well as on their synthetic substitutes, finance benefits for those engaged in the re-refining. It ensures the financial responsibility of managing oil waste falls upon those who reap the benefits of its re-use. The bills before the House are a direct response to an independent review of the scheme, which recommended raising the levy to address this imbalance. Through the implementation of these bills, we can remedy the longstanding deficit and relieve from taxpayers the shouldering of the scheme's financial shortfall. The Australian government is ensuring this environmentally beneficial scheme is fiscally secure and economically beneficial.

The benefits of these bills extend far beyond financial rectification. By ensuring the costs of the recycling of oil are appropriately borne by its users, we create a fair and sustainable system that incentivises responsible behaviour. This approach both supports the principles of environmental stewardship and encourages businesses to prioritise sustainability in their operations. It sets a precedent for other industries to adopt similar models, driving us closer to a circular economy where waste can be minimised and resources can be better utilised to their fullest potential. The total cost of an oil change for a passenger car may increase by approximately 28½c as a result of this measure. That is 0.2 per cent on a \$150 service. It's a very small price to pay to ensure this scheme's ongoing sustainability.

The bills represent a decisive step towards rectifying the deficit that has burdened the scheme for far too long. By raising the excise duty and customs duty, we ensure the costs of recycling oil are appropriately borne by the users. This initiative upholds the government's commitment, and certainly the minister's commitment, to environmental sustainability and promotes responsible management of waste oil, so let's embrace the opportunity to build a more sustainable future for ourselves and for future generations. I thank the minister for bringing the bill to the House and I commend it.

Ms PLIBERSEK (Sydney—Minister for the Environment and Water) (10:57): I'd like to thank those who have contributed to the debate on both bills, the Customs Tariff Amendment (Product Stewardship for Oil) Bill 2023 and the Excise Tariff Amendment (Product Stewardship for Oil) Bill 2023. These two pieces of legislation will ensure the environmentally sustainable management of used oil is funded by those who benefit from the use of that oil. They will do this by ensuring the customs and excise tariffs collected on relevant oils are sufficient to fund their end-of-life management costs, reducing the burden on taxpayers. This will have a minor impact on oil users, with the cost of an oil change for an average car rising by about 28 cents.

The continuing success of this scheme is vital to protecting our soils and our waterways. It's also essential in ensuring Australia has an effective oil recycling sector to turn waste oil into new oil, supporting our circular economy.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Ms PLIBERSEK (Sydney—Minister for the Environment and Water) (10:58): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Customs Tariff Amendment (Product Stewardship for Oil) Bill 2023

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

Ms PLIBERSEK (Sydney—Minister for the Environment and Water) (11:00): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority Amendment (Disclosure of Information) Bill 2023

Second Reading

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Ms LEY (Farrer—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11:01): I rise to speak on the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority Amendment (Disclosure of Information) Bill 2023. This bill amends the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority Act 2008 to allow the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority, DonateLife agencies, grant recipients and authorised family members to publish, disseminate or disclose information about deceased organ or tissue donors or recipients without breaching the law of the state or territory.

The purpose of the bill is to broaden the disclosure of information provisions in the act which govern the OTA and DonateLife's obtaining of consent for information on donors or recipients to be used in community awareness and educational activities. The coalition has always had a longstanding commitment to increasing the rates of organ donation in Australia to alleviate the suffering of those on the organ transplant waiting list. We understand organ and tissue donation saves and transforms lives, and we are proud of our record in overseeing an increase in donors through various targeted investments while in government.

Right now around 1,600 people in Australia are on the waitlist for transplant. Wait times can be anywhere between six months to four years. Australia's rates have improved in recent years, particularly during our time in government, with donation rates doubling between 2009 and 2019. However, the coalition understands that it's critically important to ensure we continue to encourage more people to register as donors and make transplants more accessible for the Australians who need them. We also recognise that the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant and unavoidable impact on this area, as it did many areas of the healthcare system. This saw Australia's donation and transplantation rates drop in 2020 following an emergence of COVID-19, which makes it more critical than ever to encourage donation in Australia and make up for this period of decreased accessibility. We want to work with the government to increase our organ donation rate to make sure everyone who needs one or who would benefit by organ or tissue donation can get help with a donated organ.

It is important that all Australians are aware that our instant online registration takes only a minute but can make a lifetime of difference for up to 10 people. By signing up to be organ donors, Australians are signing up to the possibility of giving someone the gift of life, and the importance of that cannot be understated. That's why we're so

appreciative of the amazing work that the organ and tissue authority, DonateLife, does in improving this area in Australia. I would like to take this opportunity to recognise DonateLife for the work they do across the community, including with individuals and families affected by organ, eye or tissue donation or transplantation. I acknowledge they work in collaboration with the donate agency in each state and territory and a specialist donation medical, nursing and support staff who deliver the nationally consistent program. Their work in increasing the rates of donation and improving outcomes for Australians who require an organ or tissue transplant is critically important. Improvements in this area literally change and save lives.

Considering this bill intends to support DonateLife and other agencies in the work they do in this area, we absolutely support the intention of these amendments. We acknowledge this bill builds on the coalition's work to encourage greater rates of organ and tissue donation in Australia.

However, we do have concerns with the amount of time for consultation that has been undertaken prior to the introduction of this bill, particularly in regard to the definitions contained in the bill. Time again, we are concerned by this government's refusal to allow for appropriate levels of consultation on their legislation to follow proper process. So we have some questions that we would like to tease out in the Senate committee process.

The opposition will support the passage of this legislation through the House, and we will take the time to explore these reforms properly in the Senate.

Noting that the assistant minister at the chair had a close involvement with pharmacy in her previous work before coming to this parliament and that I am speaking on a health bill, I want to appeal to the government to recognise the plight of pharmacists across Australia at the moment in the context of what we saw in this parliament yesterday. I know that the minister about to speak on this bill is well aware of what I'm saying—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Vamvakinou): Order!

Ms LEY: and I also know that she is a good person and she will listen closely to the pharmacists who visit her.

Ms McBRIDE (Dobell—Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention and Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Health) (11:06): Thank you to the member for Cooper, the Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care, for bringing this critically important bill to the House. It has been said before, but it is worth repeating, organ and tissue donation saves lives. It restores health and improves the quality of life for thousands of Australians every year. It's about giving your neighbour or your friend or even someone you've never met another chance at life. But last year, of the 80,000 people who died in Australian hospitals, only around 1,400 people were in a position where organ donation could be considered. In about 90 per cent of those cases, requests to families for donation were made. While there was a national consent rate of 54 per cent from families, only around 450 people became organ donors in that year. Thanks to those donors, 1,200 people were able to receive a transplant, a life-changing and life-saving gift. However, as it currently stands, around 1,800 Australians sit on the waiting list for a transplant. What is clear is that we need to do more, but, unfortunately, our organ donation system is not working as it should. This bill will help amend some of those shortfalls.

Currently each state and territory has its own human tissues act, which have diverse limitations around the disclosure of information that may identify a donor or a recipient. As a result, the Australian Organ and Tissue Authority, otherwise known as the OTA, is limited in the ways it can deliver its programs, particularly in its community awareness activities. The bill will allow DonateLife agencies, grant recipients and authorised families to publish, disseminate or disclose information without breaking the law of any state or territory. Importantly, it will maintain the provisions requiring consent from family members when disclosing such information while clarifying and extending who is classified as an authorised family member.

Organ and tissue donation is one of the greatest gifts you can give. Unfortunately, it is uncommon to be in a position to be able to donate at the end of life. That's why we need to strengthen our donation scaffold, because simple maths will tell you more potential donors means more potential donations.

Before entering parliament, I did work as a specialist mental health pharmacist at Wyong Hospital on the Central Coast of New South Wales, a community that I have come to represent. I have shared many stories in the House about my time at Wyong Hospital and the lessons that that experience has taught me, but perhaps the most important lesson that came out of my time working in a hospital is that people in need are looking for a life raft. It's a sentiment that I know many of my colleagues here well understand but is even more true for the almost 2,000 Australians waiting for a transplant.

When it comes to health, our government has inherited a neglected system. It's never been harder to find a doctor, but we're changing that, and our actions are meeting our words. Our historic investments in Medicare will triple the bulk-billing incentive. It's the largest increase in the incentive in the 40-year history of Medicare. We're making it easier for all Australians to get the care they need by growing the health workforce and supporting all our trusted health professionals to do what they're trained to do. We're standing up Medicare urgent-care clinics, with more

clinics in more places. This will free up our overstretched GPs, take the pressure off hospitals and improve access to affordable care. Fifty-eight Medicare urgent-care clinics will be fully resourced and operating this year, open for longer hours and with no out-of-pocket costs for patients. And we're investing in the Australian Digital Health Agency to upgrade and modernise My Health Record, making it easier for patients and providers to use and to support the secure, safe and efficient sharing of information.

This reform to organ donation is part of our broader strategy to repair and restore our healthcare system, provide universal health care to all Australians and bring our healthcare system into the 21st century. We are making sure that our healthcare system is one that Australians can rely on, that Australians can trust. That is why I'm so pleased to support this bill.

Dr WEBSTER (Mallee) (11:10): I rise to support the premise of the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority Amendment (Disclosure of Information) Bill 2023 and its potential to raise awareness of organ donation, although I believe more work needs to be done before the bill passes both houses. Allowing organisations such as the Organ and Tissue Authority and DonateLife to obtain consent from authorised family members of a donor or recipient to share information regarding their loved one helps to promote organ donation. The amendments allow family members to further commemorate the gift from their loved one in remembrance services. When donor families shared their story, not only is their loved one honoured for giving the gift of life but also it raises much-needed awareness that organ and tissue donation is life-saving.

Legislation of this type has already been passed at the state and territory level—for example, in November 2022 by the ACT government. It should be noted that this amendment is not intended to facilitate direct contact between donor families and organ and tissue recipients. The right of both donor families and transplant recipients to remain anonymous remains paramount. I support any measure that may further help the cause of organ donation. However, there are potential issues with the bill in its current form, particularly with the large expansion of the list of authorised family members who are able to provide consent for the disclosure of information. There is also limited detail around the process by which this consent will be sought. Once again, we are seeing a pattern emerge with this Labor government, which refuses to allow for appropriate levels of consultation on their legislation and fails to follow proper process. My colleagues and I will support the passage of this bill through the House, to then be explored in the Senate with a committee inquiry. Referring this bill to the Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee will allow further adjustments to ensure that the bill is watertight and is as effective as possible.

I want to see this legislation be the best it can be, as organ donation is a subject that is extremely close to my own heart. My granddaughter Emmeline was the recipient of a liver transplant at the tender age of 14 months. Emmy was diagnosed six weeks after birth with biliary atresia. Without surgery, this disease cuts the life of a baby very short indeed. Emmeline underwent a simpler procedure initially, which unfortunately did not work. The only hope for her was a liver transplant. I have to say, I hope she never has to undergo another one. She was a very sick baby for the first 14 months of her life, and we dared not think about the only alternative she faced without a transplant.

The Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne was Emmy's home for months, and the care she received was absolutely exceptional. It is impossible to speak of how grateful we are to her donor and their family for the gift of a replacement liver. It took about 24 hours for Emmy's skin colour to change from sickly yellow to vibrant white and for her eyes to change from yellow to perfectly white. It was simply extraordinary. Emmy is now a thriving, bubbly almost-10-year-old—she's not 10 yet, she tells me all the time!—who is afraid of pretty well nothing and lives life to the fullest.

It is from my granddaughter's experience that I re-established the Parliamentary Friends of Organ Donation along with my friend the member for Macarthur, Dr Mike Freeland, in 2019. We thank all members on both sides of the House who have supported this cause over the past few years.

Just recently I attended the World Transplant Games in Perth. The World Transplant Games were first held 45 years ago, and this year they returned to Australia for the first time since 2009. There were recipients and donor families from 45 countries represented in Perth, with such a powerful message to share: that organ transplant not only saves lives but allows recipients to thrive. The World Transplant Games is the world's largest event with a goal of raising awareness of organ donation.

In supporting this legislation, which aims to raise awareness, I note there is still so much work to be done with regard to organ and tissue donation. Currently, if a deceased individual is registered as a donor, their family must be informed of the donor status of their loved one, and the family's approval must be obtained to begin the donor process. At present, should the family object, the donor process is abandoned and the wishes of the deceased to save a life through organ and tissue donation cannot be fulfilled. Australia's Organ And Tissue Authority, the OTA, states that nine out of 10 families gave consent to donation when their family member was registered to be a donor and

they were aware that this was the case; however, this dropped to four out of 10 families when a family had not been informed by their loved one that they wanted to be a donor.

Organ and tissue donation is a selfless, noble decision that should be not only encouraged but also upheld and carried through at the wish of the donor, as it is life-saving. According to the OTA, only around one in three people are registered to be an organ donor. And that is something that needs to change.

This is not a political issue. It is bipartisan.

Currently, in Australia, there are around 1,600 Australians on the waitlist for organ transplant. These are everyday people—mothers, fathers, children, sisters, cousins and friends. They are people just like you and me, just like our children and grandchildren. On top of the 1,600, there are more than 13,000 additional people on dialysis, many waiting for a kidney transplant.

But, while the numbers I have just highlighted seem concerning, there is cause for hope. Australians have been doing well. Since the OTA was established in 2009 to lead the national program to improve organ and tissue donation in Australia, more than 15,500 people have received life-saving organ transplants from 5,450 organ donors.

The coalition has long been a supporter of organ donation and oversaw an increase in donors through various investments and marketing when in government. In Australia, in the first 10 years of the organ donation program, the deceased donation rate grew by 122 per cent, resulting in an 81 per cent increase in people receiving an organ transplant.

How can you help? It is as simple as registering to be an organ donor, if you haven't already. Organ donation is a rare event, fortunately. Organ donation can only occur when someone dies in a hospital, as organs need to be functioning well to be transplanted. In 2021, around 1,250 people, or two per cent of those who'd died, were in a condition where organ donation could be considered.

Life is precious. You can ensure that, whatever happens to you, that could save the life of another Australian. But we must be intentional about this. I am registered. Are you? Registration is easy and can be done through donatelife.org.au. Anyone in Australia aged 16 or over can register. It takes only one minute, but that one minute can give another person a chance at life. It could be you or your loved one. And I know, you would be forever grateful. Everyone in this House should be appreciative of the work of DonateLife.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognise DonateLife for the work they do across the community, including with individuals and families affected by organ, eye and tissue donation and transplantation. I acknowledge their work in collaboration with donate agencies in every state and territory and the specialist donation medical nursing and support staff who deliver the nationally consistent program. Their work in increasing the rates of donation and improving outcomes for Australians who require an organ or tissue transplant is crucially important. Improvements in this area literally change and save lives.

Once again, I reiterate my support for the premise of this bill and the awareness it will create for organ and tissue donation. I just want to see some more work done on it before it is ready to pass into legislation; hence, while this bill will be supported through the House, there are some questions that need to be teased out in the Senate.

Ms MURPHY (Dunkley) (11:20): I acknowledge the member for Mallee and her commitment to organ and tissue donation. I'm sure, Member for Mallee, your niece is incredibly proud of you and what you are doing, and I would like to echo and join with the member's call for people to register to donate. It is a simple thing to do and it can change so many lives.

Before I return it to what I wanted to say, having heard the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's speech just then, I do want to say it should be beneath a deputy leader of the opposition to use a bill like this to make completely unrelated political remarks, and in particular to try to personally draw in the assistant minister who is speaking on this bill, which is about saving lives. This parliament deserves better from a deputy leader of an opposition who apparently aspires to be at least a deputy prime minister. It needs to be put on the record that the assistant minister in question, the member for Dobell, is doing an outstanding job, and she is absolutely unwavering in her commitment to increasing the health of Australians, including through access to cheaper medicine.

The Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority Amendment (Disclosure of Information) Bill 2023, as others have said, shouldn't be a matter of politics and should be bipartisan. From what I've heard from those opposite, essentially it is, with some not-unexpected criticism to come from an opposition about process. But the reason this bill goes beyond politics—or it should—is that it genuinely is about saving lives. Others have read out the statistics, but they really do matter. Last year alone, 454 organ donors resulted in 1,224 Australians receiving a life-saving organ transplant. One donor—any one person—can save the lives of up to seven other people and then help many others through eye and tissue donation. As the member for Mallee pointed out,

though, it is quite a restricted situation in which your organs can be donated. You do need to pass away in a hospital with well-functioning organs, and it only equates to two per cent of people who die in hospital each year.

That's why it's so important to be registered and to make sure your family knows what your requests are. In 2022, of the 1,400 people who passed away in circumstances which meant they could be organ donors, 1,300 of those people's families were asked to consent, which always happens even if you're registered, and only 701 families said yes, leading to those 454 donors. If registration were higher and people had had conversations—because most Australians, when asked, say that they would like their organs to be donated—families would be in a much easier position to say, 'Yes, you can use my loved one's organs.' In fact, once a person is registered, nine out of 10 families say yes—nine out of 10 families. So it makes a huge difference.

DonateLife say that there are three things that we can do to increase organ and tissue donation. The first is to have specialist donation staff to support families in hospitals—staff like Jodi Vuat, who works at Frankston Hospital in my electorate. She had experience overseas, working in intensive care, helping families to consent or to understand the donation process, and came back to Australia wanting to do exactly that and still does that at Frankston Hospital to this day. So her role is to support families at the time of organ donation. She talks to them about the donation. She explains the process. She supports the hospital and the medical staff. And Jodi—who works in that field—says that people need to talk to their families about organ donation. It's really important, she says, to have the conversation with your loved ones so your family is in no doubt about your wishes. 'The more people who have registered their donation decision, the more transplant recipients we can help,' Jodi says.

Jodi is out and about in the community, raising awareness about organ and tissue donation, and one of the most common myths she encounters is that people think their organs are not good enough to be donated. People say, 'You wouldn't want my liver, because I like to have a few drinks.' Sometimes that might be the case! But it's not always the case. So don't assume that you're too old or too unhealthy to become a donor. Register, and that assessment will be done if you are in a position to be an organ donor when you pass away. That's Jodi's message.

DonateLife says (1) have donation specialist staff, (2) register on the Australian Organ Donor Register and (3) talk to your loved ones—and that is what this bill is intended to do. It will allow donor families to talk about the experience of their loved one having donated and helped the lives of others. So it's about having specialist staff, registering on the Australian Organ Donor Register and talking to your family about donation—because, as I said, only four in 10 families say yes to donation if they don't know what their loved ones wanted. They're three easy steps.

I've said in this place before that I personally am quite attracted to an opt-out system instead of an opt-in system. DonateLife suggests that the three steps I've just talked about will increase organ donation, but I still think it's worth us looking at an opt-out system so that there are more people—rather than the two per cent of deaths in hospital that can lead to donation—who can be a donor with the consent of their families. But it wouldn't take away the need to talk to your family about what you want.

The other thing I wanted to talk about in terms of donation is that, while Jodi is right—don't assume that, because you have a few drinks or you're not a spring chicken, your organs aren't fit for donation—there are people who can't donate their organs, because of diseases like metastatic cancer, to name one, but who, when they pass away, still want to be able to contribute to better medicine and the lives of others. You can donate your body to science. I've had a look at it and I looked at it again today. There isn't actually a national register for donating your body to science. How it works in Australia is that each state regulates it slightly differently, but, in effect, you have to donate your body to a specific university and go through their scheme. You have to fill in all the paperwork before you pass away to do so, and there are a number of limits to that. For example, for the University of Melbourne, you have to pass away within 40 kilometres of the university.

Donating your body to science means that your body is used to help train doctors, nurses, pharmacologists and research scientists. In some circumstances, it can be used for research. You're helping the very people that will go on to save other people's lives. I think that's an incredibly worthy thing to consider if you are in a position where you can't donate your organs and tissues to other people to use. There's probably more work to be done in that space to make it easier for people—or their loved ones—to donate their bodies to science in an effective way. That's a task for the future, but I think it is something that is absolutely worth doing.

Before I conclude, I want to talk very briefly about a young man in my electorate, Dylan Briggs. I've mentioned his friends in the parliament before. Dylan went to Frankston High School and, tragically, died riding his bike home from school in March of 2020. It was a very difficult time for everyone, during the pandemic, and then his family had to deal with the fact that this young man, in his teenage years, was killed on his way home. Dylan was an organ donor. Dylan was a teenager and he was an organ donor. He saved lives through that act as a young man.

To this very day, his friends are continuing to do all they can to honour Dylan. They set up the Chill Out & Look About initiative, which is about road safety. They've collaborated with local police to make videos and to go out and talk to young people about road safety. They designed the logo and the emblem for Chill Out & Look About as a character modelled on a photo of Dylan, where Dylan looks like he's on watch, looking out for everyone's safety. His legacy after his tragic circumstances is to donate organs so other people's lives can continue and for his friends to take up a cause to save other young people's lives on the roads. I want to congratulate Dylan's friends and give a shout-out to Dylan's mum, Sarah-Jane, who is an incredibly strong woman after the loss of her son.

Ms WARE (Hughes) (11:32): I rise to speak on and support the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority Amendment (Disclosure of Information) Bill 2023. While the member for Dunkley is still in the House I'll commend the comments she made, particularly in relation to us perhaps exploring an opt-out rather than an opt-in system for transplants and donations.

I will first speak about the bill briefly, and then I want to commend organ donation and registering for donation. I am registered. My husband is registered. We've had the conversation with our children. I've had the conversation with my parents as well. It is particularly important that as many Australians as possible do register for this.

The stated purpose of the bill is to amend the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority Act 2008 to broaden the disclosure of information provisions. I note that the minister's second reading speech said:

Currently, there are provisions in both state and territory legislation, and the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority Act 2008 that prohibit the sharing of some information related to deceased donors and recipients for the purposes of community awareness and other educational activities by the Organ and Tissue Authority and DonateLife agencies.

It also said the bill is intended to:

amend the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority Act 2008 to allow the Organ and Tissue Authority, DonateLife agencies, grant recipients and authorised family members to publish, disseminate or disclose information about deceased donors for the purposes of the Organ and Tissue Authority's community awareness, educational or commemorative activities.

There's a list of authorised family members that the bill provides will now be included, but it is stated:

... that these amendments are not intended to facilitate direct contact between donor families and organ and tissue recipients. Governments intend to protect the right of both donor families and transplant recipients to remain anonymous—

where they wish to do so. So, to the extent to which I think the clear intent of the legislation is to encourage and facilitate organ donation and transplants, I support and commend this bill.

I'll just read out some statistics. I know that many in this place have spoken of these statistics already. This is from the DonateLife website:

Organ, eye and tissue donation saves lives, restores health and improves the quality of life for thousands of Australians each year. But did you know that only 2% of people who die in hospital each year can be considered for organ donation? One organ donor can save the lives of up to 7 people and help many more through eye and tissue donation.

In 2022, there were 1,477 deceased eye donors and 276 deceased tissue donors. The numbers were slightly down in that year. For corneal transplants, which help to restore sight and vision for many people, there were 2,340 recipients in that year, which was a slight decrease. In that regard, Sandra Jowlett, a very close friend of my mother, had a corneal transplant back in about the mid-eighties, I think it was, and it has made a very big difference to her life—she was a teacher—in terms of her being able to read and carry on with her teaching profession.

Fifty-four per cent of families said yes to donation in 2022. This was when they were asked in a hospital setting. Usually it is the case that families are asked when a family member has passed away, and there are very specific circumstances when a person dies in a hospital, in an ICU or ED ward, because organs need to be functioning well to be considered for transplantation. Only around two per cent of Australians who die in hospitals meet the criteria required to be organ donors. With those numbers being so low, it is so important that we have as many Australians as possible register now to consent to become a donor.

There are currently around 1,800 Australians waitlisted for a transplant and around 14,000 additional people on dialysis, some of whom may need a kidney transplant. So, again, the need for transplants and donations is growing and is urgent. While the majority of Australians seem to support organ and tissue donation, and that's appreciated, only around one in three, or 36 per cent of Australians, is registered to be a donor. It is not difficult to register. It is quite a simple process on the DonateLife website. As I said, I commend any members of this place who have not already registered to please consider doing so and to have that conversation with their families.

In that regard, I just want to speak briefly about a good friend of mine, the mayor of Liverpool, Ned Mannoun. In 2014 he donated his kidney to his then two-year-old son, Solomon. Solomon is now 11 years of age and is a

typical, healthy 11-year-old, I'm glad to report. Ned and his wife, Tina, went through a very difficult time when Solomon was born. He was very, very ill. They went through the process of ascertaining whether or not there were suitable donors, and in the end it was Ned who was the best match. He said at the time that he would do anything he could and that he would 'never give up on his little boy'. At the time when Solomon received his transplant, he had never really enjoyed a bath or a swim. He had to be very careful even drinking water; it was an agonising process. So for that little boy who is now, as I said, a robust 11-year-old, turning 12 in September of this year, that eight-hour operation was literally life-saving and life-changing. I know there will be many others in my electorate have undergone this process. For that reason, I do again commend this legislation to the extent that it will help to promote organ donation and help save lives again, particularly the life of a little two-year-old boy, as he then was.

The bill is supported by the Liberal Party. The Liberal Party has a proud tradition of supporting organ donation. To that extent, I support this bill and commend it to the House.

Mr RAE (Hawke) (11:41): I begin by acknowledging your leadership and contribution in this space, Deputy Speaker Freeland. You have played a very significant role both in our caucus and in this parliament more broadly in raising awareness around this issue. Your background as a medical professional or as a doctor gives you a credibility and a knowledge that you have so generously shared with us about the opportunity of organ donation. I know that you worked with others across this parliament but you particularly deserve recognition for the work you do, and thanks from all of us who care very deeply about this issue.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Freeland): Thank you.

Mr RAE: There is something tragically beautiful about the concept of organ donation because it almost exclusively occurs in a circumstance in which life is lost and from that loss, like a magnificent flower blooming in an inferno, life is sustained. It is a challenge to create the momentum to sustain that life through the various complex bureaucratic and administrative processes that are required. But more importantly, in very challenging emotional circumstances, the decision-makers, usually the family who have just lost a dearly beloved loved one, have to make a decision to give life to one or many people they don't usually know and may never know. They don't necessarily have that personal connection. They have to do it right there in that moment, at the height, at the most excruciating point, of emotional anguish for themselves. Yet so many families do make a decision. Of course, they are helped when people have assisted them to make that decision by registering. We have heard a number of speakers speak about the importance of registration, of communicating clearly about one's wishes in this space.

As we know, there is such a limited number of people passing who qualify under very strict circumstances to have their organs donated. You start with a very, very small pool of people. You start with a set of families who are often put under the most intense and terrible circumstances in which they have to make a decision that is often a life-and-death decision for another human being who they usually don't and may never know. When you think about that set of circumstances, there is something wholly statistically challenging. How do you thread that needle to get an outcome? And yet, almost as if by magic, it does happen, and it happens regularly. It's not as regularly as we would like, but it does happen regularly. So many people at that critical point find enough love in themselves, enough love for the person who has passed, in order to take that love and make something so beautiful of it. I pay my absolute respect to those families that make that decision under such terrible circumstances.

We have a good organ donation system here in Australia. We have a great organ donation system here in Australia. It's one of the legacies of the last government. It has been largely, I think, supported by all sides of politics in terms of it being a matter that we don't quibble over. We all support this as a great thing for our society and, obviously, at a human level, it's something that most of us have been affected by one way or another. We know that the circumstances that present the need for organ donation are broad. Whether we know someone who has received an organ from organ donation or we know someone who is on a waiting list or could be eligible to receive an organ under a donation program, largely, we have all been affected by one or other of those circumstances.

We have a best-practice system here in Australia, but this is an opportunity to again improve upon it. This is about the further empowerment of family members. That is so important because family members are ultimately usually the decision-makers in these circumstances. They make the hardest decisions. They make the fundamental decision to donate, often. They then also make the decisions associated with the legacy of that donation and how that legacy is managed. Obviously that legacy is intricately tied to the donor themselves. This legislation empowers those families to really take advantage of that legacy, to use that for all of our society's benefit, to tell the story of the donor, to paint for those who may not intimately understand that process what it is like, to deal with it in honest terms on both its challenges and its amazing benefits and also, ultimately, fundamentally, to encourage more families to make that difficult and beautiful decision.

In telling their stories, we know that these families, who are the most powerful advocates for organ donation in our society, will create opportunity and authority. They will give permission to other families to make these

decisions. Under that intense pressure of having lost a loved one, it can be very challenging to make decisions that fundamentally you cannot unmake once they have been made. If someone goes into those circumstances and they have not had a chance to think through that decision and its implications and how that decision applies particularly to the donor, the person they have lost, that can be a very challenging prospect. This allows our community to have a broader and more honest conversation that is informed by the experiences of other families so that before people in their time of peak anguish have to make that decision they have hopefully been exposed to some of the thinking and the experiences of other people in such circumstances. That is such an important component of how we raise awareness of organ donation generally but also prepare people who are going to find themselves in that circumstance to make the best possible decision they can for their loved ones, for their own families, for the person who is ultimately the donor and, indeed, for the people for whom life will be sustained off the back of that decision.

I just want to talk briefly about a dear friend of mine, someone who many people in this place knew, former senator Mehmet Tillem. Mehmet Tillem was a fierce advocate for organ donation in this place, in his time here. He spoke about it many, many times. He spoke about it in his first speech. I knew Mehmet Tillem for a long time, before he came to the Senate. He was a lifelong advocate around this issue. He believed fundamentally in the beauty of this concept. He progressed it in places outside of this parliament through his community activism, and he brought that passion here. He brought it on behalf of his own community; he brought it on behalf of his own family. Ultimately Mehmet Tillem, by circumstances of irony, ended up finding himself part of that conversation, under the most tragic of circumstances. He said in his first speech:

Organ donation, what we can do after we have passed away, is something that we can hang our hats on as a legacy to those that come after us.

After that he went on many times to speak about this issue. He remained an advocate after he left the parliament. Ultimately he believed that the best option was, as the member for Dunkley discussed earlier, an opt-out system.

I think that is the goal many of the people who are passionate about this issue would like to see us get to. There's a long pathway to get there. It's not going to happen overnight. There's a reform piece, and I think there's an ultimate ambition that we can all share that Senator Tillem advocated for very strongly. He would be extraordinarily proud of this legislation today, this bill. He would be so proud that after the best-practice work of the Rudd and Gillard Labor governments we now have an Albanese Labor government who are building upon that legacy, who are continuing to improve Australia's organ and tissue donation systems and continuing to seek sustainability in that space, to raise awareness, and to empower more families to make those decisions and ultimately to save lives through those beautiful decisions.

I also want to quickly note the member for Lara in the Victorian parliament, Ella George. She has also advocated fiercely around organ and tissue donation. She and I and Mehmet Tillem shared a very special professional and personal friendship that developed over many years. He was a mentor to both of us, and she's done some extraordinary work in this space as well.

As I said, I think Australians are fundamentally generous and kind people, we are decent people, and we understand the opportunity that organ and tissue donation presents—the creation of something beautiful out of something very dark and tragic, as is often the case. Fundamentally I think the raising of awareness, the further education of people and indeed the active pursuit by many of us to ensure that we are registered on organ and tissue donation registers and that we communicate clearly with our family members will continue to increase the rates at which organs and tissues are donated from the rather limited pool that are eligible. This legislation will help families who make that decision to continue to tell their story, to uphold the legacy of the person they have acted on behalf of as the donor—and indeed the lives they save through that very beautiful and difficult decision.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Frelander): I thank the member for Hawke. I also would like to thank him for his very kind words. Thank you.

Mr COULTON (Parkes—Chief Nationals Whip) (11:53): I rise today to speak about the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority Amendment (Disclosure of Information) Bill 2023, and I appreciate the contributions of those who have spoken before me. As I understand it, this bill is to allow more information, with the permission of families, to be dispersed to the public in an attempt to raise awareness around organ and tissue donation. I think it is a noble thought, but I believe that when this goes to the Senate it will be under a bit more scrutiny from a Senate committee. We do need to be very careful about some of the firewalls that are in this information. I was actually in charge of organ and tissue donation when I was a minister, and there is a group of people who really want to have information as to where the organs from their loved ones have gone. That may not be a bad thing, but it could also cause huge problems. I think the privacy of people who have received organs should be guarded completely because, for instance, if someone is identified as having a family member's organs and maybe they're living and lifestyle that that family is not comfortable with, it could lead to all sorts of issues. While I agree

with the sentiment of raising awareness of this, we need to be very careful that we do protect the privacy of the recipients.

With indulgence, Deputy Speaker, on the use of props, I will show you my donor card as an organ and tissue registered donor, but, quite frankly, whether it's a donor card, ticked on a licence or whatever, none of that matters as much as talking to your family. In that desperate time when a family member is in the process of passing away, sometimes the emotion at the thought of their loved one donating their organs can become too much for families, so it's really important that you have that conversation with your family members. Regardless of whether you've got one of these cards in your wallet, your license ticked or whatever else, if your family is not aware of your wishes then that will become a problem.

One of the misconceptions is that organs can be donated by people who have passed away in all sorts of places. The number of people who passed away in a circumstance that enables the organs to be used is quite narrow. Going from the number of people that pass away that are registered organ donors down to the number of people whose organs are actually donated is quite a narrowing thing. You have to be in a hospital where there is access to a retrieval team. You have to still have your body functioning even if you are classified as having no brain function, and that does narrow it down. I know some organs can handle the person being deceased for a little while before they're taken and some need to be done at the time of death. Australia does do well. We can do better. If this legislation helps shine a light on the importance of organ donation then that's a good thing, but, once again, we must respect privacy.

I have a short anecdote about how things can work out. In February 2007, the last day of the school holidays in my home town of Warialda, eight 13-year-olds managed to talk a younger man into taking them out to the state forest on the edge of town to drive in his ute. Those 13-year-olds were all driving around, and one of them lost control of the vehicle. Of all those people in that vehicle, one girl was killed instantly. Nearly all of them were seriously injured, and two found themselves in Sydney on life support. They were 13. One of them was a ward of the state. At that stage, there was no legal way—even though her natural mother was quite prepared for her organs to be donated. Subsequently, in New South Wales, they have changed the legislation around that so that a ward of the state or someone that is under state care can do that.

The other young lad was 13. Incidentally, he'd actually talked about helping other people through donating blood and through organ donation as a matter of course in family discussions, so his parents knew that he did have a wish. Ultimately, his passing enabled other people to live, and I think it helped that family make some sense out of the tragic loss of a 13-year-old son.

It can't be planned. It can't be thought about. But, quite often, families find themselves in these circumstances very quickly and unexpectedly. That's why it's so important that there is a serious discussion with all the family so when that time comes, despite how emotionally overcome you may be, you do know what the wishes of your loved one is.

I'll be watching this pass through the Senate. I'll be hoping that they do put scrutiny onto it, because I know there are others in this country who would like to see that change but I am a firm believer that the privacy of the recipients of organs should be paramount, because we don't know exactly what sort of relationship we would end up with if the families of donors actually got to meet the recipients of their loved ones' organs. So I support this bill with the reservation that it is thoroughly scrutinised through the Senate process.

Dr REID (Robertson) (12:02): I rise today to talk on the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority Amendment (Disclosure of Information) Bill 2023. What this bill seeks to do at the end of the day is, as we've heard honourable members say today, improve and strengthen our organ donation systems, because it will empower families, it will empower loved ones, to tell the story of the donor, who they were and the life they led and to advocate for organ donation, which is so vital in our health system.

We talk a lot about organ donation and the importance of organ donation and advocacy in this space, but I want to take the House through a bit of what organ donation actually is from a clinical sense. We know that transplantation is the process of transferring an organ or part of an organ—whether that be liver, kidney, lungs—which is a graft, from one donor to another. There are different types of transplantation. We look at autologous, we look at allogeneic and we look at isograft transplantation.

I'm going to focus more on the allogeneic transplantation for this debate today. Then, on top of that, there are also requirements for the donor and the recipient to be histocompatible, so basically making sure that when the organ is donated that it's going to function and work without fear of rejection into the future.

There are indications for the transplantation of different organs. When we look at the kidneys, we look at renal transplantation. That's primarily reserved for patients with end-stage renal disease of multiple causes. We look at liver transplantation, where a liver or part of a liver can be transplanted into a patient for a multitude of reasons,

whether that be hepatocellular carcinoma, fulminant hepatic failure, cirrhosis, biliary atresia and the like. The list for the hepatic transplantation is quite extensive. Looking at cardiac and heart transplantations, we see patients with end-stage heart failure and untreatable and intractable ventricular arrhythmias that cause severe debilitating suffering and also pose a significant risk for loss of life. Finally I'll touch on lung transplantation. That's particularly for patients with advanced lung disease that's now refractory to medical or surgical therapy or with cystic fibrosis.

This may seem like a long list of diseases—and it is—but each person with these conditions that I have just mentioned who requires a transplant, who requires an organ, is a patient experiencing incredible and unimaginable suffering in a lot of cases. That pain is often also felt by families, friends and carers who know that patient or know that person. Organ donation truly is the gift of life. It's not just a slogan. It allows people not just to see an improvement in their symptoms and quality of life but to celebrate their next birthday. It allows people to hug their children. It allows people to travel around and experience our beautiful country and the world. It allows people to live a long, happy, healthy life.

This leads me to be donors of organ transplantation—and their families—who give the ultimate gift. The ultimate gift here in this case is a strong and full life for another. I want to take a moment to thank every donor and their families for the incredible gift that they provide under the most challenging and often most horrendous of circumstances. It's so important that we have these conversations with our families. Everyone in this chamber should have these conversations with our families about what we want at the end of our lives and whether or not we want to be an organ donor. Furthermore, the ability to communicate the stories of those who have given that gift of life and those who have received that gift is vital to saving lives and improving the quality of life for more Australians.

Before I go on a bit more, I want to thank an incredible advocate for organ donation in my electorate of Robertson on the Central Coast, Rob Manning. He is an amazing and inspiring human being. He works and volunteers quite literally night and day to raise awareness for the importance of organ donation, because he knows, like so many others, of the importance of organ donation and how it does save lives, how it does improve symptoms and quality of life.

Australia's best-practice organ and tissue donation system is a proud legacy from former Labor governments, particularly the Rudd Labor government. Our government here is now committed to extending that legacy and improving organ donation. The bill we are talking about today, the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority Amendment (Disclosure of Information) Bill 2023, is part of that next step. It's the next stage in this process and in this journey. The bill is intended to allow authorised family members to give consent to the disclosure of information about an organ and/or tissue donor. This bill will allow the transplant authority and DonateLife staff to obtain consent from family members of a deceased donor before including information about the deceased donor in their promotional or educational activities. If that consent is given by what is deemed an authorised family member as defined in the terms of this bill, a law of a state or territory will not prevent the publication or dissemination of that information by the transplant authority or DonateLife. I will repeat that again. This is going to allow the families of organ donors who've made that brave, generous decision to say yes to organ donation in one of the most difficult times of their lives to tell their stories.

I've worked in the intensive care unit and had many a shift where I've had these conversations about organ donation with family members, and it is generally the worst night or day or time in a family member's life. This is a way that families can commemorate the gift their family member has given, which can generally improve the lives of or save up to seven people. It's going to let the families tell their stories and, in doing so, it's going to encourage the broader Australian public to do the same: to sign up to be an organ donor, to sign up to be a tissue donor and to have that important conversation. It's so important that we know what our family members want and what their wishes are, particularly at the end of their lives.

There was a member who spoke recently about privacy. This bill maintains the safeguards in relation to privacy that are vital to the functioning of our best-practice organ and tissue donation system. The bill will not facilitate direct contact between donor families and organ and tissue recipients, and all governments are committed to continuing to protect the rights of both donor families and transplant recipients who wish to remain anonymous.

I just want to reiterate that the families of donors and the donors themselves provide one of the greatest gifts—the ultimate gift—that can be given, and that is a full, strong and healthy life. I say thank you to those families and thank you to those donors. It is so important that we support them through that time. On a final note, I know I've said it once already, but I'll say it again, Rob Manning is a powerful advocate for organ and tissue donation on the Central Coast. He is literally working night and day, contacting our office nearly daily, because he knows the importance of organ donation, not just on the Central Coast but right across the country.

Dr GILLESPIE (Lyne) (12:12): I rise in support of the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority Amendment (Disclosure of Information) Bill 2023. I do want to follow its analysis in the

Senate, as the former speaker on the bill outlined. It is an unfortunate reality that there are 14,000 Australians sitting on dialysis machines, having their bodies filtered because their kidneys have reached such a stage of decay that they can't filter all the toxins. That's just people on dialysis. Receiving a donated live kidney, either from a relative or from a donor who is matched with a person in an immunological sense, is a gift that changes that person's life instantaneously for the life of the transplant. The life of this graft, if it's well managed with all the latest immunological drugs that allow a donor's kidney to thrive and function in a recipient, means that that recipient's life can be changed for 20 or 30 years, and that's incredible.

The dilemma, though, is that there are not enough people donating. The essence of this bill is legislative change that will allow encouragement and role modelling of the dramatic effect that donation has by personalising it once authority has been obtained from the close family and relatives of someone who has been a donor or a recipient. If those families are willing to give that consent, all's well and good. It sounds a bit gory, but it has been clothed in a lot of appropriate secrecy. If the family is happy, I think it will result in much greater transplantation outcomes. To put it in perspective, 170,000 Australians annually shuffle off this mortal coil and go to a better place—at least, I hope they all do—but only 80,000 of them die in hospital. To become a donor, as well as dying in hospital, a person has to be in an ICU or in a high-care situation where a transplant can occur. The really critical thing is, though, that a lot of those people who end up there haven't spoken about the possibility of becoming a donor. They haven't even thought about it, and they haven't spoken to their family about it.

In the last parliament and in the parliament before that, I was the minister looking after the Organ and Tissue Authority. I know that they've been doing fantastic work—and I would like to acknowledge here all the work they've been doing—as a result of which, over a period of 10 years up to 2019, the number of donations has doubled. Everyone thinks: 'We've got a couple of hundred thousand people who have registered. Why do we have any waiting list for organs?' That's because the reality is that only a small part of a very large pool can realistically come a donor.

I encourage all Australians to consider this. It is a very altruistic thing for you to think about. You might think: 'Well, if I've used up all my heartbeats and I'm moving on, why don't I donate a part of my body and help somebody else be liberated and have a great life without being stuck to a machine or an oxygen tank or be coughing their life away?' Their liver can be regenerated. It's a really amazing gift to be a donor. So I encourage everyone who hasn't thought about it or who hasn't already done it to do what I did a couple of years ago. I thought, 'My dodgy old body has probably got a bit of life left in it.' It took me two minutes with my Medicare card and my iPhone to go to www.donatelife.gov.au and register myself. Once you've done that, the next thing you should do is tell all your family members, 'By the way, if I suddenly end up in ICU, and I've run out of time, I've already signed up to be a donor.' That is probably the most targeted way that you can help the system.

As I said, this bill has provisions to allow a broader scope of family members to give that permission. That's the part that we have to look at closely. You can't just make it open slather, but, if that permission being granted could happen more often for those people in ICU, we would get much better figures than we have now. Last year, 1,300 families were asked whether their relative would consent to being a donor and whether they would give their consent. Unfortunately, only 701 families said yes. So a lot of those potentially life-saving organs and tissues weren't able to be utilised. Last year we had 454 donors, which was a rise of eight per cent, which is great. We had an enormous increase in the number of people who ticked that they would allow transplantation of their cornea—that's the shiny bit on the front of your eyes—for corneal diseases, which can send people virtually blind. As well as that, there were living related and unrelated donors: people who weren't dying but donated a kidney, in particular, for someone who matched their immune markers. There were many donations of hearts, lungs, pancreases, intestines and, as I said, kidneys.

I think the important thing for everyone to realise is that it is better that we have many more people on the bottom of the triangle as potential donors. Hopefully, we all live a regular life, and we don't all of a sudden end up in an ICU or on a life-support system. But if we have hundreds of thousands more people who have taken the time to let their family members know that, if a sudden accident or something happens, they have ticked the box and registered, we will get much more better outcomes.

I would also like to congratulate and thank all the people working in this space around the country, whether you are in intensive care or in the kidney unit of hospitals. My younger sister spent her career here in the ACT, negotiating and running parts of the nursing of the transplant unit here in Woden hospital. Congratulations to all the people around the country. I worked as a kidney registrar at one stage, looking after people who had been transplanted. There is a huge back office behind any one transplantation. There are clinics, blood tests and drugs and then there is keeping up to date with everything.

Australia is blessed with a wonderful health system compared to other countries, but we could always do better. Hopefully, the bill will allow more storytelling by family members because it is a powerful and inspirational story to hear—how your loved one has passed on but they passed on the gift of life to up to seven other people by ticking

the box. Like I said, go to donatelife.org.au, get your Medicare card out and register, just in case that is what happens to you.

Dr FREELANDER (Macarthur) (12:21): I hope the member for Lyne has many more heartbeats to go. I thank him for his contribution. I would like to thank everybody who spoke for their contribution. I would in particular thank the Assistant Minister for Health, Ged Kearney, who had carriage of this bill, and also the other Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care, Emma McBride, for bringing the bill to the House.

As many of you are aware, I am a cochair of the Parliamentary Friends of Organ Donation alongside my very good friend the member for Mallee, Anne Webster. One of the most moving events I have seen in the House since my election in 2016 was when Anne spoke about her own granddaughter and the fact she had had a donated liver transplant. To see her grand-daughter running around the room as Anne was talking about this, as a healthy young girl, was absolutely fantastic and very, very moving. We have both had the privilege of co-chairing the group since 2019 and we have seen excellent progress in the space of organ donation. We worked along DonateLife, Transplant Australia, the Organ and Tissue Authority and many other dedicated organisations. We have been advocating for greater awareness and support for organ donors, their families, the organisations that do the vital work in this area, as well as recipients.

The success of organ and tissue donation in this country was greatly enhanced by the work of the Rudd Labor government in 2009. I would like to pay tribute to the present Minister for Health and Ageing, Mark Butler, who was instrumental in getting the original national program going through the Organ and Tissue Authority. Since then, there has been significant growth in donation rates, with more than 16,000 Australians receiving a life-changing organ transplant. However, the process through which an individual can become a donor is limited. Only two per cent of people who die in a hospital can be considered for organ donation, as there organs need to be in a well-functioning order and the process needs to occur within a specific time frame of death. Altogether, only 1,400 Australians were eligible to give the gift of life each year in our hospitals. Only 30 per cent of people eligible to be donors are in fact registered as donors. As the member for Lyne has explained, it is a simple matter with your Medicare card to the go to the DonateLife website and register as a donor. I encourage everyone to do so.

This is why the work of the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority, known as the OTA, is so vitally important. Their promotional and educational activities are vital in increasing community awareness of organ and tissue donation and the fact that it really is the gift of life and in encouraging individuals to register and inform their nearest and dearest relatives of their choice. This is why this bill is so important. It will broaden disclosure information provisions in the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority Act 2008 to allow DonateLife agencies, grant recipients and authorised family members to publish, distribute or disclose information about deceased donors and/or recipients. Clearly there are some privacy concerns. That's why the bill does have those concerns well catered for. This is the very important work of the Organ and Tissue Authority to get people aware of the great importance of organ donation. We have had members talk about their personal experience with organ donation. I have certainly had patients of mine who have had organ donations and done extremely well, really transforming their lives and the lives of their families.

I would also like to pay tribute to the pioneers in paediatric organ donation in this country—Robert Jones in Melbourne and the recently retired Albert Shun, a paediatric surgeon at the Children's Hospital at Westmead—for their work in promoting organ donation in the paediatric population in this country.

The amendments provided by this legislation will align with the sentiment of many families who have had members become donors and also recipients, as they support the idea of increasing community awareness about donation and registration and commemorating their family member who has given the gift of life. It's hoped this bill will lead to more successful promotional campaigns, resulting in increased donor registrations.

One such very successful campaign is Jersey Day. I and my electorate staff engage with this every year. It was inspired by the gift of life that Nathan Gremmo gave to six people when he became an organ donor at the age of 13. My staff and I regularly partake in Jersey Day, which is great fun but also raises awareness about the importance of organ and tissue donation and the DonateLife network. You wear a jersey of your favourite sporting team and post about the purpose of doing it to promote organ donation in our communities.

Organ donation is something that affects all of us in different ways. Most of us have experience of people who have received or donated organs. I pay tribute to them and their families. In my work as a paediatrician, I have dealt with many patients who have benefited from organ and tissue donation. One of my former patients was one of the first long-term survivors of a liver transplant in the paediatric age group in Australia. She is doing extraordinarily well.

I've had a long involvement in this space and I've seen how attitudes and technologies have changed for the better, but there's still much more work to do. I think in particular we need a national registration program. When we have

digital licences throughout the country, I am hopeful to see this register allow licences in every state to be a donor. It's a simple thing we can do for our community. I thank the assistant minister and the minister, and I thank the Organ and Tissue Authority teams and DonateLife in particular for the work that they are doing in this space. I commend this bill to the House.

Dr ANANDA-RAJAH (Higgins) (12:28): I have seen firsthand the life-saving gift of organ donation in action. At the Alfred, I was one cog in a machine that took patients hanging on by a thread through to transplant and into aftercare and then on to wellbeing. Lung, heart, renal and bone marrow transplants were my wheelhouse. There are two major threats that present to patients post transplant. One is rejection and the other is infection, I dealt with the latter, from bacteria, reactivating viruses and fungal infections. Infection and rejection are two interacting forces, and they are synergistic. One makes the other worse and vice versa. When the call came, it was like watching an orchestra swing into action. The surgical team did their bit; then ICU took over, always under the watchful eye of the transplant parent unit, with support teams, like the infectious diseases team stepping in from the beginning to keep those pesky bugs at bay—usually, with a cocktail of therapeutics. The attention to detail was meticulous: every vital monitored; every drug level analysed and calibrated, to walk that tightrope between therapy and toxicity. In the wards, the allied health teams took over, helping patients to walk, clear their lungs and, eventually, go home.

The transplant teams I worked with, alongside, were experts, whose only focus was to get the patient through those stormy waters and then on to health. I mostly dealt with adults; but occasionally I came across a child, because the Alfred also performs paediatric lung transplants. Our focus was on the recipient, and the only mention of the donor was a read-out at the start of the transplant with some basic medical details, cause of death and infectious diseases screening.

Behind that record, we knew, though, that there was always a grieving family who had made some pretty courageous choices. I just want them to know that those organs were treated like precious cargo. The patients were at the centre of the universe, and none of this would have been possible without fraught decisions being made through tears by families far, far away.

It was the Rudd Labor government who, in 2009, initiated a national program to increase organ donation. It falls now to the Albanese government to extend this proud Labor legacy.

Until now, disclosure regarding the details of donors has been variable throughout Australia. The Northern Territory, WA and South Australia have the most restrictive rules, preventing disclosure of information—including from family members, who authorise the donation. This has had the effect of curtailing the telling of stories—good news stories—and community awareness campaigns regarding the merits of organ donation.

Around two per cent of the 1,400 people who die in hospital are eligible to be donors. It's not a great number; but it has a multiplier effect, because one person can go on to save the lives of seven other people and to assist many more with eye or tissue donation. In 2022, there were 454 deceased organ donors. We profoundly thank their families for that decision. There are, clearly, an additional 1,000 or so people who could become donors when they die, at a time when we have waiting lists groaning with adults and children waiting for that gift of organ or tissue donation.

Some years ago, I went to theatre and I watched a kidney transplant. When the kidney was perfused—basically, when it was hooked up to the blood supply—it started to make urine, right then and there, and that urine squirted out in time with the heartbeat. In doing so, it freed that patient from the shackles of dialysis, the tyranny of dialysis.

These amendments will now allow donor recipients, family members and agencies like DonateLife to boost their public awareness campaigns around organ donation. Consent from families will always be required, meaning that privacy will always be protected. The bill will not facilitate direct contact between donor families and organ and tissue recipients. They can maintain their contact with each other anonymously, if they wish, through DonateLife. By harmonising legislative requirements on disclosure nationally, it will make it easier for families of donors to engage in promotional and educational activities—noting that, in many cases, donors live interstate.

It is important to pull back the veil over death and dying, to end the taboo. Talking about the greatest gift being organ donation is a way of commemorating life—the one that has passed and the ones that are re-emerging from the brink of despair. What could be more life-affirming? It is enormously validating for those brave families to share their stories—in the swirling miasma of grief, to know that some good was born.

It is important to have these conversations about end-of-life and being an organ donor. It's better to do this with your faculties intact and in calm weather than at three in the morning in an ICU with alarms buzzing. You can register at donatelife.gov.au, or on your Medicare Express app. It only takes a minute.

I commend this bill to the House.

Ms MILLER-FROST (Boothby) (12:34): The decision to donate organs is a deeply personal one, and I support organ donation. I think being able to improve or extend the life of a stranger, or many strangers, is a profound gift. It's an example of something positive coming from what are often tragic circumstances. Australia has a best-practice organ and tissue donation system. It's a proud legacy of the Rudd Labor government. This bill, the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority Amendment (Disclosure of Information) Bill 2023, aims to help increase the rate of organ donation by building on this legacy so more individuals and families can benefit from this process.

Organ and tissue donation is one of the greatest gifts you can give. As a number of previous speakers have remarked, it's actually, sadly, very uncommon for someone to be in the position of being able to donate organs or tissues at the end of life. This is because, to be considered for organ donation, donors need to pass away in hospital with well-functioning organs. Nationwide each year, only around two per cent of people, about 1,400, meet these criteria. While we have an opt-in system where people can nominate that they wish to be organ donors and about 76 per cent of Australians say they are willing to be organ donors, ultimately it is the decision of the family members at the critical time when donation is an option. Altogether, this means that our rate of organ donation is extremely low. Meanwhile, the list of people awaiting transplants grows.

If we could hear the stories of lives changed, renewed and reinvigorated by organ donation, of times of great sorrow turned into times of deep meaning, perhaps more Australians would register to be organ donors and tell their families and friends of their wishes. Perhaps a family faced with this decision at a time of great sorrow would see this as a way in which their loved one could continue to contribute a lasting legacy to the world. And that is what this bill is about.

When passed, this bill will allow the Organ and Tissue Authority and DonateLife staff to obtain consent from authorised family members for the disclosure of information about an organ or tissue donor so that that information about the deceased donor can be included in promotional and educational activities. Basically, it will allow the appropriate authorities to gain appropriate consent to enable the sharing of stories of organ donation. Currently, this is governed by different processes across different states and territories. Indeed, my home state of South Australia is one of the strictest regarding prohibiting people from disclosing information about donation, including by the family members of donors.

This bill seeks to set a unified standard across the Commonwealth, and this has been reached in consultation with all relevant state and territory ministers. Once this bill is passed, and providing consent has been given by an authorised family member as defined in the bill, the law of a state or territory will no longer prevent the publication or dissemination of the information. This will enable the family of an organ donor to commemorate the gift that their family member gave—the gift of life for up to seven people—if that is their wish. I of course acknowledge that it will not be the wish of every donor family.

These families and loved ones are making brave and generous decisions to say yes to organ donation at what is undoubtedly one of the most difficult times of their lives, and it's important that we respect the wishes of donors and of their families. It is important that we do not cause any additional stress at this distressing time. But we do also have a growing transplant waiting list, and encouraging people to focus on the very great and positive benefits that it is in their power to give is an important part of increasing organ donor rates.

For those willing, this bill will make it easier for families to tell their stories and, in doing so, encourage the broader Australian public to do the same and to understand the process and the benefits of organ donation. The ultimate aim is to encourage more Australians to sign up to be organ and tissue donors themselves. It's hoped that this more public discussion of donation and people's experiences with family members' donations will help to normalise what can be difficult conversations with loved ones about organ and tissue donation. It's hoped it will help people share their wishes with their loved ones with regard to donation.

The bill maintains important safeguards in regard to privacy for donors and donor families, and these are undeniably vital to the functioning of our best-practice organ and tissue donation system.

The bill will not facilitate direct contact between donor families and organ and tissue recipients, and all governments are committed to continuing to protect the rights of both donor families and transplant recipients who wish to remain anonymous. Donor families and those who have received a transplant can continue to contact each other anonymously through their jurisdictional DonateLife agency. What the bill will do is harmonise legislative requirements on disclosure nationally, supporting increased community awareness about donation and registration, and allowing donor families to tell their powerful stories and commemorate their loved ones in remembrance services.

I pay tribute to the Assistant Minister for Health Ged Kearney for her work to bring about this legislation, and I encourage anyone listening now, if they wish, to get their phone out and sign up to be an organ or tissue donor

today. You can do it quickly online at donatelife.gov.au or with just three taps on your Medicare Express Plus app. I encourage everyone to have the sometimes difficult conversation with loved about your wishes. Organ donation can change lives—not just the lives of the recipient but also their family and their friends. I personally know of a recipient in my electorate who without receiving a kidney would have left a widow and two teenaged children. Receiving the donation has changed the lives of that entire family. They were on the list for some time, and it was a very blessed day when they actually got the call. I'd encourage those listening to sign themselves up and have that conversation with their family so that their wishes are known and, hopefully, respected should the worst happen. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr REPACHOLI (Hunter) (12:42): I rise today to contribute my support for the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority Amendment (Disclosure of Information) Bill 2023. Life is the one gift every person on this earth has been given. Some people have the chance to get this gift twice. The giver of this gift is an organ donor, and because of those generous people who want to make an impact to others, even after they have passed, thousands of Australians have been given a second chance at life. Being an organ and tissue donor truly is one of the greatest gifts that you can give.

While many Australians are already signed up to be an organ donor, it is, unfortunately, uncommon for someone to be in a position to be able to donate once they've passed. This is because donors need to pass away in the hospital with well-functioning organs to be considered for organ donation. This means two per cent or 1,400 people who die in a hospital each year have their organs or tissue donated. This is why we can never have enough people sign up to be an organ or tissue donor.

Labor has a proud legacy of ensuring Australia has the best health service in the world. It was the Rudd government that implemented our current best practice organ and tissue donation system. The Albanese government wants to keep this legacy going by improving donation rates even further, and this bill is vital to being able to achieve this. This bill takes practical steps to help more people to be donors and to see more lives saved in this process. This bill will allow authorised family members to give consent to the disclosure of information about an organ and tissue donor, and it will allow the OTA and DonateLife staff to obtain consent from an extended list of family members of a deceased donor before including information about that deceased donor in their promotional and educational activities. This is important because in order to get more people signed up as organ donors we need to make sure there is more information and education about the issues. At the same time, it is very important that the donor and their families are respected.

It is a tough time when a loved one passes, but, hopefully, knowing that their loved one's brave decision to be an organ and tissue donor could save up to seven lives will give some peace to the grieving family. This bill allows families to commemorate the gift that their loved one gave to save the life of others. It will allow families to share their stories, and, importantly, this will make more Australians take notice and hopefully sign up to be an organ and tissue donor themselves and have the important conversation with their loved ones about their wishes. Their loved one's organs may have saved seven lives, but their story could have helped save many more.

Each state and territory has its own human tissue act which has varying limitations around disclosure of information that might identify an organ or tissue donor or a transplant recipient. The OTA and the Commonwealth-funded state and territory DonateLife agencies are limited in the ways they can deliver the national organ and tissue donation and organ transplantation program, and their community awareness activities. This bill will help tidy that up and make it easier to run education and awareness programs, which will be important in encouraging more and more Australians, from all states and territories, to become organ and tissue donors.

Privacy is vital to the functioning of our best-practice organ and tissue donation system, and this bill will make sure that this privacy is maintained. The bill will not facilitate direct contact between donor families and organ or tissue recipients. We understand that, whether you are receiving or donating an organ, it is a scary time in your life and in the lives of those around you, and some may wish to remain anonymous. This bill will make sure that all governments are committed to continuing to protect the rights of both donor families and transplant recipients who wish to remain anonymous. But being anonymous doesn't mean that you don't have gratitude towards those who have given you an organ or an interest in those who have received an organ from your loved one. So donor families and those who have received a transplant can continue to contact each other anonymously through their DonateLife agencies. This will allow families to see the impacts of their loved one's decision, and the recipients to express their gratitude.

The simple fact is that transplants save lives, and today I want to share the incredible story of someone in my electorate whose life was saved because they were able to get a transplant. His name is Liam Woods, and I can definitely say he's one of my mates as well. Eight years ago, Liam received a transplant after being diagnosed with cancer. Today Liam is doing great. He has beaten cancer, and he recently had the honour of representing our country. Liam pulled on the green and gold at the World Transplant Games in Perth in April, representing this country in

football. While he was over there, he added a few more sports to his schedule, representing Australia in track athletics, in 100- and 200-metre events, and even played in the basketball team as well. Liam got to experience the Australian team dinner and was able to walk across the bridge in Perth and on to Optus Stadium, which he said gave him goosebumps. He said, 'To put the green and gold on and play against other countries is something I thought I'd never ever do,' and it's something that he will never ever forget. Liam excelled in these games, scoring a hat-trick in the final which helped Australia take home the gold, beating Italy 6-1. Not only has he recovered but he has a new chance to lead his life to the fullest. He is playing sport and playing at representative level.

The World Transplant Games is an incredible event. This year, there were 1,500 competitors from 46 countries, all together, as Liam said, to celebrate the gift of life. And the Aussies did us proud, finishing second overall and taking home 67 gold medals. Well done to everyone involved. Liam said that it was amazing to hear what some people had gone through to be able to participate in these games and that it was inspiring to meet others from Australia and also around the world who had gone through bone marrow, organ and tissue transplants. These games show how amazing and how valuable transplants are and why it is so important that everyone puts their name down to be an organ, blood and tissue donor.

Liam is a strong advocate for encouraging people to become donors. Liam's message to people is to either register to be an organ, tissue or blood donor or just read some of the inspirational stories of people that have had a second chance at life. Liam wants to go to the next games, which will be held in Dresden, Germany in 2025, to try to retain his gold medal. Liam, congratulations on all that you have achieved competing for Australia at the World Transplant Games and thank you for being such a strong voice on such an important issue. The Hunter is proud of you. Best of luck in 2025.

I want to use this opportunity to encourage everyone in the chamber and everyone back at home in the Hunter and also around Australia to become a donor. Stories like Liam's show how valuable organ donors are. You will truly be giving someone a second chance at a happy, healthy and long life. It is quick and easy to do. It only takes one minute online at [DonateLife.gov.au](https://www.donatelife.gov.au), or three taps on your Medicare Express Plus app, so what are you waiting for? This is your chance to give someone life and leave an impact that will stay with someone for the rest of their life, long after you have gone.

This bill does the important and necessary job of harmonising the legislative requirements on disclosure nationally. This will help to create much-needed increased community awareness about donation and registration and assist donor families to tell their powerful stories and commemorate their loved ones in remembrance services. This bill will help more stories to be told and to be heard by many, many people. The more awareness being spread through their stories, the more Australians who will themselves put their hands up to be able to give the same gift. This bill will help ensure that more people have access to transplants, and the gift of an organ and tissue is a gift of life. I commend this bill to the House.

Mr BRIAN MITCHELL (Lyons) (12:52): Organ and tissue donation saves lives. It's an act of selflessness and compassion. It's a gift that has within it the power to give somebody else a second chance at life, to restore hope to those grappling with debilitating illness and to alleviate the suffering of individuals and their loved ones. By donating organs or tissue, Australians can provide life-saving opportunities and extend the lives of transplant recipients, enabling them to pursue their dreams and aspirations or simply to spend more time with those that they love. The efforts undertaken by the Organ and Tissue Authority in state and territory DonateLife agencies are instrumental in increasing the number of registered organ and tissue donors and informing Australians about the critical importance of sharing their wishes regarding donation with their own loved ones.

I'm proud to say Tasmania is leading the country with donation outcomes, according to DonateLife Tasmania. It's a proud achievement that has only been made achievable by the generosity of organ donors and their families. In 2022, 57 people received a life-saving transplant in Tasmania. That's 57 lives saved and 57 families who get to enjoy more time with their loved ones. But there's still more work to do to grow donation and transplantation outcomes in Tasmania and nationally. With around 1,800 Australians currently on the waitlist for an organ transplant, I encourage everyone to register to donate their organs and to communicate this wish with their families.

The OTA, alongside state and territory DonateLife agencies, plays a pivotal role in raising awareness, facilitating education and promoting the importance of registering as an organ and tissue donor. Their tireless efforts aim to bridge the gap between the limited supply of organs and tissues and the ever-growing demand for life-saving transplants. Community awareness campaigns, educational initiatives and public engagement activities are crucial to fostering a culture of donation and encouraging individuals to make their wishes known to loved ones.

The importance of organ donation can never be overstated. Tasmanian woman Maddie Bonney is currently in Melbourne where she requires around-the-clock support as she waits for a matching organ donor. Maddie was diagnosed with pulmonary arterial hypertension five years ago and is on the waitlist to receive a double lung

transplant. With two young children, Maddie is desperate for an organ donor match so she can get home to Tasmania and spend time with her kids, watching them grow. She's waiting for organs to be made available to her, which, of course, requires somebody else to be lost, but those people are lost anyway. Imagine if they make their organs available to her, so that she can live with her kids. That would be a real gift, indeed.

Each state and territory in Australia has its own human tissue act. The legislation is not uniform and imposes limits on the information that can be disclosed to donation recipients or the family of an organ donor. It can often prevent recipients and the families of donors from connecting—something that can be quite heartfelt and important for both parties. Unfortunately, the Northern Territory, South Australia and Western Australia have some of the most restrictive laws, preventing any individual from disclosing such information even if there is full consent and a desire for information to be shared. This can make it difficult for the OTA and DonateLife agencies across Australia to deliver services more effectively, especially through providing community awareness activities and events which involve donor families.

To address this issue, the proposed bill aims to expand the disclosure of information provisions in the OTA act. It seeks to permit DonateLife agencies, grant recipients and authorised family members to publish, disseminate or disclose information about deceased donors and recipients, subject to the consent of the respective parties, without infringing upon the laws of individual states or territories. It is important to stress that the bill upholds the need for family consent before the disclosure of information, ensuring the wishes and privacy of the organ donor's family are always respected. Furthermore it clarifies and extends the definition of 'authorised family member' to encompass a broader range of individuals who can provide consent in this regard.

These amendments align with the sentiment expressed by many families whose loved ones become donors. They support the idea of raising community awareness about donation and registration, as well as commemorating loved ones through remembrance services. For many, knowing that their loved one has saved others' lives is a thing to treasure. This bill signifies an opportunity to align legislative requirements on disclosure nationally, promoting greater consistency and coherence in the organ and tissue donation process. By harmonising these provisions, we can enhance community awareness, encourage public engagement and inspire individuals to register as organ and tissue donors. Through the sharing of personal stories and the commemoration of donors' selflessness, we can create a culture that values and prioritises organ and tissue donation, ultimately saving more lives and alleviating the suffering of those in need.

Organ and tissue donation is an extraordinary act of generosity, but few might realise that the opportunity to donate is rare, as donors must die in hospital with viable organs, accounting for only two per cent of the 1,400 people who die in hospitals annually. Australia's organ and tissue donation system has come a long way thanks to the pioneering efforts of the Rudd Labor government. It's viewed by many as being best practice internationally and is seen as a proud legacy of the Rudd government. Through the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority Act 2008, the Organ and Tissue Authority was established as a statutory authority entrusted with the responsibility of coordinating a nationally cohesive approach to organ and tissue donation and transplantation.

The Albanese Labor government remains committed to extending this legacy and improving donation rates, and this bill represents the next crucial step in our collective effort. By allowing authorised family members to give consent for the disclosure of information, this bill empowers the OTA and DonateLife staff to include information about deceased donors in promotional and educational activities. This enables the families of organ donors, who made that decision to say yes to organ donation during one of the most difficult times of their lives, to commemorate the gift that their family member gave, the gift of life for up to seven people.

This bill grants donor families the opportunity to share their stories. Through these stories, they can inspire the broader Australian public to follow suit, encouraging them to register as organ and tissue donors themselves and to engage in crucial conversations with loved ones about their wishes.

I want to emphasise again that this bill maintains essential safeguards to protect privacy. It's a cornerstone of our organ and tissue donation system. It does not facilitate direct contact between donor families and organ and tissue recipients, ensuring the rights of both parties who wish to remain anonymous. Donor families and transplant recipients can continue to contact each other anonymously through their jurisdictional DonateLife agency.

What this bill does is harmonise legislative requirements on disclosure across the nation. It supports increased community awareness about donation registration, empowering donor families to share their powerful stories and commemorate their loved ones through remembrance services.

I want to take a moment to recognise and applaud the brave and compassionate families who have made the courageous decision to say yes to organ and tissue donation during what are some of the most challenging moments of their lives. As their loved ones are often dying in hospital before them, they are asked to extend the hope of life

to others. And, for those who are able to consider the wellbeing of strangers as their own loved one lives their final moments, I say thank you. Their unwavering generosity and resilience allows others to live and spend time with their loved ones.

There is an immense impact that organ and tissue donation can have on individuals, families and communities. By supporting the bill, we can empower family members to commemorate their loved one's gift of life, share their powerful stories and inspire others to register as donors. Together, we can embolden a society that values the preciousness of life, the transformative power of the donation and the enduring legacy of compassion.

I'm proud to be an organ donor. I carry the card with me everywhere I go. I understand that if something should happen to me, I have the opportunity to help others. And, importantly, my family is aware of my wishes. It's not left to them in those final moments to have to decide what I want; they know what I want.

In closing, I urge every person listening to consider organ donation. Grab your phones, sign up to be an organ and tissue donor. It takes just a minute to register online at [DonateLife.org.au](https://www.donatelife.org.au) or three taps on your Express Plus Medicare app. By doing so, you can be part of the committee that saves lives, brings hope to those in need and creates a lasting legacy of compassion and generosity. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms TEMPLEMAN (Macquarie) (13:03): There are probably a lot of us in this chamber who have registered as organ donors, but there's probably not a lot of us who will ever be able to be organ donors, because very few people actually can be when they die. A person has to die in hospital in specific circumstances in an intensive care or emergency department as the organs still need to be functioning well to be considered for transplantation. So only about two per cent of people who die in Australian hospitals meet the criteria to be an organ donor.

That's why this legislation is so key. The more we can encourage people whose relative or family member has been able to donate, the more we can encourage them to talk about it, where they are comfortable to do so, to share the message of what that organ donation meant to them. Then, the more likely we are to build up the numbers so that there is a greater number of people who are willing to do this and whose families know they are willing to do it.

In terms of the actual numbers, in 2022 around 1,400 people of the 80,000 people who died in Australian hospitals died in a way where organ donation could be considered. Requests to families for donation were made in 1,300 cases. Of these, 700 families said yes. That is about 54 per cent, and that's the data we're hoping to shift so that more people say they're willing and more families are in a position to say yes when they're asked.

This bill allows authorised family members to give consent to the disclosure of information about an organ and tissue donor. Around the country, all sorts of different rules make that easier or harder in different places. But this will allow the staff of, for instance, [DonateLife](https://www.donatelife.org.au) or the OTA to obtain consent from an extended list of family members of a deceased donor before including information about the donor in their promotional and educational activities. As someone who has worked with a lot of not-for-profit organisations and who knows that the human face of an issue is one of the most powerful ways to spread the word, I can absolutely see the benefit in this legislation. It makes me wonder why we didn't have it sooner—but I'm delighted we're working through this now.

I think it's important to stress that while the privacy components of this bill will make it easier for family members to give consent, there are still very strict privacy rules around organ donation. This bill maintains all the safeguards in regard to privacy that are vital to the functioning of the best-practice organ and tissue donation system that we can have. It will not facilitate direct contact between donor families and organ and tissue recipients, and all governments are committed to continuing to protect the rights of both donor families and transplant recipients who wish to remain anonymous.

So, what this really does is give people choice. It's part of several things we're doing in our first year in government to lift awareness and rates of registration. I note that the minister recently announced that six groups will share nearly \$400,000 in community awareness grants to boost awareness about organ and tissue donation, particularly to the 16- to 25-year-old age group, who have the lowest organ and tissue donor registration rates across the nation. Only 10 per cent of the 3.2 million eligible young adults are currently registered. So, if you're listening to this speech right now and you've got your phone handy, it's a perfect opportunity to jump onto [DonateLife](https://www.donatelife.org.au) and register your interest in being an organ and tissue donor. Even easier, go to your Express Plus Medicare app and tap it three times, and you'll be there. In the big scheme of things, this piece of legislation is not massive, but it actually could make a real difference to a lot of people, as could your decision to register as an organ tissue donor. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (13:08): I rise to speak on the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority Amendment (Disclosure of Information) Bill 2023. Donating an organ or tissue is one of the greatest gifts we can give to others. Now, I don't want to become one of those MPs who quote themselves—'Well done, Graham; well done!' Nevertheless, I talked about organ donation in my first speech, way back in

February 2008. Back then my friend Debbie Duddridge had died just a few months earlier, on 29 October 2007, right in the middle of the election campaign, while waiting for a set of lungs. Her partner, Margie Kruger, and I did law together, and I know how devastating that loss was for Debbie's family and for Margie. I know that one person deciding to sign up to be a donor could change the lives of up to seven people. Seven Debbie Duddridges might have been smiling rather than seven Margie Krugers grieving. By donating, we can literally change lives by saving lives. It is hard to think of any other way you could make that much of a great and direct difference to someone—somebody who you, the donor, will never meet or interact with. This is the ultimate selfless gesture, where the self is donated.

Unfortunately, in some Australian states, unless a person expressly gives permission for the sharing of their donation story, it will never be made public. The point of telling these wonderful stories is that they end up saving lives and encouraging thousands of others to do the same. I told that Debbie Duddridge story—a sad story—way back in 2008, to inspire others to donate. But imagine if Debbie were here to tell a different version of her story—and I know that Debbie would be a much better recruiter than me and a much better storyteller than me.

We live in a healthy, wealthy country, and most Australians live long and fulfilling lives. And this is a good thing. However, it also means that they have few organ donation options. The barnacles of age and accompanying illnesses mean that few senior bodies have much to donate back to the herd. To become an actual donor relies on many factors, and the circumstances all have to align at the right time.

Firstly, for instance, a donor with well-functioning organs would need to pass away in a hospital. They would need this prior medical supervision just to be considered as a donor. This is even before medical professionals assess a medical history to rule their organs in or out—to rule on which organs they may or may not be able to donate. For example, an alcoholic's liver probably wouldn't be suitable, because it would've been a bit overworked. I'm not making a comment on anyone at all. But, on the other hand, perhaps, the heart from someone in the modern Liberal Party would be almost totally unused!

I assure those present, I wrote this speech a long time ago, before I knew who was in the chamber!

The second factor that doctors have to consider is the health of the needed organs. Are they are viable donations? These specific medical requirements mean that there are only around 1,400 deceased Australians each year who meet these medical criteria.

When you think about everything that has to fall into line for a possible donation, it is reasonable to think that, in the tragic and vast majority of occasions, these situations are unexpected; the spinner of the year seems to work quite haphazardly, thankfully. Consequently, the person would have never thought about having to give official permission to have their donation story shared. Obviously, this is because they didn't expect that their time on this earth would be up so soon. Obviously, many of us embrace Yossarian's words from Joseph Heller's magnificent *Catch-22*: we're going to live forever, or die in the attempt! No doubt, publication permission would have been given if they'd been told beforehand that their time was approaching, but that's not how the person who spins the wheel works. How immortal is it to share the story of possibly saving the lives of seven other people—seven people with families and loved ones, who, through the donor's generosity, will be able to spend more time with their families and friends. So, as a result, the Organ and Tissue Authority and Commonwealth-funded state and territory DonateLife agencies are limited in the ways they can deliver the national organ and tissue donation and transplantation program. This particularly affects their community awareness activities and events involving donor families.

This bill seeks to broaden the disclosure of information provisions in the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority Act to allow DonateLife agencies, grant recipients and authorised family members to publish, disseminate or disclose information about deceased donors and recipients without breaching the law of a state or territory. The bill maintains important provisions requiring the consent of the family of an organ donor prior to the disclosure of information, and clarifies and extends who is classified as an authorised family member for the purposes of providing this consent. This will enable the families of organ donors who've made the brave and generous decision to say 'yes' to organ donation at one of the most difficult times of their life to commemorate the gift that their family member or loved one gave: the gift of life to up to seven people. It will let these families tell their stories of their loved one and, in so doing, encourage the broader Australian public to do the same thing, whether it is to simply sign up to be an organ and tissue donor or to have that important conversation with your loved ones about your wishes when you pass. Knowing is so important, as it means there is no second-guessing what your loved one would have wanted. Making sure their wishes are met sometimes involves the conflict between a love partner and a family saying, 'This is what the person would have wanted.' Having worked in wills and estates, I find it amazing what can happen after someone passes away. Knowing is so important. Having that clear and concise information is just one less thing to have to think about at one of the most difficult times of our life.

The bill also maintains the safeguards in regard to privacy that are vital to the functioning of our best practice organ and tissue donation system. I might add that Australia's best practice organ and tissue donation system is a proud legacy of the Rudd Labor government. I mention Rudd in particular because Prime Minister Rudd actually had had interaction with this and was quite passionate about it. It was a government that invested in programs to boost awareness, equip hospitals and provide better access to care and information for families of potential donors facing certain death. It is this Albanese Labor government that is committed to extending this legacy and improving donation rates. This bill is the next step in this important work.

In regard to maintaining safeguards, of course some donor families and recipients would prefer to stay anonymous. This bill will not facilitate direct contact between donor families and organ and tissue recipients. Every state and territory is committed to continuing to protect the rights of donor families and transplant recipients who wish to remain anonymous. Donor families and those who have received a transplant can continue to contact each other anonymously through their jurisdictional DonateLife agency. This will not change. What this bill will do is harmonise legislative requirements on disclosure nationally. It will help support increased community awareness about donation and registration and allow donor families to tell their powerful stories and commemorate their loved one in remembrance services. How special those left behind will feel, knowing that their loved one, even after death, has helped others to live. The legacy of life that continues after death is so powerful.

I encourage everyone to do those two things today: firstly, talk to your family and make clear your wishes about donation and ask your family members what their wishes are as well; and secondly, jump on donatelife.gov.au and register as a donor.

I commend this bill to the House.

Mr JOSH WILSON (Fremantle) (13:17): I'm also glad to speak in support of the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority Amendment (Disclosure of Information) Bill 2023 and the changes that it makes. There's no doubt that this is an area of health policy, program and practice in Australia that needs to be improved because of the remarkable benefits that come from making donated organs available to people who are very, very unwell.

As others have noted, we can do more to lift the rates of donation and, therefore, the incredible outcomes that can be delivered. In 2022, 80,000 Australians passed away, and only 1,400 of those were eligible to be donors. That's only two per cent. Out of those 1,400, in 54 per cent of those cases, families agreed with the deceased person's wishes and allowed them to become a donor. That rate of 54 per cent did decrease slightly from 2021 to 2022. That is something of an indication of what my colleagues have said about the difference that will occur when, in addition to people making the choice to be an organ donor, they also have that conversation with their family and friends, but specifically with their family, so that there is family consent. When you consider that those 700 organ donors translated into 1,200 recipients, if we could lift the rate of family consent for those people who have already made that very generous decision to be organ donors, then we will start to see life-saving opportunities provided to people who might otherwise very quickly find themselves literally at death's door.

It wasn't that long ago I had an opportunity to catch up with Robert Manning. Robert Manning will be known to the member for Dobell. I heard of Robert Manning because of his interest in the Tuggerah Lakes community project. Robert Manning was an organ donor recipient. He's a person who has one of those incredible stories about how he got very ill very quickly and benefited from organ donation. His illness would probably otherwise have meant the end of his life. All of us have heard stories like that. All of us know of the life-changing, life-saving reality that comes with organ donation if that's what you need to survive.

I first became interested in donation because of something that was pioneered in Fremantle: the paired live kidney exchange. That obviously involves live donors, so it's not a matter of consent with respect to people who lose their lives. It is a fascinating example of how we can make changes like the ones made in this bill, which improve the opportunities for these kinds of 21st century medical miracles to be delivered. With kidney donation people can donate one of their kidneys to someone who needs it. There are often family members who are prepared to do that, but only 30 per cent of people who are prepared to donate to a family member—a brother, a sister or even a spouse—are compatible. So even if you have a willing live donor it doesn't necessarily solve the problem for the person who needs that kidney. The genius of the paired live kidney exchange program is that you might have a pair of family members—two brothers, for instance. One brother is prepared to donate a kidney to the brother who needs it but isn't compatible. That kidney will be donated to the beneficiary in an opposite pairing that will be matched up. A fellow in Fremantle, Professor Paolo Ferrari, got that going more than a decade ago, and I believe it's now an Australia-New Zealand joint program that helps match up compatible donors with people who need kidneys.

The strongest message that I—and I think everybody in this debate—would give is for people to think very carefully about how remarkable it is for you to decide to be an organ donor. You can literally give the gift of life

and health to another human being. I don't think there is any greater gift you could give. That's step one. Step two is making sure your family understands that that's your wish so they are able to consent to that if that comes.

I'll be the first to put my hand up and say I'm not the most technologically advanced person. I didn't know that you could go through the Express Plus Medicare app and make that decision with a few clicks on your smartphone. I've been a card-carrying organ donor since some time ago. I think that people could take the time today—amongst checking their emails, their calendar, social media or the news—to go and download the Express Plus Medicare app, if they don't already have it, and make that choice. I will when I get out of here.

When you consider that there were effectively only 700 donors across Australia in the 2022 calendar year, we could see that rate of organ donation lift quite considerably. Every time that occurs there's the potential for seven recipients to benefit. I don't think it is hard to imagine. If you had a family member who was experiencing organ failure, being in that situation, knowing that if someone had been prepared to take the time to think about what they would like their legacy to be and made what I think is a really sensible act of human generosity, to choose to be an organ donor—don't leave it at that, because the family consent part is a vital piece of the equation. Talk to and encourage family members to consider it themselves. Talk with them sufficiently for them to understand that that is what you would like and that that is what you want one of your legacies to be at the time of your passing: that another member of the Australian community, and their family, will have their life changed. I can only imagine what it must be like for a person who is waiting, knowing that their own mortal clock is ticking fast, to get the phone call and to be told: 'Today is the day. There is a liver or another organ on which your life depends that is available.' It would be one of those weight-lifting, burden-lifting experiences. I can only imagine, though. Obviously nobody wants to be in that position.

This is something that both sides of politics have worked on consistently over time. As I say, there were changes made under the former Labor government. I'm glad that it was a focus of the coalition before. The minister and the assistant minister are carrying this work forward. I think this change will improve awareness and efficiency within the way the program works. I am hopeful that, through these changes, the way we talk about them and endorse them, we actually get that community participation in something that is life-changing and life-saving. On that basis, I'm very happy to speak in support of the bill.

Ms KEARNEY (Cooper—Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care) (13:26): The Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority leads the implementation of the Australian government's national program to increase organ and tissue donation and transplantation, working with DonateLife agencies in all states and territories. Critical to the work of the Organ And Tissue Authority and DonateLife agencies are promotional and educational activities to increase community awareness of organ and tissue donation issues, and to encourage people to register on the Australian Organ Donor Register and talk to their family about donation. These activities include commemorative services; educational and community awareness materials, such as posters and flyers; and social media content, which often include the sharing of experiences by individuals and families involved in organ and tissue donation and transplantation.

Currently, there are provisions in state and territory legislation and in the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority Act 2008 that prohibit the sharing of some information related to deceased donors and recipients. As a result, the Organ and Tissue Authority and Commonwealth funded state and territory DonateLife agencies are limited in the ways they can deliver the national organ and tissue donation and transplantation program and, in particular, community awareness, educational activities and commemorative events for donor families. The Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority Amendment (Disclosure of Information) Bill 2023 will amend the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority Act 2008 to allow the Organ and Tissue Authority, DonateLife agencies, grant recipients and authorised family members to publish, disseminate or disclose information about deceased donors or recipients for the purposes of the Organ and Tissue Authority's community awareness, educational or commemorative activities.

These changes will allow the Organ and Tissue Authority and DonateLife agencies to obtain consent for this information to be shared from an extended list of family members of donors and recipients. These legislative amendments align with the sentiment that many donor families wish to commemorate their family member in remembrance services. Some also want to raise community awareness about donation and transplantation. The ability to communicate the stories of those who have given the gift of life and of those who have received this is vital to saving lives and improving the quality of life for more Australians. These changes will support the Organ and Tissue Authority and DonateLife agencies in more effectively achieving these goals. I thank all the members for their contributions to the debate on this bill.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Ms KEARNEY (Cooper—Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care) (13:29): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Beecroft Rotary Club Youth Awards

Mr LEESER (Berowra) (13:30): Recently, I presented the Beecroft Rotary Club Youth Awards. These awards recognise students in years 11 and 12 who have pursued their passions while making an impact on their community. The Youth Volunteer of the Year award went to Kate Johnson, a dedicated Coogee surf lifesaving patrol member and a volunteer helper with Autism Swim. Young Sportsperson of the Year awards went to swimmer Abbey Thomas, soccer player Annika Lee and state field hockey champion Molly Holst. Young Designer of the Year Natalie Gibbons sewed and donated handmade face masks for Westmead's children's hospital. The Young Environmentalist of the Year, Erin Green, established a community garden and pioneered Sustainability Week initiatives. The Young Person in STEM of the Year was Shreya Mukherjee, for creating the app EcoSocial to help young people find climate-related volunteer opportunities. The Young Journalist of the Year went to Luciana Romanski for her writing in school publications, media internships and external marketing and communications experiences. The Young Performer of the Year awards went to singer Anika Joshi and dancer Mia Kim. The Young Employee of the Year was Sarah Kuang, for contributions to Little Athletics and Coles. The Young Entrepreneur of the Year went to Kai Macann for co-founding Terra Symposium, a business delivering philosophy and ethics programs for high school students.

The event was coordinated with the support of Beecroft Rotary's Youth Director, Daniel Dummer, and it was planned and executed by five local university and high school students: Sofia Guastini, Jaime Pitcher, Shabdha Kukunooru, Georgiana Dumapit and Hasti Rostami. Many members of the Beecroft Rotary Club volunteered, and I congratulate all of them.

Cricket ACT Hall of Fame

Mr DAVID SMITH (Bean—Government Whip) (13:31): Last Thursday, Cricket ACT announced ACT and Australian Indigenous cricketer Neil Bulger as the 15th member of the Cricket ACT Hall of Fame. Neil first came to Canberra in 1972 to play League, but ended up playing cricket for Queanbeyan. He was named ACT First Grade Player of the Year in that first season, as well as making his debut for the ACT that same summer. In the wake of his performance for the ACT, he was approached by Queensland but returned to Tumut to play footy. He returned to Queanbeyan for the '79 season and resumed playing for the ACT, going on to represent the territory in 27 matches. During his career, Neil was named ACT First Grade Player of the Year three times, ACT Representative Player of the Year twice, and twelfth man for the Prime Minister's XI when the match resumed in 1983-84. He was appointed vice captain of the Australian Indigenous team that toured England in 1988, a moment he described as one of the proudest of his career. He played for Queanbeyan for 25 seasons in all, and his contribution to the club was recognised by both the club and the then City of Queanbeyan Council with the naming of the Neil Bulger Oval in 2015.

Neil passed away last year and was named in the Cricket ACT Men's Team of the Century this year. He was a giant of the game, and I pay my respects to his family, particularly his brother Vince who has just been named in the Australian over-seventies team, which will tour the United Kingdom later this year.

Health Care

Ms LEY (Farrer—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (13:33): I rise to appeal directly to those opposite, those government members covertly mentioned in today's edition of *The Australian*, for their non-role in Labor's 60-day scripts change from September. I'll quote from the article on page 7:

Labor MPs are being told not to voice concerns over the government's move to double drug dispensing in community pharmacies ...

A key Labor insider ... called and texted the offices of government MPs strongly advising them not to comment ...

Some of you appear to have gone a step further, refusing to even meet with your local pharmacists. Pharmacists from across Australia are in the House this week, but apparently you are too busy to meet with them.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Claydon): Direct your comments here. You are referring to me when you say the word 'you'.

Ms LEY: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. Possible store closures, opening hours cut back, staff laid off work—in many cases these are part-time mums—and lost dispensing fees, jacking up the price for other patients, including in aged care. Can I cast everyone's mind back to question time yesterday? When this government's Prime Minister dismissively responded to a question about whether pharmacists would be worse off, he said every government member will meet with them because every member here knows how important the role of community pharmacists is. The Prime Minister and the health minister have announced a major health policy without proper consultation on the impact that it will have on community pharmacies, and I can promise you—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Claydon): The member for Macquarie.

Eating Disorders

Ms TEMPLEMAN (Macquarie) (13:34): Eating disorders are one of the hardest mental illnesses to treat and they are the most lethal. We're providing \$70 million of additional funding for innovative programs to treat mental ill-health and eating disorders, improve services, educate health professionals and support patients and their families and carers. The Butterfly Foundation will receive nearly \$3 million for a recovery support program for patients who've been discharged from hospital, which will be delivered virtually, while the University of Sydney's InsideOut Institute's e-clinic will receive funding of \$4 million to make effective, evidence based care and treatment available digitally to people with an eating disorder. Both of those are regardless of where people live. Headspace centres will have eating disorder treatment embedded in them, and a digital GP hub operating out of the University of Sydney will help address the knowledge gap that people consistently report about their interactions with GPs.

We know there has been a decline in the mental health of children and a rise in self-harm and eating disorders, so better research is vital. A significant part of this investment goes towards funding vital research projects on children's mental health, finding ways to improve access to evidence based treatments and their delivery and to address the inequalities in treating childhood mental health. I'm very proud to be part of an Albanese government committed to a better future for children with eating disorders and their families.

Timms, Ms Maree

Dr HAINES (Indi) (13:36): Today I rise to celebrate a local Indi science educator. Wangaratta's Digital Technologies Advisory Committee was recently awarded a National Science Week grant for its Inspired By Tech Regional Festival. One of the leading people behind this grant's success is Maree Timms. Maree is a dynamic leader in the STEM field, mentoring local students to pursue their love of science. Maree is so good at what she does. She's received education awards and has led the Galen Catholic College's VEX Robotics team to international competitions.

In 2018, the robotics program's success at the national titles gained them entry to the VEX Robotics World Championship in Kentucky, USA. From a field of 600 international high schools, they went on to win a service award. That's the first time Australia has won an award at the worlds in the secondary school division. They also made history in 2020 as the Australian representative at the first Kibo Robot Programming Challenge. They were one of only three teams from across eight countries to successfully complete the mission of coding NASA's Astrobee robot on the International Space Station.

I congratulate Maree—what a legend of education!—successive VEX teams and all STEM teachers as they inspire and advance future generations of Australian scientists. Well done, Maree.

Racing Together

Mr NEUMANN (Blair) (13:37): Recently I was delighted to attend the opening of Racing Together's new headquarters in garages at Queensland Raceway, Willowbank, in my electorate, the home of motorsport in Queensland. Racing Together is a fantastic community organisation dedicated to supporting young First Nations people to participate in motorsport and boost Indigenous representation in the industry. Established by Chair Gary Connelly AM and his wife, Monique, in 2020, the organisation provides Indigenous young people with driver training and mechanical knowledge and with an opportunity to pursue a career in the sport as a driver or race team member. Racing Together imparts valuable career and life skills, including personal health and wellbeing, social responsibility, communication skills and teamwork, setting these young people up for success.

Racing Together has liaised closely with First Nations groups. From the 10 original team members, four now have jobs in the industry, one has gone on to university and two have gained full-time employment elsewhere—an amazing track record. The organisation has won support from all levels of the sporting and motorsport world, from formula 1 world champion Sir Lewis Hamilton to Australia's leading supercar team owners and the Australian Sports Foundation, and it won the FIA president's equality, diversity and inclusion award last year. Welcome to Ipswich, Racing Together.

Climate Change

Ms STEGGALL (Warringah) (13:39): Today I hosted an international climate policy panel with my co-chairs of the Parliamentary Friends of Climate Action. We heard from the US ambassador Caroline Kennedy, the UK high commissioner Vicki Treadell, the EU ambassador Gabriele Visentin, and the German ambassador Dr Markus Ederer. Minister Bowen also addressed the panel. The UK has ambitious climate action, setting a world-leading target of 78 per cent emissions reduction by 2035. Under the UK's Climate Change Act, it is a legally binding long-term emissions reduction target, and the UK is making significant investments in offshore wind power.

The EU has adopted ambitious emissions reduction targets backed by significant funding for green technologies and initiatives. Their commitment to phasing out CO₂-emitting cars and an emissions trading scheme has positioned them as a global leader. Germany has committed to 80 per cent emissions reduction by 2040, achieving 80 per cent renewable energy and phasing out gas heating from over 50 per cent of homes by 2030. The United States of course passed the Inflation Reduction Act last year, the most significant climate legislation in US history, deploying some US\$400 billion to cut carbon emissions and dramatically incentivise investment in clean energy.

Australia must learn from these examples. I call on the government to commit to 75 per cent emissions reduction by 2035 and to get ambitious and accelerate our transition.

Pearce Electorate: Roads

Ms ROBERTS (Pearce) (13:40): The community in my electorate of Pearce welcomes federal government Black Spot funding that will improve safety on our local roads. The funding totals more than \$2.3 million across three important projects in Pearce. Safety will be improved at intersections in Landsdale, Merriwa and Quinns Rocks. There has been \$750,000 committed to improving traffic flow and safety at the Mirrabooka Avenue and Hepburn Avenue intersection in Landsdale. The works include installing pre-deflection on both Mirrabooka Avenue, approaches to the roundabout and modifying cycle lane ramps. There is \$1.5 million allocated for the Hester Avenue and Connolly Drive intersection at Merriwa, where the layout of the two-way roundabout.

Lane separation, cycle paths, pedestrian crossings and lighting will also be improved. There is \$132,000 committed to the Marmion Avenue and Pitcairn Entrance intersection in Quinns Rocks, where works have already commenced. This will include upgrades and modifications to median islands and pedestrian crossing points, as well as alterations and renewal of the pedestrian path. The Black Spot Program commits a total of \$12.6 million for Western Australian roads and demonstrates the Albanese Labor government's commitment to improving road safety for our community. I love that our government listens to and cares about our local communities.

Motor Neurone Disease

Mr CHESTER (Gippsland) (13:42): As MPs we are privileged to meet plenty of extraordinary Australians. I include Neale Daniher in my list of courageous, humble, selfless and inspirational people that I have had the honour to spend some time with. The Daniher name is synonymous with Australian Rules, and Neale had a celebrated playing and football career. In his memoir, Neale observes, 'When all is said and done, much more is said than done.' No-one could ever accuse Neale Daniher of that. He is a man of incredible passion and action who actually founded Fight MND in 2014 after being diagnosed with the disease himself, a disease that kills two Australians every day.

Fight MND has raised more than \$60 million for research, and just buying one of these beanies is one way we can all help. Neale Daniher has been robbed of his ability to talk, but I contacted him and asked for a message I could read to parliament. This is what Neale told me. He said:

I would like to thank all Australians have joined in the fight against motor neurone disease. You are part of what I call the Fight MND army. Whether you have bought a blue big freeze beanie, donated or volunteered, you give people like me and others living with MND hope for the future. The many millions you have raised has invigorated medical research in Australia and, in time, we are hopeful this will lead to treatments and, ultimately, a cure for this insidious disease. Until there is a cure, the Fight MND army will fight on. Thanks for being part of the fight.

Well, thank you, Neale Daniher. Australia, please back this man as he fights MND.

International Workers Memorial Day

Mr GEORGANAS (Adelaide) (13:43): Just over a month ago, 28 April was International Workers Memorial Day, a day when we remember those workers who never came home after leaving for work. It is a day to remember those who have been diagnosed and perished with cancer and other illnesses, sometimes decades after their exposure at work. It is a day to remember the thousands of Australian workers who have been maimed in the pursuit of making a living, some bearing their scars and disablement for the rest of their lives. This day is an opportunity for us to pause and think about what really matters—those we work with, our families, our friends and those we love—and an opportunity to evaluate what is important and to reaffirm the value we as Australians place on life. The 169

workers who were traumatically killed at work, according to the last complete report, were all victims of needless and preventable incidents. The AMWU this year has called on all to use this day to recommit ourselves to strive to do what our gut often tells us is right, despite it not always being what is popular or comfortable.

In the parliament we have a responsibility to ensure that our work, health and safety laws are achieving their objectives. Principal among those is to protect workers while they're engaging in work. We need to protect Australian workers. We need to introduce industrial laws into this parliament that make work safer. We need to stop workers from being exposed to dangerous chemicals and ensure that exposure standards are health based, not an artificial upper limit. In the case of welding fumes, under the workplace exposure standards our welders are notionally allowed to breathe in up to 11 grams of a known— *(Time expired)*

Margaret River Pro

Mrs MARINO (Forrest) (13:45): Congratulations to the organisers, the competitors and the volunteers in this year's hugely successful Margaret River Pro. The Margaret River Pro is one of only two Australian events on the prestigious World Surf League championship tour. This year's live-streamed Margaret River Pro, in April, was held at Surfers Point at Prevelly, in the stunning Margaret River region. It is the midseason decider for the world championship tour. Only the top-performing surfers, together with wildcard competitors, advance to compete for the coveted world title in the final five events. The surfers who make it to that midseason cup automatically qualify for the start of the following year's world championship tour. The 2023 season will also be the top qualification route for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

Given it's the midseason decider, it means that viewers see the world's best surfers put everything on the line to advance to the second half of the world tour. This year it was Gabrielle Medina and Carissa Moore who emerged victorious, with local hero Bronte Macaulay just edged out by Moore in the semifinal. I want to congratulate all of these surfing champions and all of those who worked to deliver the Margaret River Pro. Of course, there's another generation coming up through the Margaret River Senior High School's surfing academy, a program for talented and gifted surfers. Let's hope we see some of them in the next Margaret River Pro. *(Time expired)*

Chisholm Electorate: Friends of Damper Creek Conservation Reserve

Dr GARLAND (Chisholm) (13:47): On Sunday I was absolutely delighted to have the opportunity to spend time with the Friends of Damper Creek Conservation Reserve, a wonderful group in Chisholm. What an amazing day it was in Mount Waverley, as they planted a staggering 1,500 trees, despite the gloomy weather. I commend their outstanding efforts in keeping our community green and gorgeous. I want to place on the record my heartfelt gratitude to the Friends of Damper Creek Conservation Reserve for their dedication and hard work over decades. They are the guardians of this beautiful reserve, ensuring its preservation and nurturing its natural splendour.

The benefits of planting trees are far-reaching. They improve air quality, provide homes for wildlife and help combat climate change. Additionally, they create havens for us to relax in, reconnect with nature and enjoy the beauty of our surroundings. Being in nature with one another is so important for the wellbeing of our community and our environment.

The Friends of Damper Creek Conservation Reserve have set a remarkable example to all of us in the community, showing us that by working together we can achieve great things. Let's remember, too, the journey doesn't end here. The challenges we face in preserving our environment require ongoing commitment, and we must continue to support organisations in our communities like the friends of Damper Creek, who work tirelessly to keep our community vibrant and our natural spaces flourishing.

Lindsay Electorate: Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme

Mrs McINTOSH (Lindsay) (13:48): Recently I had a roundtable meeting with local pharmacists from across Lindsay to discuss the Albanese Labor Government's new 60-day dispensing rule. This new rule reduces the income pharmacies can earn, meaning they will be forced to reduce staff, impacting timely services for so many community members. Losing staff in Western Sydney pharmacies means losing jobs in Western Sydney. It's not only that; the funds pharmacies receive for filling scripts go towards providing vital community services. These include the ability to provide Webster packs for free or at a heavily reduced cost for the elderly.

Suneet, who operates two Terry White pharmacies in Penrith, is worried that the 60-day dispensing rule means he will have to lay off two pharmacists and three pharmacy assistants. Suneet says he will need to increase the cost of Webster packs tenfold, to \$20. Suneet's pharmacies assist 100 aged-care residents and 400 elderly locals. I sincerely hope these patients will not be impacted by the Labor government's changes.

Many small pharmacies are worried the government's changes will close their doors. I will fight for Western Sydney pharmacies and their patients to ensure that the doors remain open and the cost of these rules, these changes, aren't a huge cost on my community and my community pharmacies.

Employment: Women

Dr ANANDA-RAJAH (Higgins) (13:50): With so many challenges, who can afford to leave female firepower on the table? In one year of the Albanese government, records are being smashed. Women's employment is at a 50-year record high. Over 3.8 million women are in full-time work—the highest number in recorded history. Women are flocking to full-time jobs. Why? Confidence—confidence that the Albanese government, flush with 53 per cent women, is backing them in. We are implementing the *Respect@Work* recommendations; making gender pay equity an explicit consideration of the Fair Work Commission; paying super on payday; and reforming the bargaining system so women can negotiate as a bloc. We've introduced 10 days of paid domestic violence leave. We've stamped out pay secrecy.

We are dialling down the casualisation that has robbed women of financial security. Financial security provides options. It's the difference between staying or leaving, building up or just getting by.

With cheaper childcare and the biggest boost to paid parental leave on 1 July, we want to see those gendered stereotypes that box in women as homemakers and men as breadwinners relegated to history. The Albanese government is lining the streets, clearing the barriers and cheering Australia's women on.

Flinders Electorate: Infrastructure

Ms McKENZIE (Flinders) (13:51): Today I rise to share some commitments for Flinders from an excellent press release dated 31 July 2018, because I think they might have been forgotten. It reads: 'Labor will deliver Frankston to Baxter rail upgrade'. I can't read it all, because the then shadow minister for infrastructure's excitement for this project was, at the time, effusive, and today time is short, but here goes:

A Shorten Labor Government will move quickly to deliver the much-needed Frankston to Baxter Rail Upgrade ...

Federal Labor is an advocate of the electrification and duplication of the Stony Point Line to Baxter to improve train services for commuters across Dunkley and on the Mornington Peninsula.

In 2016, Federal Labor committed funding for a business case to ensure the project could proceed as soon as possible upon the election of a Federal Labor Government.

Currently thousands of Dunkley and Peninsula residents drive and park at Frankston, Kananook or Seaford stations because the Metro line service ends at Frankston.

Nothing has changed, mind you. It goes on:

A Federal Labor Government will electrify and duplicate the track to Baxter, giving commuters better access to high quality public transport and park-and-ride options

The project will reduce travelling times, increase capacity and above all, get commuters home earlier so they can spend more time with their families.

I ask the Prime Minister, who was the shadow minister for infrastructure at the time and under whose name this press release was issued: what happened to this promise? The \$225 million for the Baxter rail electrification now sits before his \$120 billion infrastructure razor gang.

Climate Change

Ms MILLER-FROST (Boothby) (13:52): This morning I attended the Parliamentary Friends of Climate Action's briefing on international climate policy, where we heard from US ambassador Caroline Kennedy, EU ambassador Gabriele Visentin, German ambassador Dr Markus Ederer, and British high commissioner Vicki Treadell. The Minister for Climate Change and Energy, Chris Bowen, thanked the German ambassador for the 50-million-euro investment for the German-Australian Hydrogen Innovation and Technology Incubator, which will have green hydrogen projects in Australia, including in Whyalla in my home state.

The panel then told us that climate science and the urgent need for action to prevent catastrophic climate change largely enjoys bipartisan support internationally, with parties instead competing on strategies to achieve climate action and industry exceeding the targets set it. We heard that our 43 per cent by 2030 has put us back at the table internationally, and, for instance, the Australia-EU Free Trade Agreement was previously blocked by the previous government's recalcitrant stance on climate action.

Mr Tehan interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Claydon): Member for Wannan, it's highly disorderly to be interjecting when you're not even in your seat.

Ms MILLER-FROST: And we heard that the illegal invasion of Ukraine has driven home that energy security is a geopolitical issue.

People in Boothby often raise climate action with me, and I'm pleased to be able to tell them that this government is taking action and working with our international partners to limit climate change. But, with 2030 only 79 months away, we have no time to lose. (*Time expired*)

Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme

Mr LLEW O'BRIEN (Wide Bay) (13:54): There aren't too many businesses in regional Australia that are as relied upon and as trusted as our local pharmacies. They are part of our community, and we trust them with our most sensitive personal information. They really do hold a special place. They provide services to their community motivated by a commitment to its wellbeing. Often those much-needed services are provided at a financial loss. Operating a pharmacy is complex and as unique as the needs of the community it keeps healthy. The Albanese government's announcement to cut the income of local pharmacies is not only an attack on our community pharmacies; it's an attack on our regional communities.

My local Tin Can Bay pharmacist told me how the \$3.5 billion funding cut to pharmacies undermines his viability and that he will likely not be able to continue the Webster-pak service in its current form, meaning this will ultimately cost his customers more. Others have warned of reduced operating hours on evenings and on weekends, forcing patients to travel long distances to another chemist. But worst of all is that many will likely shut their doors permanently. The Albanese government's pharmacy cuts will come at a great cost to our nation's health.

Live Animal Exports

Mr ZAPPIA (Makin) (13:56): Yesterday this House delivered on another Albanese Labor government election commitment and passed legislation strengthening the role of the Inspector-General of Live Animal Exports. Importantly, under the legislation the office of inspector-general will clearly be independent. It will have new powers and functions to monitor, investigate and report on animal welfare and live animal exports. Live export cruelty has been a matter of extensive public outcry for decades, with numerous inquiries and media reports exposing cases of horrific animal cruelty. Animal cruelty is not confined to live exports and has been found in horse and greyhound racing; in puppy, pig and poultry farms; and even in animal shelters. Those areas are primarily the responsibility of state and local governments, but they do need to be addressed.

Consistent with their approach of saying no to everything, the coalition did not support this legislation, which, importantly, ensures compliance with reasonable standards by providing greater transparency and accountability for live exports. The Albanese government is progressively and responsibly delivering on better animal welfare outcomes. The enhanced role of the inspector-general is a welcome step in responding to community expectations of ending unacceptable animal cruelty in the live export sector.

Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme

Mr McCORMACK (Riverina) (13:57): Promises are important and, if you make one, you should keep it. Unfortunately with the government, they don't keep their promises. Take this letter from the Minister for Health and Aged Care to Trent Twomey, President of the Pharmacy Guild, where he states:

Labor also looks forward to working with the Guild to explore further opportunities to lower drug prices in a budget neutral way that do not adversely affect the viability of community pharmacies.

Labor also looks forward to working with the Guild to ensure the implementation of the current community pharmacy agreement includes reforms that do not negatively impact on either the viability of community pharmacies or patient's access to community pharmacy services.

Well, we know that the double dispensing is going to affect the viability of pharmacies. Twelve hundred of the 4,000 pharmacies across Australia are in regional areas, and they're worried. We saw the anger yesterday. Three hundred and twenty-four country towns do not have a doctor, and the pharmacy is the only health professional. We need at all times to protect those pharmacies to make sure that they can continue to operate as small businesses and, more importantly, to provide the health advice and all the things that they do. This is going to kill many pharmacies, and it is just wrong. This is no mystery fiction whatsoever; the pharmacists know the Butler did it!

The SPEAKER: Order! Members are to be referred to by their correct titles.

Moreton Electorate: Africa Day Festival

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (13:59): Last Saturday I was lucky to join President Beny Bol of the Queensland African Communities Council for their annual Africa Day Festival in Acacia Ridge. This festival in my electorate provides a window into the rich tapestry of African culture. Despite there being 54 different African nations, the power of unity was very much on display. The energy and enthusiasm displayed by the participants and performers on the day was quite contagious. I'm reminded every day in Moreton that differences in a multicultural society should be cherished and celebrated.

One of the highlights of the day was the African nations parade, where people marched and danced to music from their country before coming together as one whole African community. The stalls around the festival offered a great selection of African foods, including Measante Meaghan's African infused chutneys—yet another item to add to my list of food weaknesses! I enjoyed walking around the festival and meeting the stallholders, seeing the incredible clothing, jewellery and decorations that different African nations have to offer.

I was very thankful for the opportunity to speak about the contributions different African communities have made in their area and right across the country. I particularly thank Benny Bol for publicly declaring that the Queensland African Communities Council have offered their steadfast support for the First Nations voice referendum. There is a certain symmetry in our newest Australians supporting our oldest Australians. It's a shame about some of the dinosaurs that settled here in between, but that's democracy for you.

The Africa Day Festival is always a great family day out and the Queensland African Communities Council should be very proud of themselves for putting on this great event. I look forward to celebrating with them again next year. *(Time expired)*

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

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Budget

Mr DUTTON (Dickson—Leader of the Opposition) (14:01): My question is to the Prime Minister. Prime Minister, sadly for Australian families when it comes to economic management Labor doesn't have a clue. The government has delivered two budgets and families are worse off as a result of your decisions. Labor is driving up prices and killing the economy. When will the Prime Minister admit he has got it wrong?

Opposition members interjecting—

Ms Mascarenhas interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! Members on my right! The member for Swan is warned. It's not the time to interject while questions are being presented. I give the call to the Prime Minister.

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Prime Minister) (14:01): Thank you for that word salad from the Leader of the Opposition! The fact is that what we have done is produce a responsible budget. We did that now more than three weeks ago. And that budget, of course, took pressure off cost of living through the measures that we had—our \$3 billion plan for energy, our plan for cheaper medicines, our cheaper childcare plan that comes in one month from today. All of the policies that we put forward in our budget, of course, were fully costed. I'm asked about government and policy processes and how they impact people. A couple of days after the Treasurer handed down the budget—I note he might have got one question about the budget in the three weeks since from those opposite.

Mr Rick Wilson interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for O'Connor!

Mr ALBANESE: Three weeks ago, the opposition leader gave his budget reply. A centrepiece of his budget reply was a policy about JobSeeker, but he failed to release any costings on the night, on 11 May. On 15 May, he said this: 'Well, probably about half of what Labor is proposing to their own measure was his costing'—probably about half! Then, on 16 May, the *Australian* reported:

In recent days, the Coalition has briefed-out two competing costings for its policy—\$700m and "in the order of" \$2.3bn.

Dr Chalmers interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Treasurer will cease interjecting.

Mr ALBANESE: Close! Close! The next day, the *Australian* reported:

Opposition Leader Peter Dutton has conceded he doesn't know the cost of his marquee budget-reply proposal

And, then, earlier that day, he went on Sky to clean it up and he said this:

No, I mean the difference in the costings is around the parameters and the assumptions, and the Parliamentary Budget Office will finalise that work ... that'll be released in due course

Twenty-one days later, no-one is still the wiser. Imagine if a Labor Leader of the Opposition had released a centrepiece of a budget reply three weeks later and said: 'Well, it will all appear in due course, and it might be hundreds of millions. It might be billions. We don't know what it is. We don't know what it'll cost. We don't know what the impact will be!' Fair dinkum, you're just not up to it. *(Time expired)*

Early Childhood Education

Ms MASCARENHAS (Swan) (14:05): My question is to the Minister for Early Childhood Education. One month from today, the Albanese Labor government's changes to make early learning more affordable will come

into effect. How will the changes benefit the Australian economy by unlocking the full potential of women's workforce participation?

Dr ALY (Cowan—Minister for Early Childhood Education and Minister for Youth) (14:05): I thank the member for Swan for her excellent question—indeed, a timely reminder that in just 30 days the Albanese Labor government's landmark reforms to early learning will come into effect, benefiting over 1.2 million families right across Australia, including 6,900 families in the member for Swan's electorate, 7,700 families in the electorate of Hume, 5,800 families in the electorate of Corangamite, 7½ thousand families in the electorate of Longman, 5,200 families in the electorate of Goldstein and 265,000 families in rural and regional Australia. It is delivering on our commitment to real relief to household budgets of families, who we know are struggling with the cost of living, while also improving economic security for women.

For the average family on about \$120,000 a year with one child in care for three days a week, those changes will cut costs by \$1,700 a year. That's money that makes a real difference to families right now. These reforms pay economic dividends right now, but they also build our country's future. They lay the foundations for a better future, giving children the very best start in life and giving them the foundational skills they need to continue on and be successful in learning and be successful in work.

We also know that early childhood education and care benefits Australian women, who are often the primary carers, because too often the cost of early learning means that women's choices to participate in the workforce or to take on study are limited. And that means that the economic benefits of women's participation can't be fully realised. Our reforms are going to unlock that full potential, boosting productivity by giving women and families more choice.

I know firsthand how important early childhood education was in my life, and the choices it afforded me—to go back to study, to go back to work, to give my sons a different life. I want all women in Australia to have that choice. According to Danielle Wood from the Grattan Institute, making early childhood education more affordable is 'a rare win-win-win policy'. It's a win for families, it's a win for children and it's a win for women.

Ms Bell interjecting—

Dr ALY: It's also a win for the economy and it's a win for the future of our country.

The SPEAKER: If the member for Moncrieff continues to interject, she will be warned.

Australian Defence Force

Mr HASTIE (Canning) (14:08): My question is to the Prime Minister. In November, in an interview with the *Australian* newspaper, the Prime Minister said he would spend whatever was necessary to produce the defence force that could defend Australia. But this week the Department of Defence confirmed in budget estimates that the government has cut \$1.5 billion from the Australian Defence Force. Australia is in the most challenging strategic environment since the Second World War. Why is the Prime Minister breaking promises and making it harder for the ADF to keep our country safe?

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Prime Minister) (14:09): [inaudible] be keen to have the opportunity to add to this answer. The fact is that what we have done is produce a defence strategic review aimed at what assets Australia needs to defend ourselves, where they should be placed, and actually delivering it. You can't defend your country with a press release, and what we saw from those opposite is a press release. Indeed, the member himself, who served as the Assistant Minister for Defence under the Leader of the Opposition—the new 'dream team' here, the new 1 and 2 dream team—said:

As the assistant defence minister, I saw a lot of waste. And there are always savings to be made. So we're not arguing that there should be no cuts. We just want to make sure that these are done in a considered way if they are done and we also want certainty. ... funding AUKUS will require sacrifices ...

That's what the former assistant minister for defence said, answering his own question—this is questions and answers from the one side today!

The SPEAKER: The member for Canning on a point of order?

Mr Hastie: It goes to relevance. Bring him back to the question, which is: why is he breaking promises and making it harder for the Australian Defence Force to do its job?

The SPEAKER: The Prime Minister has a preamble. I'm listening carefully to make sure he's referring to the estimates and other parts of the question, and I give him the call.

Mr ALBANESE: On 31 October 2022 the member said this: 'Yes, we squandered a lot of opportunity through the leadership changes.' He went on to say: 'It created ministerial churn, which led to inertia institutionally, and I think it meant we delayed a lot of those decisions. It's been a criticism, and I think a valid one.' Hear, hear! But of course it was consistent with his leader, because he, the former defence minister, said, on 15 August last year: 'I

wish that we could have acquired more capability within defence earlier.' If only he was in a position! If only he was in a position to do something—as the defence minister—to acquire more capability! Fair dinkum.

But the Nats haven't missed out, either, Mr Speaker, you'll be pleased to know. The Leader of the National Party said this, on 13 March: 'I think Defence has to put their hand up and acknowledge that much of their procurement over many decades, across many different governments, has been ordinary at best'—ordinary at best! You've got to ask the question of why some of these people still have jobs, to be candid; indeed you do.

Honourable members interjecting—

Mr Conroy interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Pacific Island Affairs will cease being disorderly.

National Anti-Corruption Commission

Dr ANANDA-RAJAH (Higgins) (14:13): My question is to the Attorney-General. How has the Albanese Labor government delivered on its key commitment to establish a National Anti-Corruption Commission after almost a decade of inaction?

Mr DREYFUS (Isaacs—Attorney-General and Cabinet Secretary) (14:13): I thank the member for Higgins for her question. It's been a busy first year in government. Ahead of the last election, the Albanese Labor government pledged that if the Australian people gave us the honour of governing this nation we would repay their trust by returning integrity, honesty and accountability to government. Labor told Australians that if we were elected we would legislate a National Anti-Corruption Commission in 2022, and we did. We said we would establish the inaugural leadership team through a merit based selection process, and we did. We said we would have the commission operational by mid-2023, and we will. I'm very pleased to advise the House that the National Anti-Corruption Commission will commence operation on 1 July this year. We said we would deliver a watchdog with teeth and without delay, and that is just what we have done.

Those opposite also promised to deliver a National Anti-Corruption Commission. They promised at the last election. Indeed, they promised at the election before that. The Australian people waited for over three years, but those opposite never even introduced a bill to parliament for it. They were never serious about it.

This government is serious about tackling corruption. We are committed to cleaning up the mess left by those opposite. We have honoured our commitment to legislate a powerful, transparent and independent National Anti-Corruption Commission. This is yet another example of the Albanese Labor government delivering for the Australian people in our first 12 months in office.

Interest Rates

Mr GEE (Calare) (14:15): My question is to the Treasurer. Today I spoke with Scott Goodkin, who is from Mudgee and, with his wife, Barbara, runs a small business called Mudgee Music. It is a music shop. Scott also teaches bass guitar along with three other music teachers. Scott told me that, if interest rates keep rising, Mudgee Music and other small businesses face a very bleak future. What is the government doing to bring interest rate relief to home and business owners like Scott and Barbara?

Mr Wallace interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order, Member for Fisher! I have been pretty clear all week about interjecting before minister's speak.

Dr CHALMERS (Rankin—Treasurer) (14:16): I thank the member for Calare for his question and for his representation of small businesses in his local community. I think everybody in this place understands that one of the big pressures on small business and on mortgagees more broadly is the fact that, since last year, interest rates have been going up and people have had to find more in their monthly household or small-business budget to cover higher interest rates. I think that is self-evident and well understood.

What we have tried to do in the budget—and I am confident that we have done in it the budget that we handed towards the beginning of last month—is what we can to address some of the issues in the economy which are pushing up inflation. We don't pre-empt or second-guess the decisions taken independently by the Reserve Bank and its board, but we do work out where government can make a meaningful difference when it comes to inflation.

Inflation was the primary influence on the May 2023 budget in at least three ways. First of all, we're providing responsible cost-of-living relief where we can without adding to these inflationary pressures. The Reserve Bank governor said yesterday that he believes, from his point of view, that the budget is not adding to inflation and that, if anything, it's taking the pressure off inflation. He said yesterday in his testimony that there is nothing in the budget which has made him revisit his thinking about interest rates into the future.

Secondly, we know that we need to deal with issues on the supply side of the economy. That's why we have big investments in energy, technology, people and skills and in trying to repair busted supply chains that are pushing up prices and interest rates as well.

The third thing we did is show spending restraint in the budget to get the budget in much better nick and to make sure the budget is not adding to inflationary pressures and also to rebuild some of the buffers in the budget. That's why we are forecasting a surplus this year. That's why we've banked such a big proportion of the upward revision in revenue.

So we do understand. My message to the small businesses and mortgagees in your part of the country, a wonderful part of the country, is that we do understand the pressures that they're under. The Reserve Bank takes its decisions independently. We take responsibility for what we can influence. Whether it's cost-of-living relief, spending restraint in the budget or dealing with the supply-side issues in the economy, we take those responsibilities seriously and we are acting on them.

Wages

Ms VAMVAKINO (Calwell) (14:18): My question is to the Treasurer. After a decade of wage stagnation, why is getting wages going again central to the Albanese government's economic plan?

Dr CHALMERS (Rankin—Treasurer) (14:19): I thank the member for her question and also for the experience and dedication that she brings to this place. We said we would get wages moving again in responsible ways, and we are. Wages are growing faster and more people are getting wage rises since the Albanese government came to office.

Mr Sukkar interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order, Member for Deakin! You will be warned shortly.

Dr CHALMERS: Wages grew by 3.7 per cent over the year to the March quarter. That's the fastest growth in over a decade. And 60 per cent of jobs recorded a higher wage rise than the year before. That's the highest proportion on record and around double the pre-pandemic average. We are pleased that wages are moving again and more Australians are seeing the benefits of higher wages, but we do know that many Australians are doing it tough. We need to see inflation moderate to secure that real wages growth we want to see in our economy. That's why our budget and our plan is all about taking the pressure off inflation, and the Reserve Bank governor said yesterday that he believes that it will.

But let's be really clear: we don't have an inflation challenge in our economy because people on the lowest incomes are being paid too much. This side of the House understands that strong and sustainable wages growth is part of the solution to the cost-of-living pressures felt by many Australians and not part of the problem, as those opposite want to pretend. As the Reserve Bank governor said yesterday, nominal wage growth at the moment isn't a problem and nominal wage growth has not been the source of inflation; I want to make that clear. The Treasury secretary made similar comments earlier in the week. He said that there are no signs of a wage-price spiral developing.

Tomorrow the Fair Work Commission will hand down its decision on minimum and award wages, and we will respect whatever decision the independent umpire makes, but the Albanese government will always do what we can to support the wages of workers, particularly the lowest paid workers in our economy. That's why we've supported wage rises for minimum and award wage workers. We've funded pay rises for aged-care workers in the budget, we changed the law to support secure jobs and better pay, we're making it easier for parents to return to work when they want to and we're investing in industries that create secure, well-paid jobs into the future.

Getting wages moving again is a deliberate design feature of the Albanese Labor government. We are proud of the progress that we've made, but we know that we need to do much more to get the real wages growth that people need and deserve in the economy. The contrast couldn't be clearer. Those opposite want lower wages, they want more expensive medicines and they voted for higher energy prices to make the cost-of-living challenge in our economy even worse.

Ministerial Standards

Ms LEY (Farrer—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:21): My question is to the Prime Minister. Through the budget process, this Labor government awarded a \$23 million cyber wardens grant without tender, which will benefit the Labor aligned company 89 Degrees East. A spokesperson for the minister for health, quoted in the media, confirmed the measure had been brought before the Expenditure Review Committee of cabinet. Did any ministers declare a conflict of interest at the meeting of the Expenditure Review Committee when this grant was approved?

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! The groans are not parliamentary.

Mr Pasin interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Barker is warned. The Prime Minister has the call.

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Prime Minister) (14:22): I'm not sure whether the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has ever been on the ERC, but if she had ever been on an ERC she would know that the answer to that question is obviously that the ERC doesn't consider those levels of detail. It is just never dealt with at a meeting of the Expenditure Review Committee. It's not what we do when we're putting together a budget. It's not what the former government did and it's not what this government did.

Mr Violi interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Casey is warned.

Mr ALBANESE: The grant that the member referred to was a grant to COSBOA, and it's a matter for them which contractors they engage to administer the program.

Artificial Intelligence

Mr HILL (Bruce) (14:23): My question is to the Minister for Industry and Science. What is the Albanese Labor government doing to ensure that the growth of artificial intelligence technologies in Australia is responsible and safe?

Mr HUSIC (Chifley—Minister for Industry and Science) (14:24): I thank the member for Bruce for the question and also for his engagement on this issue. In fact, there are a number of parliamentarians who have thought deeply about this matter. I want to congratulate the member for Higgins and also the member for Curtin, who has raised these measures. It is something that the community is thinking about, and the Albanese government is determined to support the uptake of technologies in a way that is fair and inclusive and that reflects community interest.

Fairness and inclusivity are core values for our government. These values have informed all technology related policy in my portfolio and they have guided our work, for example, to grow the tech workforce in Australia. I am pleased to say that this week we announced that we have reached 935,000 jobs, up eight per cent since last year, and we are well on our way to reaching our tech jobs target of 1.2 million jobs by 2030. We want to maximise the benefit of technology in ways that benefit us while also having a clear focus on curbing risk.

It has been estimated that AI could add about \$1 trillion to \$4 trillion to our economy over the next 15 years. But recent AI models are being adopted at speed and scale and there is concern in the community about the pace at which the technology is developing. Our government respects this concern. That is why we are acting. In February, the Albanese government commissioned the National Science and Technology Council to provide a rapid report on the development of generative AI. The report provided a consensus position from our science and research community on immediate trends in AI.

Today we have announced the next step in making sure we have modern laws to manage modern technology, which is why the Albanese government released a discussion paper and the NSTC paper to help guide that work. Our discussion paper, *Safe and Responsible AI in Australia*, looks at existing regulatory and governance mechanisms in our country. It sets out actions being taken in other parts of the world. It considers whether additional risk based rules are needed. It sets the stricter safety rules for high-risk uses of AI. It is clear on the kind of transparency and monitoring required for AI being able to be used to make decisions about people's lives. The discussion paper is backed by an immediate investment in industry adopting AI in responsible ways.

Today's discussion paper brings together several Albanese government values: being a government that acts on science and is led by science, drawing on our National Science and Technology Council expertise, working together across portfolios—ministers Burke, Dreyfus, Claire, Rowland, Gallagher are all looking at these issues deeply—integrating national wellbeing and economic prosperity. Again, we want modern laws to manage modern technology.

Minister For Health And Aged Care

Ms LEY (Farrer—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:27): My question is to the Minister for Health and Ageing. I refer to media comments from the minister's office last night claiming that the minister had nothing to declare when ERC awarded the \$23 million Cyber Wardens grant. At Senate estimates today it was confirmed the Prime Minister put in place a specific conflict-of-interest protocol for the minister on matters relating to 89 Degrees East. Given the minister is under this prime ministerial direction, why did he not recuse himself from the decision to award this grant which benefits 89 Degrees East?

Mr BUTLER (Hindmarsh—Minister for Health and Aged Care and Deputy Leader of the House) (14:27): I welcome this question because I and the rest of my ministerial colleagues, I can tell you, take the Prime Minister's mandatory ministerial code of conduct very, very seriously. After my appointment as the Minister for Health and

Ageing, I made all of the appropriate declarations to the Prime Minister that are required by the code. Out of an abundance of caution, that included my wife's engagement with 89 Degrees East in spite of the fact that her contract for services with that company had concluded in late 2021 in anticipation of the birth of our child. But given the possibility that she might enter a new contract for services at some point in the future, which she did, ultimately, in February of this year, arrangements are in place to manage any potential conflict, consistent with long-standing practice for ministers of both sides of politics and their spouses.

The SPEAKER: The minister will pause. I will hear from the deputy leader of the opposition.

Ms Ley: I rise on a point of order on relevance. It refers to the minister's answer to the question why did he not recuse himself from a ERC decision that his own spokesperson—

The SPEAKER: Order! I will hear from the Leader of the House.

Mr Burke: On relevance, the minister is being clearly relevant to the question that was put before him. I get that the deputy leader is familiar with the concept of what it does look like when someone breaches the ministerial code.

Government members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! Ministers on my right will cease interjecting immediately. Manager of opposition business.

Mr Fletcher: That is a completely inappropriate comment from the Leader of the House, as he knows well, and he should withdraw it.

The SPEAKER: To assist the House, if the Manager of Opposition Business finds that term offensive, I will ask the—

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: He was making a statement, but if there is offence taken, my process is to—

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! To assist the House, I couldn't hear the full comment. But if there is an offensive comment made, I am just going to ask the Leader of the House—

Mr Burke: If I am asked to, on the basis of assisting the House, I withdraw.

The SPEAKER: Thank you. Back to the point of order from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I am listening carefully to his answer. He is going step by step in terms of the process, in terms of what actions have been taken. He is being entirely relevant. I will ask him to continue, and I will listen carefully to make sure he is.

Mr BUTLER: I can confirm that at no time has any matter been before me for a decision about that company. Were that to happen, I would manage that in accordance with longstanding arrangements followed by both sides of politics about potential conflicts between ministers and their spouses.

Infrastructure

Ms DOYLE (Aston) (14:31): My question is to the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government. How is the Albanese Labor government reversing previous approaches and delivering on its commitment to make Australia's cities and suburbs, including in my electorate of Aston, even better places to live, work and raise a family?

Mr Albanese interjecting—

Mr Dutton interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition and the Prime Minister can pause their conversation for a moment.

Mr Dutton interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition, I haven't called the minister yet. I am trying to give the call to the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, who has just been asked a question in the House. She has the call.

Ms CATHERINE KING (Ballarat—Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government) (14:32): Can I thank the member Aston for her question. She knows what it is like to grow up, to raise a family, and to work and live within our great suburbs across this country. Just over a year ago, the Australian people elected the Albanese Labor government to restore a national vision for our cities and our suburbs, and we are getting on with the work of doing just that.

Our government knows just how critical our cities are, driving national productivity, contributing to our cultural identity and housing two in every three Australians. We want every city and every suburb to be an excellent place

to live, with equitable access to the jobs, housing, services and infrastructure that every Australian deserves. That is why our recent budget delivered significant investment in our cities and suburbs. We are producing a national urban policy framework which will once again put the Commonwealth at the heart of and into the business of shaping our great cities and suburbs. The work will be guided by experts in design, planning, sustainability, property and housing via the new Urban Policy Forum headed up by the fabulous Professor Barbara Norman. It will work hand in hand with state, territory and local governments to deliver a truly national vision. We are reconvening the planning ministers, alongside my ministerial colleagues from around the country, to work on issues around housing supply and affordability, climate change, communications and urban environments.

We're delivering real investments in our cities, with a new community infrastructure grants program for our cities, suburbs and periurban communities, the Thriving Suburbs Program. For the first time in recent memory, every single part of Australia has a transparent, open and merits based program to apply for community infrastructure that they need. We are establishing a new Precincts and Partnerships Program to invest in city-shaping precincts which deliver significant benefits to our cities. We are looking to fund best-practice projects from innovative industrial precincts supporting new ways of working to mixed-use communities while delivering the housing, cultural and commercial opportunities for our cities' needs. These partnerships will be led by communities because we know that nobody knows our cities and suburbs better than the people who call them home. We will make these investments through a transparent process with publicly available guidelines so communities aren't pitted against each other for funding decisions made behind closed doors. Our cities are amongst the best in the world, but we know they can be even better. Those opposite left a policy vacuum when it came to the cities agenda and the cities space, with their Cities Reference Group last meeting in 2019.

Mr Fletcher interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Manager of Opposition Business will cease interjecting.

Ms CATHERINE KING: Instead, we are getting on with the process of making sure we've got the policy settings right to invest in our cities and to invest in our thriving suburbs because we know that they matter to the people of Australia.

Minister For Communications

Mr COLEMAN (Banks) (14:35): My question is to the Minister for Communications. According to a recent analysis, the member of parliament who has accepted the largest amount of tickets and hospitality from the gambling industry is the minister. The total number of ticket and hospitality packages from the gambling industry accepted by the minister is 10. Given her role in regulating gambling advertising, does the minister think this is appropriate?

Ms ROWLAND (Greenway—Minister for Communications) (14:35): I thank the member for his question. The reason why the member knows that information is that I have declared it all, as required by the parliament, as every member of parliament is required to do. The reason why it is declared is that I follow those rules.

I made it very clear some time ago in a public forum where the honourable member was also present that, although I did comply with all the rules, I understood there was community concern around this issue, and I made a conscious decision that I would no longer accept any donations from gambling companies nor hospitality from gambling companies. If the honourable member were asked the same thing—as I do recall, he was unable to answer that question. The member may wish to reflect on his own behaviour in this regard.

The reality is this: the policy that this government and I, as minister, administer—along with a number of other ministers, including the Minister for Social Services—when it comes to this area is based on the solid principle of harm minimisation. This government will be judged on its delivery. The member may wish to reflect on the fact that, during their whole time, their nearly 10 years in office, they failed to make a dent in this area. They proceeded at a glacial pace when it came to the national consumer protection program, which was designed for this very purpose. They failed when it came to administering their own reports that they received about banning credit cards for online gaming. They failed to act and they failed to even release the Stevens review when it came to classification for simulated gambling in children's games.

If the minister wishes to come here and ask any member of this parliament about their commitment to harm minimisation or in any respect—sorry, shadow minister. Sorry about that. If anyone wishes to come here and reflect on any member of this side, the reason that these matters are known is that (a) they were declared, and (b) they should be well aware that this government takes its responsibilities very seriously when it comes to that adherence. This is a government that will be judged on its record when it comes to harm minimisation. Those opposite failed to deliver in 10 years.

Cybersecurity

Dr MULINO (Fraser) (14:38): My question is to the Minister for Cyber Security. How is the Albanese Labor government delivering increased cybersecurity and resilience to fix the mess left by the previous government?

Ms O'NEIL (Hotham—Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Cyber Security) (14:38): I thank the fantastic member for Fraser for his question and acknowledge his brilliant advocacy for his community. Cybersecurity affects the lives of every single Australian, and it is absolutely critical to our national security. The honourable member is right: it was a great pity for us to arrive in government a year ago to find that Australian cybersecurity was in an absolute mess. We had no policy leadership. We had no real attempt to coordinate the work of cyber being done across government or indeed across the economy. We had no cyber incident response function in the Australian government. We were left with a cybersecurity framework that was five years out of date and a privacy framework there was a decade out of date. None of this is particularly surprising—

Honourable members interjecting—

Ms O'NEIL: I'm getting some interjections; there are a few people who are touchy about this. But none of it is surprising because the truth is that the former government did not even have a cybersecurity minister. What were they expecting? This astounds me because of the scope and scale—

Mr Fletcher interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister will resume her seat. The Manager of Opposition Business will withdraw that comment.

Mr Fletcher: I withdraw.

The SPEAKER: The minister is in continuation.

Ms O'NEIL: The absolutely appalling leadership shown by the former government astounds me because of the scope and scale of this problem. We were told last year by the National Australia Bank that they are subjected to 50 million cyberattacks a month. The Australian Taxation Office is subjected to three million cyberattacks a month. What we know about this problem is that it is likely to get significantly worse over the coming years. We've got changing technology which the Minister for Industry and Science talked about before which will radically change this landscape. We've got a geopolitical situation that's very challenging for our country.

There is a huge amount of phenomenal work occurring now within the Australian government on this matter. We've set up the hackers task force, a 100-strong force of ASD and AFP officers who are hacking back at the criminals who seek to do us harm. We've taken over leadership of the Counter Ransomware Initiative: a 38-country organisation which is assisting us in tackling this global problem. We have declared 82 systems of national significance. These are the pieces of infrastructure in our economy that are so important that, if they did come under cyberattack, it would constitute a national security incident. We've now set minimum cyber standards for 11 sectors in the Australian economy.

Last week, we kicked off the new cybersecurity National Exercise Program. This is a very important part of our national defence. The truth is that, even if we do everything we can to prevent cyberattacks, we cannot reduce the cybersecurity risks to zero, so what is just as important as a deterrence piece is what we do when we think about recovery. The first cyber exercise kicked off in financial services. For the first time, the government got together the banks, the regulators and the parts of government that would assist if our financial services system came under attack. A business leader who participated in that program texted me on Friday night saying that it was the best government and industry collaboration he has ever worked in. I'm really proud of that. I'm proud of my department and proud of this government, which is doing this important work for the first time for our country.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

Smith, Mr Thomas

The SPEAKER (14:42): I'm pleased to inform the House that present in the gallery today is Mr Tom Smith, the state member for Bundaberg in the Queensland Parliament. A very warm welcome to you.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety

Mr WILKIE (Clark) (14:42): My question is to the Minister for Aged Care. Most recommendations of the aged care royal commission have not been implemented nor have the sector's pleas for more funding been met. As a result, many service providers can't reliably provide high-quality care, facilities are closing and numerous providers are facing difficult choices about whether they even stay in business. Minister, beyond some extra nurses and a pay rise, when will all 148 royal commission recommendations be implemented?

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for the NDIS will cease interjecting.

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! There was far too much noise at the conclusion of that question. I give the call to the Minister for Aged Care and Minister for Sport.

Ms WELLS (Lilley—Minister for Aged Care and Minister for Sport) (14:43): I thank the member for Clark for his question. Like him, the Albanese Labor government has always recognised the steep challenges that face the aged-care industry in this country. We've never shied away from the scale of response required. I would argue that we have acted urgently in the first 12 months to address the scale of the crisis that we have confronted. That is why I travelled to the member's home state of Tasmania earlier this year to listen to the workers, the residents and the facility managers on the ground. I went to eight different facilities across Tasmania to hear their experiences and their ideas about how we address these problems and how we address them urgently. I would argue that we have done so.

A historic \$36 billion funding injection in the budget is something the scale of which has not been seen in this parliament on aged care, and I think that that's important and meritorious. Also, this budget that is only three weeks old directly addressed 44 of the royal commission recommendations. That means that, in our first 12 months in government, of the 148 recommendations, we've now addressed 69, which is almost half. I accept that there's a long way to go, and I've never shied away from the fact that we do have much more to do. But to go from nine out of 148 in 15 months to 69 out of 148 in 12 months expresses our sense of the urgency and the gravity of this problem.

To your point about providers facing difficult choices about staying open or closed, I direct you to Catholic Health's chief executive, Pat Garcia. They run more than 25,000 aged-care beds in this country. That is a huge number. They said that after this budget and the measures that were put in this budget their providers are 'reassessing the once questionable viability of facilities in light of the new numbers' that they saw in the budget. Southern Cross Care Queensland CEO, Jason Eldering, who runs 12 homes in my home state, said that he welcomes the government budget because 'all new investment in aged care is welcome'.

You have already mentioned our \$2.5 billion commitment to 24/7 nurses and to increase care minutes and to our life-changing \$11.3 billion commitment to the pay rise for aged-care workers. These are significant measures. These are unprecedented measures for aged care. They respond directly to the royal commission.

I would also say that I think the member appreciates the need for honesty and nuance in dealing with complex problems in an industry like aged care. To go to the facility closures, there have been closures, as there have always been. That is not because of our staffing requirements. The facts are that there are more beds opening in aged care than there are closing and more facilities closed in the last year of the previous government than have closed in the first year of our government. The facilities closing in the last year of the former government were not closing because they prophetically foresaw the changes that would come. (*Time expired*)

Migration

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (14:46): My question is to the minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs. How is the Albanese Labor government changing citizenship rules to provide a direct pathway to citizenship for New Zealand citizens and to support long-term residents who have been building their lives in the Australian community?

Mr GILES (Scullin—Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs) (14:46): I thank the member for Moreton for the question, and I recognise his longstanding advocacy on this issue for those in his community but also right around the country. This is basically an issue of fundamental fairness, an expression of our values, values we share with our friends over the ditch in New Zealand. Ours is a country that has been built by citizenship, which is that common bond that unites all of us—those of us who became Australians by birth and those who became Australian by choice. This lies at the heart of a unified, cohesive and inclusive nation.

Back in 2001, changes made by the Howard government made it much more difficult for New Zealanders in Australia to attain citizenship. This had the long-term impact of creating a generation of permanently temporary migrants in our country. We recognise that there are many New Zealanders here on special category visas who've been stuck without a clear pathway to citizenship despite their contribution, raising their families here, working, paying taxes, contributing in voluntary capacities and building lives in Australia. Through my entire time in parliament, I have been engaging with this community and listening to their stories, some of which are very challenging, particularly for some of the children in these families. I want to acknowledge all of those who have been telling these stories and sharing them with me and my colleagues—in particular, the Treasurer and the Minister

for Home Affairs, who have been relentless advocates for their cause. I also want to recognise Oz Kiwi, the organisation that brought together this story.

We have listened and, under Prime Minister Albanese, we have acted. From 1 July, New Zealand citizens living in Australia will now have a direct pathway to Australian citizenship. All special category visa holders will be able to apply directly for citizenship as long as they meet the residency and other requirements. These are changes that reflect the closeness of our relationship. It's a fair change and, importantly, it reflects the circumstance of Australians living in New Zealand. It is important to note that, as a result of this change, eligible applicants will not be considered Australian residents as defined under the Social Security Act, but this will enhance people's economic and social integration with communities and provide additional opportunities, particularly for young people thinking about further study and more involvement in the ADF and the Australian Public Service.

We are prepared for these changes next month because we have done so much work dealing with the citizenship backlog. As I have informed the House previously, we have slashed processing times. There is more to be done in this respect, but the caseload of citizenship applications is now at its lowest level for more than six years. This will facilitate us making more real— (*Time expired*)

Road Safety

Mr LLEW O'BRIEN (Wide Bay) (14:49): My question is to the minister for infrastructure and transport. This year alone my community of Wide Bay has seen 20 people killed on our roads, with five on the Bruce Highway. The previous coalition government committed to funding the life-saving Tiaro Bypass on the Bruce Highway. Can the minister confirm whether this project is subject to her infrastructure review and, if it is: why hasn't it been quarantined from the review as has been done with the Brisbane Olympics?

Ms CATHERINE KING (Ballarat—Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government) (14:50): I thank the member for the opportunity to talk about the importance of the infrastructure investment pipeline, the integrity of that pipeline and the review that we are undertaking. The first thing I want to say is that every single dollar of the \$120 billion 10-year pipeline remains in the budget. We are committed to keeping that \$120 billion pipeline. But we have a problem when it comes to the previous government. When you looked at that infrastructure investment pipeline—when we last left office there were about 140 projects in the pipeline. Today there are 800 projects in the pipeline, with a large number of them added in the 2016 and 2019 election campaigns. There are 800 projects. It's incredibly important that we actually look to see: can we deliver every single one of those? The problem I am faced with, which I was left by the previous government—the mess that you left—is that you were more interested in the media announcement, you were more interested in the press release, you were more interested in standing there in your communities saying you were going to deliver than actually delivering. To actually fund every one of those 800 projects would require billions and billions and billions more dollars. What we are trying to do is make sure that that \$120 billion pipeline has projects that can be delivered. They are important projects, and I look forward to engaging with members as that review concludes.

Mr Joyce interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Riverina.

An opposition member: It's going to cost lives, the Tiaro bypass.

The SPEAKER: The minister for infrastructure has concluded her answer. She doesn't need to continue.

Mr Llew O'Brien interjecting—

Ms Catherine King interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Wide Bay and the minister for infrastructure can continue that discussion after question time. I give the call to the member for Solomon.

Veterans

Mr GOSLING (Solomon) (14:52): My question is to the Minister for Veterans' Affairs. What steps is the Albanese Labor government taking to improve services and supports for veterans in the Northern Territory?

Mr KEOGH (Burt—Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister for Defence Personnel) (14:52): I thank the member for Solomon for this important question and I thank him also for his ongoing advocacy and support of veterans not just in the electorate of Solomon, which he represents, but across the entire Top End. It was my great pleasure to be able to join the member for Solomon on Monday of this week at the opening of the Mates4Mates Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centre, a family and veterans hub put together with a \$5 million contribution from the federal government. This hub will be able to service not just the 7½ thousand veterans across the Darwin region but the 10,000 veterans across the Northern Territory. We're doing this because we have a commitment to making sure that we are best coordinating the services made available to our veterans and their families—

The SPEAKER: The member for Gippsland is now officially warned.

Mr KEOGH: in the places that we see the greatest concentration of those veterans. We're going to see the Mates4Mates Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centre offering supports in transition, in employment, in education and training, in advocacy services, in mental health and physical health. It will also provide a place for people to come together, share a brew, have a barbecue, connections and provide peer support to each other as veterans in the community, and that is critically important. In addition, this hub joins our Veterans' and Families' Hub network, which we have funded to see the hubs learn from each other about what's working and what's not working so that we can take the best of these hubs as we roll them out across the country with the further hubs that we will be establishing in the areas of highest need across Australia, which is an excellent contribution.

But, of course, this hub doesn't just stand on its own. This hub joins a suite of services that are being made available, including our contribution to fund the Scott Palmer Services Centre in Darwin—

Mr Littleproud interjecting—

Mr McCormack interjecting—

Mr Hogan interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Nationals and the members for Riverina and Page are now all warned.

Mr KEOGH: which is a veterans homelessness service which will see them supported there. Of course, I might point out that what we really need as well is for the Liberals, the Nationals and the Greens to support our Housing Australia Future Fund so that we can support even more veterans who are homeless across the country with the support and services that they need.

Meanwhile, we've also been fixing the backlog that we were left with by the other side, which has declined now under our watch by 20 per cent from the peak. We are getting through that backlog. It's continuing to go down. We've been taking action on the recommendations from the Defence and veteran suicide royal commission and, of course, we're working on reforming over a century of legislation for veterans' entitlements.

Can I say also that it was great to sit down for an informal chat with the veterans at Mad Snake Cafe and with the member for Solomon to hear from the front line about their experiences as veterans and about the services they need and how we can continue to deliver a better future for veterans and their families in Australia.

Student Debt

Mr BATES (Brisbane) (14:56): My question is to the Prime Minister. Student debt was indexed today at 7.1 per cent, adding thousands of dollars to the already giant debts from uni fees. Prime Minister, you got to go to university for free, so why did your government do nothing to stop this indexation and even go so far as to block the Greens' bill to free student debt and abolish indexation?

Mr CLARE (Blaxland—Minister for Education) (14:56): I refer you to the answers I gave to the member for Clark last week as well as to the member for North Sydney yesterday, where I directly answered that question. The fact is that there is a cost to getting a university degree, but there is also a value. The average income of somebody with a university degree today is about a hundred grand, and the average income of somebody whose last year of education was year 12 is 70 grand, so that's a \$30,000 difference each and every year. The average amount of HECS debt amongst people who have a HECS debt today is \$24,000.

People's repayments today don't change. It's important to make this point. This is not the way HECS works. It's not like a loan from a bank, where when interest rates go up your repayments go up. Repayments don't go up unless your salary goes up.

Mr Bandt interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Australian Greens will cease interjecting.

Mr CLARE: Another point to make here is this: HECS is an interest-free loan. It's not like a bank, where they lend you money and then they charge you interest and make a profit. The taxpayer doesn't make a profit here. The taxpayer lends a dollar and they get that dollar back in real terms. That's it—no profit. If we make a change here, what this means is that taxpayers, in all of our electorates, have to pay more. If we do what the Greens are suggesting, that's taxpayers paying \$9 billion more.

Mr Bandt interjecting—

Mr CLARE: But, more than that, it means that fewer people go to university, not more—just a lucky few, a privileged few. I want more people to go to university. I said yesterday that there are some parts of the country where 70 per cent of young adults have got a university degree.

Ms Watson-Brown interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Ryan will cease interjecting.

Mr CLARE: There are some places, like Elizabeth in South Australia, where it's seven per cent. I want young people in Elizabeth to have the same shot at going to university as the young people at Elizabeth Bay. I do.

The SPEAKER: The minister will pause. I want to hear from the member for North Sydney on a point of order.

Ms Tink: Thank you, Mr Speaker. It goes to direct relevance. I would suggest to the minister: if you don't have the answer, please feel free to take it on notice and feed back to us later.

The SPEAKER: Resume your seat. Order! The question was about student debt and about who got to go to university and whether people got to go to university for free, so that was an abuse of a point of order, so the member for North Sydney is warned.

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Order! We don't need commentary when I make a ruling for anyone in the House. I'm just going to allow the minister to continue in silence.

Mr CLARE: I want more people from poor backgrounds to go to university. I want more people from the regions to go to university. I want more people from the bush to go to university. I want more Indigenous Australians to go to university. And I have to tell you, if we're going to use taxpayers' money to invest in our universities to help more people to go to university, then I make no apologies in saying I want it to be them.

Commonwealth Procurement

Ms BYRNES (Cunningham) (15:00): My question is to the Minister for Government Services. What are the lessons for the NDIS and the government services portfolio given the evidence before Senate estimates this week on the contracts presided over by the department under former minister Stuart Robert.

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme and Minister for Government Services) (15:00): I thank the member for Cunningham for her question. Senate estimates this week heard some evidence about the allocation and conduct of a particular contract given to company called Salesforce. The background to this contract and the investigation was initially triggered following reports on 1 December last year. Following media reports, my agency heads reviewed contracts. They got Ian Watt to review procurement practices in the previous term and what observations there were to be made. Dr Watt has presented his review. This has been reported to the House.

But, in particular, the new leadership of the NDIA have had cause to review the contract entered into in February 2020 with Salesforce Australia for their CRM, their customer relationship management software. The contract is valued at \$76 million. It was initially intended as a small project, but it kept getting revised upwards and not delivering.

Around the time the contract was entered into, there was a push to use Salesforce in other agencies across government. I'm informed that Microsoft was offering a similar product but for one-third of the cost. Within the agency, the NDIA, it was pushed by senior staff including, specifically, hand-picked appointees of the previous government. The then member for Fadden was the minister at the time.

There were questions asked about the appropriateness of the contract, and the contractor who asked this question and was sacked in 2021, under the previous government. After the change of government, Ernst & Young were brought in to do assurances and advise on the project. The problem is—

Mr Joyce: Careful of that one.

Mr SHORTEN: I'm getting advice that we should be careful. I think you guys should have been a lot more careful when you were in charge. Potential issues include—these are serious matters—the procurement documents, the assessment of alternative products, who was the responsible officer for this project, how did they satisfy themselves that it was value for money. So yet again, there seems to be an association between the missing member for Fadden, dodgy contracts and controversy.

The CEO has confirmed that the contract was initiated when the member for Fadden was minister. I can now advise the parliament it has been referred to a forensic auditor. Staff have been referred to the APSC Commissioner. It was not ruled out going to the National Anti-Corruption Commission. And what we also heard in committees yesterday—and it was a bit ironic listening to some of the earlier questions from the opposition today—is a parliamentary committee chaired by the member for Macquarie has reviewed whether or not the former MP declared his friendship with the consultants Synergy 360. No conflict of interest was ever declared by the then member for Fadden—yet again.

Aboriginal And Torres Strait Islander Voice

Ms PRICE (Durack—Opposition Whip) (15:03): My question is to the Minister for Indigenous Australians. Does the minister agree with the following statement from a member of the government's Voice Referendum Working Group?

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member will resume her seat.

Mr Wood interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for La Trobe is definitely out of order interjecting. I'm trying to hear a question. I've got the member for Petrie and the minister having a conversation, which I can hear from here! I'm going to reset the clock and allow the member for Durack to ask her question in silence.

Ms PRICE: My question is to the Minister for Indigenous Australians. Does the minister agree with the following statement from a member of the government's Voice Referendum Working Group:

The voice will be able to speak to all parts of the government, including the cabinet, ministers, public servants, and independent statutory offices and agencies—such as the Reserve Bank ... the parliament won't be able to stop the voice making those representations. It can't shut the voice up.

Ms BURNEY (Barton—Minister for Indigenous Australians) (15:05): The Referendum Working Group that the member refers to is a group of Indigenous people both from the Torres Strait and from mainland Australia. They are eminent leaders. It includes Ken Wyatt, the previous Minister for Indigenous Affairs in the last government. It includes people like Noel Pearson. It includes people like Megan Davis. It includes people like Pat Turner. These are serious people, and they have guided the government on the way in which we have conducted ourselves in relation to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice for the parliament. There is also an engagement group and a legal expert group.

We have released a set of design principles that clearly answer the question that you have asked. The design principles are about how the Voice will be made up, how it will be chosen and, most importantly, what its role will be. It will be a body that will provide independent advice to the parliament and the executive on issues that affect First Nations people—things like health, things like housing, things like education. They are the issues that are reported on every year in the *Closing the Gap* report. That is what the voice will contain itself to. It will not have a veto power and it will not have a funding mechanism. It will not deal with things like parking tickets. It will not involve itself in Anzac Day, as scaremongers have said.

This is a voice that is about improving the practical outcomes for First Nations people, and it is absolutely about recognising the extraordinary history that everyone in this chamber shares, of 65,000 years of story and culture. The Voice will enhance democracy in this country and it will enhance the way in which this parliament operates.

Albanese Government

Ms THWAITES (Jagajaga) (15:08): My question is to the Prime Minister. After 12 months, how is the Albanese Labor government working to bring people together, bridge divides and build a better future?

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Prime Minister) (15:08): I thank the member for Jagajaga for her question and for her contribution as an outstanding member there in the northern suburbs of Melbourne. One year ago, Australians did vote for change, and from day one we've worked hard to prove worthy of the trust that the Australian people placed in us, delivering on commitments: historic investments in Medicare, fee-free TAFE, cheaper child care, cheaper medicines, energy bill relief, getting wages moving again, acting on climate change, the National Anti-Corruption Commission, rolling out fibre-based NBN. We had an absolute commitment to build for a better future, and it is no accident that the theme of the budget was stronger foundations for a better future. One year in, we've been turning around a decade of denial, neglect and inaction by those opposite.

But what's important isn't just what governments do; it's how they do it. I promised to work more collaboratively, and that is what we have been doing. Matt Comyn from the Commonwealth Bank said:

I've appreciated the way in which they have taken a whole-of-government and broader collaborative approach.

Ross McEwan from NAB said that the government has been 'constructive and collaborative' and said:

The passing through Parliament of climate policy has provided business with clarity and certainty ...

Brad Banducci from Woolworths said that the government has provided 'a steady hand at the wheel' and said:

Reforms to boost workforce participation and health, such as the expanded childcare subsidies, paid parental leave scheme and increases to the Medicare rebate, are important in a tight labour market and will benefit many of our 180,000 hard working team members.

Jennifer Westacott said:

After more than a decade of uncertainty and equivocation employers now have certainty about our emissions targets and how we're going to get there.

Kellie Parker from Rio Tinto said that the government has made 'a very strong start' and said:

The improvement in the relationship between Australia and China has been really pleasing to see.

We as a government have been collaborative. We're working with all state and territory governments, working with local governments, working with businesses, working with unions, working with civil society and working with women's groups—and this is why we put women at the centre of the budget a fortnight ago—because we want to deliver a better future and we want to take Australians with us on that journey of change. On that note, I ask that further questions be placed on the *Notice Paper*.

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Zolotto, Ms Belynda

The SPEAKER (15:11): In the gallery with us today is Belynda Zolotto, who is retiring from the Department of the House of Representatives after 35 years of service. Belynda started in 1987 at Old Parliament House as a word-processing typist grade 1 before moving to this new building, which opened in 1988, to continue her parliamentary service career. Belynda went on to support a wide range of parliamentary committees and most recently joined me, the President and other long-serving parliamentary staff in cutting the cake to mark the 35th anniversary of our new Parliament House. On behalf of the House, I thank Belynda for her support of the parliament for a long period of time and wish her the very best for her well-deserved retirement.

STATEMENTS

Personal Explanation

Mr FLETCHER (Bradfield—Manager of Opposition Business) (15:12): Mr Speaker, I seek to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: Do you claim to have been misrepresented?

Mr FLETCHER: I have been grievously misrepresented.

The SPEAKER: You may proceed.

Mr FLETCHER: Yesterday after question time the Minister for Government Services made several deliberately misleading statements about me in connection to concerns I have raised about answers to questions on notice being overdue. I can inform the House of the following. During the November-December round of Senate estimates last year the minister failed to respond to over 160 questions on notice by the deadline set down by the committee and during the February round of Senate estimates he failed to respond to over 340 questions on notice by the deadline set down by the committee. When asked by opposition senators if in fact these questions were overdue, the chief executive officer of Services Australia answered that all of them were overdue.

The Minister for Government Services concluded his tirade yesterday by declaring that I should stop 'wasting our time' by asking questions of him. This kind of arrogant contempt for entirely legitimate processes of the parliamentary scrutiny of executive government should trouble any Australians concerned about the operation of our democracy.

For the benefit of the minister, I advise him that the next round of answers to questions on notice for Services Australia are due on Friday 14 July 2023. I trust he will focus his attention on answering these questions rather than preparing fictitious and mendacious personal explanations.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS

Report No. 30 of 2022-23

The SPEAKER (15:13): I present the Auditor-General's performance Audit report No. 30 of 2022-23 entitled *Probity management in financial regulators—Australian Prudential Regulation Authority: Australian Prudential Regulation Authority*.

Document made a parliamentary paper.

DOCUMENTS

Presentation

Mr BURKE (Watson—Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, Minister for the Arts and Leader of the House) (15:14): A document is tabled in accordance with the list circulated to honourable members earlier today. Full details of the document will be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

PRIVILEGE

Economics Committee

Dr MULINO (Fraser) (15:14): As chair of the Standing Committee on Economics, I rise to report back to the House on a significant matter that I raised earlier this week. On Tuesday I informed the House of an unauthorised disclosure of the contents of a private meeting with the Reserve Bank governor, Mr Philip Lowe, on 24 May. As I noted on Tuesday, details of the briefing subsequently appeared in two articles in the *Australian Financial Review* on 24 May and 26 May. The committee considered this matter yesterday and agreed that these articles are the result of an unauthorised disclosure in clear contravention of standing order 240(2)(b). In investigating this matter, the committee has concluded that on this occasion the unauthorised disclosure is unlikely to have caused substantial difference to the work of the committee or the House such as to amount to a potential contempt under the Parliamentary Privileges Act. However, the committee does consider that the incident is extremely disappointing and potentially damaging to the future activities of the committee.

Each member of the committee and the secretariat gave an assurance that they had not disclose the contents of the committee's report or proceedings to any person not authorised to receive the information. In light of this, the committee's view is that it would be difficult to determine with any certainty the source of the disclosure. It is highly regrettable that this serious breach of standards has occurred, given that the Economics Committee is an important, policy-focused committee which has benefited greatly from good-faith interactions with regulators, experts and stakeholders from across the financial sector and the broader economy. I stress that those who leak confidential committee deliberations demonstrate a lack of respect for their colleagues and for parliament while undermining public trust in our democracy. I again remind all those involved with parliamentary committee processes of the importance of observing the rules against unauthorised disclosure of proceedings. Such breaches erode public trust and have a clear adverse impact on our work as committee members and as stewards of the parliament's reputation. I thank the House.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Energy

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

Rising energy prices and this government's failure to mitigate their impact on middle Australia.

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

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

Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (15:17): Have you heard the joke about the increase in power prices? I haven't, but it has not stopped the Prime Minister from laughing every single time he is asked a question from the coalition about why middle Australia is struggling with higher power prices. Have you heard the joke about middle Australian families who don't know how to pay the bills? Well, we haven't, but that has not stopped this Prime Minister laughing every single time this issue is raised in this parliament. This is not a joking matter. No matter how much the Labor Party may wish to mock, we have middle Australia right now suffering enormously. Yet we have this callous indifference displayed by the government, despite the fact they went to the election promising the Australian people that nobody would be left behind—nobody other than, of course, middle Australia.

We found out the new CPI figures from the ABS overnight. We found out that the monthly Consumer Price Index rose 6.8 per cent in the year to April 2023—that's compared to 6.3 per cent in March. We know this impact every single household across this country, and energy is a huge driver. This government promised the Australian people a reduction of \$275 off their household power bills, and they have broken that promise. They have broken that promise—a promise they made over 97 occasions ahead of the election, a promise in fact they keep on their website. It's callous indifference to those in middle Australia who are doing it tough, who have seen their power bills go up by hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of dollars. We found out only a week or so ago that those power bills will go up again—25 per cent for households, 29 per cent for small businesses—and we have nothing but hubris from the government—nothing.

Only on Monday, this week, I had the pleasure of joining the Leader of the Opposition together with the wonderful member for Casey on a visit to the Yarra Valley. We went to a company called Yarra Valley Hilltop and met with Laurie, who owns this business. He gets to work every day when it's still dark and he leaves when it's dark, as he looks after his 85 employees. Laurie runs a food manufacturing business, which is a business that supports local farmers, in particular.

In speaking with Laurie, his power bills have gone up, over the last 12 months, by 50 per cent. To put this in context, for the Yarra Valley Hilltop that's an additional \$200,000 every single year.

Government members interjecting—

Mr TED O'BRIEN: Those on the Labor benches might think this is very funny but, I'll tell you what, Laurie is not laughing. The 85 employees are not laughing. They don't find it funny at all, \$200,000 in addition just for their energy bill. Do you know what it's going to be, most likely, this time next year? They've been advised that their energy bills may, in fact, double by this time next year. What does that mean to Laurie? What does that mean to his employees? I can assure you, Laurie does not find it funny.

Not only does Laurie's business suddenly get squeezed—because his costs are going up—but also he's competing against international players whose costs are not going up, because their energy prices aren't. So, of course, he is finding it harder in the marketplace. He makes less profit. To the extent to which those increased costs from energy have to be passed on, do you know who pays for it? It's the everyday household. It's mum and dad as they go to the local IgA, the local food store, and they buy their jam, their bread and their milk. Everything is going up, and Australians know it. Yet this government is patting itself on the back, when it comes to energy.

Only a Labor government congratulates itself for ensuring prices go sky high. Only a Labor government does that. The counterfactual argument being put by the government is that prices could have been worse if they'd kept with their first set of dumb policies in the first six months of government. But they have a new set of dumb policies, and they think these dumb policies are better than their last dumb policies.

Dumb and dumber doesn't sell to the Australian public, because they know the truth. They know the truth because every single time they open up their power bill they see Labor's promise of a \$275 reduction being broken. Family budgets are breaking. There is nothing in this federal budget to help middle Australia on this stuff. Not a thing. Yet Labor will continue to come in here and laugh.

It's one thing to mock and giggle and laugh and carry on in this parliament, as the real Australians are doing it tough, but what makes it even worse is that we have the Minister for Climate Change and Energy, together with the Prime Minister, claiming that his energy policies are driving prices down. He continues to say that Labor's policies are driving prices down. We all know the truth: prices are going up. They are prepared to tell that untruth to the Australian people.

How many times, despite price rises right across the country for families and small businesses, will we have the minister responsible claiming that he is delivering the cheapest form of energy Australia's ever seen? You can't keep that deception up and think the mob won't work you out. Every single time, they know power bills are going up. We know from the default market offer and the Victorian default offer that prices are going up.

Dr Leigh interjecting—

Mr TED O'BRIEN: We have the minister across the table trying to argue, but prices are going up. Middle Australia is feeling it, even if you're not feeling it. Even if you don't care about it, middle Australia cares about it, because they're paying the bills.

The Minister for Climate Change and Energy is telling everybody it's the cheapest form of energy that could ever be delivered, but prices are going up. He knows the truth. We can't give him the benefit of the doubt and say that this is just unconscious incompetence. This is conscious incompetence. The Labor Party knows precisely what it is doing. It is restricting supply of gas in the market, which is only making it worse. It keeps this false promise on its website of a reduction in power bills, despite middle Australia feeling the pain.

They're not laughing. The senior citizens of this country are coming into winter, and I can assure you they're not laughing. I wonder how many older Australians happen to turn on question time, hear one of their local MPs ask a question on their behalf to the Prime Minister about energy bills, and hear the Prime Minister stand and laugh—absolute hubris, when we have middle Australia hurting right now.

Honourable members interjecting—

Mr TED O'BRIEN: Still we have Labor Party MPs that think it's funny. Middle Australia does not think it is funny. Middle Australia is not laughing. Middle Australia is in pain right now because of a suite of energy policies that are driving prices up. It does not matter how much callous indifference is betrayed by the Labor government. It doesn't make their lives easier. Not one measure in the budget addressed this issue. Middle Australia continues to be in an enormous amount of pain. It doesn't matter whether it's the Prime Minister, whether it's the responsible minister or whether it's the entire Labor frontbench or backbench. They somehow find humour in the misery of middle Australia, and they are defying them by doing nothing to help. *(Time expired)*

Mr WATTS (Gellibrand—Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs) (15:27): It's another Thursday afternoon. It's another MPI. It's *deja vu* all over again, another resounding Shakespearean soliloquy from the shadow minister, but yet again it's all just sound and fury signifying nothing. As I listen to the opposition in question time and listen to the opposition in these forums, it's clear that the stories of families and businesses in Australia—the middle

Australians the shadow minister was talking about before—in their world view are nothing but political props. They are props in the political theatre of this building.

We know this because if they actually cared about middle Australians, about Australian families, about Australian businesses, we wouldn't just be hearing rhetoric in here. We wouldn't just be hearing the political games and theatre. We'd be seeing action to match those words.

Mr Ted O'Brien: You're the government. Take action!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Claydon): Order, member for Fairfax!

Mr WATTS: When given an opportunity to act, to vote for reductions in energy power bills, they voted against it. Indeed, the Leader of the Opposition has confirmed recently that they would rewind—repeal—these cuts. That's their position.

Shielding Australian families and businesses from the worst of the energy price hikes being experienced in Australia and around the world at the moment is an important challenge for this parliament. We know that any increase in energy prices is difficult for families and for businesses, families and businesses that may well be listening to this debate. But we also know that Australians want their elected representatives to take real action on these challenges. Instead, all we see from those opposite is political theatre and obstructionism.

At the end of the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison government, you had the sense that the LNP jalopy had become completely clapped out. The wheels had fallen off. The axle had ground to a halt on the ground. They had no forward momentum. Well, I will give those opposite credit for one thing: they've certainly got the show back on the road. The only problem is that the new jalopy only has one gear: reverse. It's *deja vu* all over again. They want to take Australians back.

Watching those opposite, it's clear that they've learnt nothing from the last 10 years. They've learnt nothing from the last election result. They've learnt nothing from the Aston by-election result. If you picked up the *Notice Paper*, if you watched the questions in question time from those opposite, you could easily imagine that you'd been transported back to 2010. At the moment, the Leader of the Opposition is doing a pretty good impression of Tony Abbott without the speedos. It's ugly stuff—aggressive, negative, destructive politics, wrecking instead of building, with shouting and snarling. We see it every day. In fact, that's another flashback to the 2010 period that we see in this building: the targeting of Labor women in question time and the chorus of those opposite every time a capable, confident woman on the front bench gets to speak. It's just an instinctive reaction from those opposite to get stuck in. The Leader of the Opposition might have a bit more time on his hands to practise his smiles, as he promised the Australian people, if he took the dog whistles out of his mouth and actually tried to engage.

Ms Landry: Excuse me, Deputy Speaker—relevance. This is just wrong and—

Mr WATTS: It's not question time.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Claydon): That's not a point of order. I'm sorry, Member for Capricornia.

Ms Landry: I just want to say—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I appreciate—

Opposition members interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Well, there is a difference. *Practice* is very clear about matters that are politically sensitive as opposed to truly offensive. I've listened to a lot of adjectives used by the previous speaker without taking interjections and points of order either. I ask that everybody consider lifting the tone of debate in this House, absolutely, but there is nothing that has been unparliamentary. I am listening very closely.

Mr WATTS: They've learnt nothing. Indeed, they haven't even learnt the standing orders in 10 years in this place. The Australian public is sick of this kind of destructive, negative politics. This government has a positive agenda. On this side of the House, we know that the Australian public is sick of that brand of politics. That's why we've been taking urgent action to shield Australian families and businesses from the worst of energy price spikes. We know that Russia's illegal, immoral invasion of Ukraine—

Mr Ted O'Brien interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Fairfax, I've given you quite a bit of leeway. If you want to keep interjecting, you'll be asked to leave the chamber

Mr WATTS: We know that Russia's illegal and immoral invasion of Ukraine has caused energy price spikes around the world. Indeed, the International Energy Agency has found that that invasion has caused 90 per cent of energy price rises seen around the world.

Of course, Australia was left even more exposed to this external shock than it needed to be thanks to a decade of chaos and neglect on energy policy under the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison governments. Our domestic energy market

has been hamstrung by ageing electricity assets and an inadequate amount of the policy certainty necessary to support investment in new energy infrastructure—a direct result of a decade of chaos and dysfunction, denial and delay from those opposite. It was a policy shambles that saw four gigawatts of dispatchable capacity leave the system and only one gigawatt coming in to replace it. It was a shambles that saw those opposite promise a billion dollars in public funding for 3,800 megawatts of new generation through the Underwriting New Generation Investments program. What did they deliver? Nothing. Well done! Nothing.

In May 2019, those opposite made a promise of their own, promising to deliver average wholesale prices of \$70 per megawatt hour by the end of 2021. I can't recall which of the 18 different energy policies those opposite were pursuing when they made that promise during the wacky races of the previous government, but they didn't get within cooee of delivering it. In fact, the average wholesale price at the time of the last election was \$286.18—not a 25 per cent cut but a 240 per cent increase.

Of course, this is what the former government was seeking to hide when it changed the law to cover up those impending price rises before the last election. Those opposite had a political tactic. They had a tactic for delaying the publication of these price rises. They had a tactic and a plan for themselves but no plan to the Australian public—no plan to shield Australian families and businesses from the worst of those increases, a direct result of a decade of dysfunction and delay. As always, they had a plan for themselves but not for Australians.

Our Energy Price Relief Plan has provided targeted energy bill relief for families and businesses while also investing in cleaner and cheaper energy for the future, and it is working. The recent final default market offering confirms that the Albanese government has successfully limited the worst of the energy price spikes. The DMO is set by the Australian Energy Regulator. It's the price that electricity retailers can charge customers in New South Wales, South Australia and South-East Queensland—the benchmark for all other electricity offers. The DMO has confirmed that price increases are up to \$492 lower than they would have been without the government's intervention for residential customers and up to \$1,310 lower than they would otherwise have been for small businesses. Indeed, for many customers eligible for the targeted energy price relief rebates, their bills won't increase at all. This includes temporarily capping the prices of coal and gas and providing \$3 billion in targeted bill relief to eligible households and small businesses announced in the May budget—support directly for the most vulnerable in our society, those who need it the most.

They are the results that those opposite voted against. When you hear the Shakespearean soliloquies, the Churchillian rhetoric, understand that beneath it all lies nothing. Beneath it all lies political opportunism. They would rather a political fight than deliver action on energy prices for Australians. Consider the chutzpah of this mob opposite. First they changed the law to cover up the energy price rises before the election. Then they voted against the Albanese government's plans to shield Australian businesses and families from hundreds and even over \$1,000 of power bill increases. Then they used forums like this to criticise the Albanese government for not doing enough. What have they offered the Australian public since the election? Politics. They'd rather a fight than take real action for the Australian public. They'd rather play politics than act. How else can you explain their decision to vote against action to help shield Australians from these price increases?

In fact, they have offered one other thing. In addition to politics, they've offered ideology. They've offered the most expensive and slowest to roll out form of energy to the Australian public—kooky ideology mixed in with their shameless opportunism and politics. Nuclear reactors. That's a strategy for willing winning back the teal seats, isn't it? Nuclear reactors in Brighton, Toorak and Cottesloe. It's genius. They really have their finger on the pulse.

The Albanese government knows that good energy policy needs a forward vision, taking action now while also facilitating the rollout of the cheapest form of energy: renewables. That's exactly what we are doing. We know that's what the Australian public voted for at the last election. We know that's what the Australian public voted for at the Aston by-election. Those opposite are slow learners, but we will not make the Australian public pay the price for their inability to pick up on the uptake. We're going to deliver real action. We are delivering real action as well as long-term action on climate change for the Australian public. The Albanese government is 12 months in, and we are already proud of our record. Long may it continue.

Mr McCORMACK (Riverina) (15:37): 'The Albanese government is delivering.' Truer words were never said. They're delivering higher power prices. You only have to look at the evidence. Under the coalition, power prices reached their lowest level in eight years. Indeed, in our last term, power prices fell by eight per cent for households, 10 per cent for small business and 12 per cent for large businesses and industry. They're facts.

Now we have Labor in power, and you only have to look at the figures. Again they ring true. Look at New South Wales. Increases are going to go up by 24.9 per cent. That's \$594 for households. In South Australia, it's \$512. In South-East Queensland, it's \$402. South-East Queensland is one of the engine rooms of our economy. In Victoria, it's a \$352 increase from July. Look at the figures for small business. Small business helps to run the economy; it

helps to run this country. Small business carried us through COVID, through the darkest days. Indeed, look at small business. In New South Wales, they are going to cop an \$860-a-year increase on their power prices. In South Australia, it's \$1,310. In South-East Queensland, it's \$756. In Victoria, it's \$4 less than that, at \$752. If you are small-business person, how do you pay for that? Well, some of them just pass the costs onto their customers, but other businesses can't do that, so they just take home less pay and just do it tougher.

Words are important. When you go to an election promising 97 times that you're going to reduce power bills by \$275, people listen. They expect that if you get into government, you are going to keep your promise. And yet Labor hasn't. They've let the Australian people down. But that's probably not all that that unexpected, because people are used to it. Let me tell you, they will remember. People have long memories. Come next election time, they're going to remember that broken pledge, that broken promise, that broken commitment by Labor. Two hundred and seventy-five dollars—that's what people expected to come off their power bills. How disappointed are they! And I'm sure that Labor members—as I have and the member for Fairfax has had—would have had constituents come into their office and say: 'Why am I paying higher power prices when you promised me that there would be a cut?' I'm sure that they're getting those, because I am, and every member would be.

Indeed, it's all about supply. Labor has torn up the trusted supply of gas, while energy generation projects are continually delayed under their policies.

As I say, words are important. When you have a treasurer who, on budget night, fails to mention the word 'infrastructure', it's inexplicable. Now, Josh Frydenberg, when he was Treasurer, had four budgets; 28 times he mentioned the word 'infrastructure'. Treasurer Morrison did 22 times in his three budgets. And yet the member for Rankin, in his big May opportunity, failed to mention the word 'infrastructure' once—not once. Do you know how long it's been since a treasurer, in the main budget for the year, failed to mention the word 'infrastructure'? Twenty-five years—a quarter of a century. I had the Parliamentary Library look it up. I did a little bit of research myself. Twenty-five years!

Infrastructure is important; so is keeping promises; so is reducing power prices. And I'm not just saying it for saying it's sake; I'm saying it because the people outside of this building are saying it. Moreover, they are expecting it. They are expecting power price cuts. But what they're copping—particularly those middle Australians who run small businesses and who run household budgets—is: they were expecting their power prices to come down, but, unfortunately, under the Labor, Greens and Teals government, they are going up. That is as true as I stand here right now. And those small business operators are the ones who take the risks; those households are the ones doing it tough.

The Treasurer can't bring himself to say 'infrastructure'. The Prime Minister can't bring himself to keep promises that he made prior to the election. And middle Australia is suffering as a result.

Mr BURNS (Macnamara) (15:42): I do thank the member for Riverina for that impassioned speech. You've got to hand it to the good folks at the Parliamentary Library. They get some pretty wacky requests, I'm sure, throughout the year, but that one I'm sure would have really entertained them.

This MPI proposed by the member for Fairfax is a pretty straightforward one. You've got to give credit to the member for Fairfax. He is like Blinky, the three-eyed fish who swims near the nuclear reactor; he just keeps on swimming, little Blinky, the little three-eyed fish—swimming away, doing his thing. He keeps on chugging. And you've got to give him credit.

One thing that the member for Fairfax isn't telling us is that his big answer, his big alternative for energy policy in this country, is obviously nuclear energy—the most expensive form of energy. And one of the things that the member for Fairfax didn't actually mention in his contribution at the start of this MPI is: Whereabouts are these nuclear reactors going to go? Where are they going to go—whereabouts in Fairfax? Right on Coolum Beach? Move over Clive Palmer's dinosaurs! Move them over! Let's build Ted's reactor. Let's build the member for Fairfax's reactor right there—or you've got Maroochydoore: some of the most pristine surf in the country; a beautiful part of the world. But sorry, folks, down in Maroochydoore. The member for Fairfax has got big plans for you; there's going to be a new nuclear reactor down in Maroochydoore!

But there are members on the other side that don't actually share the same enthusiasm or the member for Fairfax's real affinity for nuclear energy. There are some that are much quieter. There were members in the previous parliament, like the member for Higgins, or the previous member for Higgins—we have a much, much better member for Higgins these days!—who was a big fan of nuclear energy as well. She used to come into this place and support nuclear energy. Down in my neck of the woods, in Melbourne, we have the beautiful Yarra River, with lots of things happening on the side—but, sorry, folks, we're going to have the reactor by the Yarra, according to the previous member for Higgins. It didn't work out too well, so I'm not surprised that the member for Flinders hasn't come in here and said: 'The Portsea pub? No longer. Sorry, we're going to put a nuclear reactor in Portsea.'

The member for Flinders hasn't said sorry, folks. All of those who like the Portsea Polo, put your Ralph Lauren shirt on, put your little hat on—

Government members interjecting—

Mr BURNS: The Yarra Valley? I can see the member for Casey. Sorry, winemakers and folks in the Yarra Valley. The member for Casey wants to put in a nuclear reactor. He wants a new nuclear reactor right there in the Yarra Valley. Violi's reactor—the member for Casey's reactor. It's going to be fantastic!

The member for Menzies also never comes into this place saying he wants a nuclear reactor. You can imagine down in Shoppo, the Westfield Doncaster Shopping Centre—a fantastic place. If you haven't been to Shoppo, you should go down there. There are great deals, great food courts and all of the options. I spent a bit of time in Shoppo back in the day. I did haunt around Doncaster back in the day a little bit. Sorry, folks at Shoppo, we are closing Shoppo down because the member for Fairfax is going to put another nuclear reactor right where Shoppo was.

It's all a bit ridiculous. The member for Fairfax comes into this place and pretends that he's got all the answers, except the only answer that he's got is to make Australian power prices go through the roof. The only thing that the member for Fairfax isn't telling people is whereabouts these nuclear reactors are going to go. But we obviously have a different approach. We brought the parliament back in December and asked every member of this House to say that we want to cap coal and gas prices to ensure that Australian businesses and Australian households are shielded from the worst of the power price rises. Every member of this place had an opportunity to stand with those businesses, those manufacturers and those households to say: 'You know what? It's not a good situation that you're in, but we are going to do our bit as representatives in this place.' Every member on this side of the House came in here and did their duty on behalf of those households and on behalf of those manufacturers. Every member of the opposition voted to keep prices going up because that's their MO. They want prices to go through the roof. You've got to hand it to Blinky, the member for Fairfax: he keeps swimming. But we've got a better option to keep power prices low.

Mr Young: On that personal reflection, I'd like the member to withdraw that last comment where he called the member 'Blinky'.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Claydon): I wouldn't repeat the offence when I was making the point, but I will ask the member for Macnamara to withdraw the comment.

Mr BURNS: I thank the member for Longman. I withdraw.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind everybody that it is not just one person that has made similar remarks in these debates. Member for Casey, try and lift the tone.

Mr VIOLI (Casey) (15:47): I will try and lift the tone, Deputy Speaker Claydon. Hopefully the member for Macnamara can stay for a few minutes, because I want to give him a quick education. I can assure all the good residents of Casey that small modular reactors will not be going into our electorate. One of the benefits of them is that they go where existing infrastructure is. It's actually one of the ways you can reduce the price. Small modular reactors are amazing technology that go into existing sites, which creates jobs and opportunities for those in those communities while reducing prices. I thank the member for Macnamara for the concern, but I can assure all residents in Casey that there will not be any nuclear reactors going into the Yarra Valley.

Mr Rae: They'll be so relieved!

Mr VIOLI: Thank you, member for Hawke. I'd just like to get the facts right. If the member for Macnamara is going to spend four minutes talking about nuclear technology, it would be nice if he did a little bit of research and understood the technology. When we talk about this change, of getting to net zero while keeping prices down, affordability and reliability in the market, we should be able to have a mature conversation about all technology.

I note that the member for Macnamara spent just over four minutes of his five minutes talking about the opposition. That really says a lot about the government. You would have heard it from the minister, and the next ones that speak will no doubt spend a lot of time talking about our side at the moment. The reason they do that is that they don't have any answers to the problems in energy that Australians are facing. Australians at home and in businesses know their prices are going up every day. They feel it every time they get a bill. They know this government doesn't have any answers. And it's even worse than that for the Australian people. This government is playing politics with energy prices. They rushed us all back here in December because, as you'll remember Paul Erickson said, they had to look like they were addressing the cost of living. So they rushed us back for this legislation that is continuing to drive prices up. What they also did was announce the rebates with fanfare. In December, they announced the rebates that they were going to provide to you at home to make your life easier.

The political reality is they could have delivered that cost-of-living relief to you at home, the Australian people, in February when we came back. They have the numbers in the House. They have a very enjoyable Senate. It would

have passed. They could have delivered that relief to Australians in February, and yet no Australian, as we stand here today, has received that cost-of-living relief. When you are struggling to put food on the table and you are making decisions between whether you can drive your kids to the sporting club or whether you have to make them miss training because you can't afford the petrol price, every day, every week and every month makes a difference.

Let's be really clear to the Australian people on why that cost-of-living relief was not delivered in February. The reason is politics. It was so the Treasurer of this country could stand at the dispatch box in May for this budget and make it to the centrepiece of his announcement. It was so he could tell everyone at home how lucky they were that they were getting \$400 or \$500 back from this government and how lucky and grateful they should be. It's politics. Struggling families at home have been waiting six months. This Treasurer, who has spent decades working in this House, has never put his life on the line to start a small business. He's had the comfort of a taxpayer salary for almost two decades. He played politics with cost-of-living pressures so he could make an announcement. Minister after minister and backbenchers on the government side can stand up and crow about saving \$400 for small businesses while a business like Laurie, a man who risked it all to start a business, is having a \$200,000-a-year increase and he is supposed to be happy about a \$400 reduction that he hasn't received yet because this Treasurer and this Prime Minister are playing politics with the Australian people.

That's why we are hearing those on the government side talk about the opposition while they laugh and make jokes about the cost-of-living pressures. It's because they don't understand that if you cannot bring energy prices down it drives up inflation. It drives up interest rates. It puts Australians under so much strain. This government does not have answers for the Australian people, and the Australian people know it. When they look at their bank balance and they get their energy bills, they know this is hubris. They know there is no answer from this government for the cost-of-living pressures they are living under.

Mrs PHILLIPS (Gilmore) (15:52): I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak today about what the Albanese government is doing to help provide energy price relief. As the member for Gilmore, I am already receiving thanks when I speak to families and small businesses on the New South Wales South Coast, because people know that we are doing everything possible and being responsible. Our energy price relief plan is helping. They know that the Albanese Labor government has their best interests at heart. But power prices are a major concern for many people, particularly those on low incomes or running small businesses. If we want evidence that our energy price relief plan is working, we can look no further than the default market offer, which confirms that the Albanese Labor government has limited the worst of the energy price hikes.

In New South Wales, where I live, due to the government's electricity price intervention in December last year the default market offer increase is up to 19 percentage points lower. These are the Australian Energy Regulator's numbers, too. You can't argue with that. It's 19 percentage points lower. That's a fair whack. But it's not just that. In the May budget you will have seen that we have provided targeted relief for power bills. All holders of the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card, as well as many other concession card holders, will be eligible for energy bill relief and will receive up to \$500 per household. And \$500 per year off an electricity bill will most certainly help mitigate the costs for many Australian families. That's the Albanese Labor government, though. We are working to provide real relief for people's power bills right when they need it.

It's not just the energy price relief plan and our targeted relief strategies, it's other initiatives, pro-active initiatives. We don't just want to shield people; we want to protect them in the future, which is why we're making record investments in renewable energy, because it remains the case that renewable energy is cheaper energy.

An example of this in my Gilmore electorate is a community battery we are providing at Maloneys Beach. After the devastating bushfires on the South Coast in 2019-20, the Maloneys Beach Residents Association did some research, and they found it would be cheaper and help with natural disaster resilience to have a community battery in their village. Now, just this month, I was able to announce the approval for the business case for the community battery for Maloneys Beach. Actions like this help mitigate the impact of rising energy prices for locals. Investing in renewable energy, providing community batteries—these are big wins for people on the South Coast. And even though it's impressive, that's just our energy policy.

If you want to talk about what the Albanese government is doing to help mitigate the impact of higher prices on people, well then, let's do it. One of the biggest pressures on people's hip pocket on the New South Wales South Coast is health care and, for that matter, the increase in difficulty accessing GPs and health services. I am hearing everyday how thrilled people are that, from 1 September, eligible people will be able to receive two months' worth of medicine on a single script. That's double the medicine for the same money. That's a big win. It will half visits to local GPs, freeing up appointments for those that need them the most. We are delivering Medicare Urgent Care Clinics, including one at Batemans Bay. We're also funding a Head to Health clinic in Moruya, with free mental health care for adults, but it is not just adults—we're well on the way to opening a headspace in Kiama. So that's free mental health care for adults and adolescents.

Health isn't the only winner for locals. We're providing 480,000 fee-free TAFE places in industry skills shortage areas, many of which are in my electorate. I visited Nowra TAFE a few weeks ago, and someone training to be a chef told me point-blank she would not be retraining if her TAFE place wasn't free. These TAFE places are in areas that communities need the most, like construction and commercial cookery.

We're also making childcare cheaper, in 30 days from today, benefiting around 4,800 families in Gilmore. We're getting on with the job, providing energy price relief and easing the cost of living, just like we were elected to do.

Mr PITT (Hinkler) (15:57): When the Eagles are silent, the turkeys will soar. There is no doubt about that whatsoever. But, I would say to those opposite in their commentary about nuclear reactors in this country, they should be far more cautious. The AUKUS arrangement is an incredibly important national security agreement, and every single nuclear submarine that this country will build will go to Brisbane and Sydney and Melbourne and Adelaide and Perth and Darwin, and anything that reflects on those outcomes with our partners, the United States and Britain, is actually important. It is incredibly important. So, I would say to those opposite: be very cautious with your public commentary about what is absolutely the most important initiative for this country in terms of our national security in an arrangement that has not been offered to anyone else since the 1950s.

To come to the issues on the MPI, if we look at what's actually happening out in the real world, we have a significant coal fired power station at Callide and Biloela in the member for Flynn's electorate. It had a significant incident more than a year ago. It took out two of the generators, C3 and C4. That is, more than 10 per cent of Queensland's coal-fired capacity. That shorts the market. It's that easy. Yet, the Queensland Labor government, who owns more than 70 per cent of the generation in Queensland and all of the transmission and the only domestic retailer north of Gympie, has not fixed it. In fact, there are reports today that it won't be fixed for at least another year. Experts are saying outright that there will be massive increases in power prices and, in fact, in a story from Matt Killoran in today's *Courier-Mail*, 'sky-high power prices' are expected and Queensland is to face rolling 'blackouts' most likely next summer. Yet we see continued profiteering from the Queensland Labor government, because they own these assets. They take over a billion dollars worth of profit every single year from government owned corporations, and what else do they get? They get subsidies from the now federal Albanese government.

The Prime Minister made an arrangement—we hear from those opposite constantly about the fact that we did not vote for it—which creates subsidies in the billions for coal and gas companies, deals with the states, yet profiteering from the Queensland Labor government is driving up prices. Once again, back in the real world, the Australian Bureau of Statistics have indicated that in the March quarter alone in Brisbane power prices went up more than 30 per cent in just one quarter. Now we see the default market offer as roughly an increase of another 25 per cent across the board for residential and as much as almost 30 for small business yet we see the Minister for Climate Change and Energy, the Prime Minister, the Treasurer and every other minister come to the dispatch box to try to tell the Australian people that a 25 per cent increase is a decrease, that in fact it could have been much, much worse. It could have been so much worse. They cannot pay their bills now.

There is no \$275 reduction; there are only increases. There is only pain for people that can't pay, and, if you are in Queensland, the profits are going to the Queensland Labor government. The quickest way to get a reduction in power prices in Queensland is for the state Labor government to stop making so much money. That is the absolute outcome of these changes. They are profiteering. The market is shorted because they have not fixed Callide power station. The information I get is the member for Flynn has written to the state minister twice for a briefing about what is an incredibly important piece of infrastructure. In fact, these power stations, would you believe, provide electricity to places like coalmines—things that actually contribute to the Australian economy. Our biggest export commodity this financial year that has provided a significant input to the bottom line for this federal Labor government and its budget and, for one of the first times ever, a budget in the black for Queensland because they had a massive increase in royalties of almost 40 per cent across the board on call. What have they done with it? They are not reinvesting it in regional Queensland. They are not reinvesting in Queensland hospitals and services. They are not providing relief. They are not providing help for people who cannot pay—

Mr Young interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Claydon): Member for Longman, you are leaving the chamber.

The member for Longman then left the chamber—

Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (16:01): yet we continue to see from those opposite rhetoric that says the 20 per cent increase is a decrease, that somehow we are in an upside down world, in another reality where increases are decreases, decreases are actually happening with an increase, and people are paying far more than they can afford but that is a good thing and they come to the dispatch box and they find it funny. No Australian finds it funny. They can't pay their bills.

Ms BYRNES (Cunningham) (16:02): There seems to be a strange power that keeps drawing me to speak on the member of the Fairfax's matters of public importance. Since the last election, he has proposed four matters of public importance before this chamber, and I've been lucky enough to speak on the last three. All of the MPIs proposed by the member for Fairfax have been on energy prices. I know how important this issue is to my electorate, as is providing relief to those who need it most. But it is a real pity he did nothing about energy prices for the past decade when he was in government. I'm beginning to think we could have an untapped source of renewable energy in this country: the bluster of those opposite. But I do hope one day I might be able to speak on an MPI proposed by the member for Fairfax that might actually relate to climate change and the important side of his shadow portfolio responsibilities—a shocking idea, I know. But on the question of the Albanese Labor government supporting Australians with cost-of-living pressures, it might be time for Ted—sorry, the member for Fairfax—to read the Treasurer's budget address or, if he wants more details, budget paper No. 2.

Labor's budget outlines a comprehensive plan that provides cost-of-living relief for those that need it most while investing in key drivers of sustainable growth and sustainably funding the services that Australians rely on. This budget is providing energy bill relief to over five million households and one million small businesses, as well as helping 170,000 households save on energy bills by financing energy-saving home upgrades, reducing out-of-pocket health costs by tripling bulk-billing incentives and investing in more bulk-billing urgent-care clinics, cutting the cost of medicine by up to half for at least six million Australians, supporting 57,000 single parents by expanding eligibility for parenting payment single, responsibly increasing the base rate for JobSeeker and other payments for 1.1 million people, increasing Commonwealth rent assistance for 1.1 million households, implementing tax breaks to ensure more investment in build-to-rent projects, delivering a 15 per cent pay rise on award wages for aged-care workers and getting wages moving again.

The new Energy Price Relief Plan will provide relief for more than 1.6 million eligible households with a \$500 energy rebate, and a \$650 rebate for 300,000 eligible small businesses in New South Wales—including some of the most vulnerable in our community. In addition to the energy price relief rebates, Labor is investing in cleaner, cheaper energy over the medium and longer term—something those opposite failed to do during their decade in government. The previous government attacked and blocked renewable energy for nearly a decade, including by refusing to invest in transmission even to connect the Snowy 2.0 project to the grid, and now we're paying the price. Our Labor budget delivers more than \$1.6 billion for energy-saving upgrades for homes, businesses and social housing, which is made up of \$1.3 billion to establish the Household Energy Upgrades Fund, \$300 million to support upgrades to social housing and \$310 million in tax relief to be delivered via the Small Business Energy Incentive.

Locally, in the Illawarra, this Labor government is investing and delivering when it comes to energy price relief. Last week, I was happy to announce, with Minister Chris Bowen and the member for Whitlam, that Warrawong and Dapto will receive community batteries, helping lower household electricity bills, reducing emissions and delivering reliable renewable energy for local residents—some of the most vulnerable in my electorate. Endeavour Energy will receive \$1 million in grant funding to install a 720 kilowatt hour battery in Warrawong and a 1,040 kilowatt hour battery in Dapto as part of the government's community batteries program. This is another example of the Albanese Labor government delivering for our Illawarra region as we invest \$200 million to install 400 community batteries across the country.

We are getting on with the job of delivering a comprehensive plan for cleaner cheaper energy, in clear contrast to the mess left by those opposite and a decade of inaction.

Ms WARE (Hughes) (16:07): I rise to speak in favour of this matter of public importance that's been brought by my friend and colleague, and our shadow energy minister, the member for Fairfax. Labor promised Australians before it went to the last election that energy bills would be reduced by \$275. I have sat here and heard speeches today, and I'm going to start, first of all, with the member for Gellibrand saying it is all the fault of Russia having invaded the Ukraine. Russia invaded the Ukraine before the last federal election, and even after the Russian invasion of Ukraine then opposition leader Albanese continued to promise, on 97 separate occasions, that energy bills would reduce by \$275. That is just one of this government's neglected promises.

The member for Macnamara spent four minutes today on this MPI discussing nuclear energy and ridiculing us. I will again invite the member for Macnamara to come out to the only nuclear reactor in this country; it's in my electorate of Hughes. He'll be welcome to come out and see what is being done out there—as would all of you across the floor. Come out and have a look at it. It's not scary. Speak to nuclear scientists and see what can be done.

The member for Gilmore spoke about having received letters of thanks for reducing the cost of living within her electorate. I've also received a letter—from Colin, of Loftus in my electorate. Colin's letter says: 'I have just received a letter from my energy company saying that my power bill is going up from the next quarter.' There are various rates quoted for different usage charges. For example, the peak usage on Colin's plan goes up by about 9.7 per cent over just one quarter. The letter cites three reasons for the increases: the rising cost of wholesale electricity,

government green schemes and market charges, whatever they might be. The letter also states that the new rates are 13 per cent above the default market price. Colin has called it the 'DMO'. He says: 'I understand that the DMO is set by federal government. How can my energy provider charge more than the DMO, I wondered.' Colin then went and rang his energy provider and was told that he was on the best available plan, and he asks me how his energy provider is able to charge more than the DMO.

I have sent that correspondence through to Minister Bowen, the Minister for Climate Change and Energy. I'm yet to receive a response, but I can say to Colin that one of the reasons that his energy bills are so high and continue to increase is a lack of supply. We have been saying this to those on the other side since May of last year. In particular, I'll draw attention to two of the major problems within my home state of New South Wales. Firstly, there is the delay to Snowy 2.0. Secondly, the Liddell Power Station, which represented 10 per cent of the New South Wales energy grid, has been permanently powered down. They are two of the problems for Colin and two of the problems for people not only in my electorate but in my home state of New South Wales and throughout the entire country.

We are hearing from those on the other side saying prices are coming down and that they are receiving all of these letters of gratitude from their electorates. I'd like to see some of those letters to the member for Gilmore, because I can assure you that, in my electorate, I am receiving letters every single day in the same vein as the one I've just quoted from Colin of Loftus. It cannot be the case that it is only those in Gilmore that are receiving these massive decreases in their cost of living when the rest of the country has been suffering, largely, under this Labor government. For example, households in my state of New South Wales are facing increases of up to 24.9 per cent—which is 25 per cent—and small business is facing increases of 21.6 per cent. To transfer that into dollar terms, that's \$594 per quarter for every householder in New South Wales.

Ms LAWRENCE (Hasluck) (16:12): Here we have an MPI from the opposition on energy prices. They are absolutely devoid of any self-awareness. This is from a bunch that couldn't land any sort of energy policy for nine years. This is from a group that couldn't even agree amongst themselves that they need to accept the science on climate change. This is from a group that lurched from one scare campaign to the next, pitting Australian against Australian in a disgusting, cynical ploy to claw back any semblance of political relevance.

In December, this government took decisive action on energy prices. Demonstrating clear leadership, we put a cap on wholesale gas prices. We could see that the supply shock caused by the war in Ukraine was impacting prices, and we took firm action to protect Australian consumers. How seriously did the government take the threat to the livelihoods of Australian people and businesses? I will tell you. The Prime Minister recalled the parliament to pass legislation. That's how seriously we took it. I had to fly back from Hasluck, which is some 3,000 kilometres away, and I was happy to do so because it was the right thing to do. And how seriously did members opposite take that threat to energy prices? They voted against the cap. The member for Fairfax needs to explain this to his constituents. Where would energy prices be now if the coalition were in power? They'd be much higher. And where would inflation be? The general consensus is that the cap will have had an anti-inflationary effect of up to three-quarters of a per cent, so where would inflation be if we had had a Dutton government? It would be higher. But that's not all; there is more.

In the May budget, the Treasurer outlined the energy price relief bill, with targeted relief for five million individuals and families most in need and for one million small businesses—true cost-of-living measures, with real reductions in energy bills.

But, at the end of the day, what this MPI really asks is this: what would a really good coalition energy policy look like? I'll tell you what it would look like. It would look like ours, properly identifying and addressing the current situation and then planning ahead for a green energy future. Not sure what I mean by that? Here are some examples.

It means investments in solar energy, like \$65 million in a groundbreaking solar thermal project; investments in wind energy, the six regions earmarked for offshore wind farms and project progressing; investments in battery storage, like the 400 community batteries being delivered all over the country, including in Stratton in my electorate of Hasluck; investments in exploration and the processing of critical minerals, and we're partnering with the US on the supply chains; investments in hydrogen, like the \$2 billion Hydrogen Headstart program; investments in transmission—we're rewiring the nation; investments in electric vehicles, like the EV-charging network, to give motorists the confidence to switch over; and investments in innovation, encouraging the development of tomorrow's technology today through the \$10 billion National Reconstruction Fund. It means investments in electrification and efficiency, like the \$1.3 billion to establish the Household Energy Upgrades Fund, the \$310 million in tax relief for the Small Business Energy Incentive, the Renewable Energy Target and so much more—so many initiatives, so little time. If members opposite would like, I'm happy to send them a link.

All of these forward-looking policies will contribute not just to cheaper energy for all Australians but to the meeting of our emissions targets and a cleaner, more circular economy. At the same time, it insulates us from the global shocks, such as the one we are currently experiencing.

In conclusion, the reason the coalition keep returning to their own mess in this area of policy is that they know that the cost of living is an issue and they hope that the Australian people will blame the government for the coalition's own failures and not look too hard at their actions in this place over the last year and the nine hopeless years prior to that—because, if the average Aussie punter had a good, hard look at the coalition, what would they find? They'd find a motley collection of climate deniers mixed in with too few others, who can't steer their party's debate. They'd find a coalition that opposed the cap on gas prices; that would have created even higher inflation if they'd held the reins. They'd find a dearth of policy and an office devoted to photocopying old MPis.

Due to the Albanese government's timely courage and the measures in the budget, Australian consumers are in the best position they could be in in the current international environment. This is a government that walks the walk.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Claydon): The discussion has now concluded.

BILLS

Trade Support Loans Amendment Bill 2023

Student Loans (Overseas Debtors Repayment Levy) Amendment Bill 2023

Second Reading

Cognate debate.

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Ms LEY (Farrer—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (16:18): I rise to speak on the Trade Support Loans Amendment Bill 2023 and the Student Loans (Overseas Debtors Repayment Levy) Amendment Bill 2023. The coalition will be supporting these bills. These are sensible reforms which the coalition developed whilst in government.

The Trade Support Loans Amendment Bill causes the Trade Support Loans Priority List to lapse; amends the act to empower the minister by legislative instrument to determine, having had regard to any relevant advice given to the minister by Jobs and Skills Australia, a new Australian Apprenticeships Priority List; and amends the act to provide that a qualifying apprenticeship is, among other things, an apprenticeship through which a person is undertaking a qualification that leads to an occupation or qualification specified on the Australian Apprenticeships Priority List. These changes will mean the skills minister can expand the program's access to people who, through their apprenticeship or traineeship, are undertaking qualifications that lead to occupations experiencing skills shortages, such as occupations in the aged-care, disability care and childcare sectors.

We know that apprentices and trainees are doing it tough right now. The price of their groceries, their fuel and their electricity are all going up, but their wages aren't. Enabling more students to access this support will be critical to more apprentices completing their studies. The Student Loans (Overseas Debtors Repayment Levy) Amendment Bill 2023 updates references in the Student Loans (Overseas Debtors Repayment Levy) Act 2015 to 'Trade Support Loans Act 2014' with 'Australian Apprenticeship Support Loans Act 2014' to align with the rebranding of trade support loans to Australian apprenticeship support loans. As I stated, these are sensible reforms which improve the scheme. The coalition began the scheme and started these reforms. We will see them through.

Some stakeholders, however, have raised concerns about the consultation process which the minister's office conducted with regard to the bill. However, they remained broadly supportive of the passage of the legislation. Stakeholders noted that the minister's office did no external consultation whatsoever. Indeed, the government's explanatory memorandum seems to admit that they did no further consultation and have broadly accepted the coalition's reforms without amendment. I'm grateful for the government's acknowledgement that our skills policies were working. The government must think so, considering that they've taken our policy and decided it was so good that no further consultation is necessary. They were able to do that because of our extraordinary work in the skills and VET space.

The coalition committed more than \$13 billion to the skills sector, including a record \$7.8 billion in our final financial year in office. We protected more than 530,000 apprentices and trainees through our wage subsidies announced since the pandemic hit, with total pandemic apprentice wage subsidy support reaching more than \$7.9 billion. Most importantly, we delivered a record 240,000 trade apprentices in training, the highest since 1963. That is a strong record to stand on, as Labor seems to be doing, and we will support them when they bring forward good policy such as this. I thank the House.

Dr GARLAND (Chisholm) (16:21): I rise today in support of the Trade Support Loans Amendment Bill 2023, a critical step taken by the Albanese government to remove barriers that hinder Australians from accessing life-changing education and training. Our government is working to remove the barriers Australians face in accessing education and training and to ensure that Australians from all backgrounds and cultures are supported to achieve their full potential. At the heart of this bill lies a pivotal provision: the expansion of the Trade Support Loans program to encompass non-trade occupations for the very first time. To reflect this expansion, the bill renames the program to Australian Apprenticeship Support Loans. The Trade Support Loans Amendment Bill 2023 continues the critical work of the existing program by facilitating the expansion of the Trade Support Loans program to nontrades, including those in the care sector and in other occupations predominantly taken up by women, including early childhood education. I think we can see this in the broader context of the work our government is doing to ensure that there is greater equity and equality in workplaces, homes and communities right across Australia.

I know how important this work is, with many thousands of constituents in my electorate of Chisholm employed in these sectors, including the more than 1,100 people engaged in aged and disability care and the 1,050 people engaged in early childhood education and care. Indeed, I've visited people who are training in these professions at Holmesglen TAFE and have met with many, many workers in these professions across my electorate, not only when I was campaigning but also in the 12 months I've been lucky enough to be the member for Chisholm.

We know Australia is facing the most significant skills shortage in decades, and the measures in this bill are practical measures that our government is taking to extend financial support to more apprentices and trainees. And of course we've also got the fee-free TAFE program, which is opening doors and opportunities for so many people across the country. The Australian Apprenticeship Support Loans will support people to continue and complete their qualifications so they can gain secure work in areas of greatest need for the economy and in our communities. Trade support loans are an interest-free, income-contingent government loan to support Australian apprentices to meet their everyday expenses while they undertake an apprenticeship. As an incentive to complete training, those who complete it will receive a 20 per cent discount on their loan.

Since their introduction in 2014, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations estimates that TSLs have helped over 167,000 apprentices who may otherwise have struggled to complete their apprenticeships. Eligible apprentices can access a maximum of \$22,890 over the life of their apprenticeship, paid monthly payments in arrears. Loans are tapered through an apprenticeship, with the highest payments at the start of the apprenticeship, importantly, to reflect the lower wages early in an apprenticeship. Eligible apprentices must opt into the scheme every six months and can opt out at any time, ensuring that apprentices don't take on loans inadvertently.

This bill does amend the Trade Support Loans Act 2014 to expand access to income-contingent loans to more Australian apprentices and trainees working in high-priority occupations of skills need as informed by Jobs and Skills Australia. For the first time, as mentioned earlier, this will include non-trade occupations and, importantly, will have the flexibility to include those in early childhood education, aged care and disability care. It is really important that this amendment does this, because it does reflect that broader commitment that our government has made to ensuring that all professions are remunerated and supported as they should be—and let's be honest: these have been, for too long, professions that have not been supported adequately, largely because of the nature of these professions as feminised professions dominated by women workers.

This legislation will achieve flexibility by replacing the existing trade support loan priority list with the new Australian Apprenticeships priority list. The outgoing priority list restricts access to the loan program to qualifications in a limited group of trade occupations, with the outdated list not being updated since the scheme was implemented, and that was quite some time ago. The outgoing priority list no longer aligns with the range of Australia's current and future skills needs. The new Australian Apprenticeships priority list will be determined, at a minimum, on an annual basis and will expand the occupations that have access to the program, including to non-trade occupations. This gives flexibility to open the financial support to occupations in high skills need in the care sector such as enrolled nursing, personal care assistants and therapists.

Importantly, this extension will assist many women. As we know, women predominantly take up non-trade apprenticeships and traineeships, and data suggests that 76.8 per cent of women in apprenticeships and traineeships are in non-trade occupations.

In determining the new Australian Apprenticeships priority list, the bill requires the minister to have regard to the advice of Jobs and Skills Australia. This is to ensure that the priority list is responsive to current, emerging and future skills and training needs in the workforce. Jobs and Skills Australia will determine the Australian Apprenticeship priority list by leveraging expertise from economists, data scientists, analysts and researchers. This legislation will have the additional flexibility of providing discretion to the secretary of the department to accept late applications for loans if appropriate in the circumstances. This could include, for instance, where an

administrative error or exceptional circumstances have disrupted an eligible apprentice's loan application. It's a safety net that ensures apprentices don't miss out on immediate financial support unnecessarily or unfairly.

This bill and the new Australian apprenticeship support loans program will join reforms we've already introduced to help Australia and Australians to meet our current and future skills needs. Our government is working with our partners, including the states and territories, to rebuild and modernise our vocational education sector. We're delivering 180,000 fee-free TAFE and vocational education places this year, with more to come from next year. I'm so proud to be able to support this bill, a bill that will help more apprentices with cost-of-living pressures while they train and that will ensure more apprentices enter meaningful occupations in current, emerging and future skills needs for Australia's economy.

ADJOURNMENT

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Claydon): It being 4.30 pm, I propose the question:

That the House do now adjourn.

Public Transport

Ms WATSON-BROWN (Ryan) (16:30): There's an incredible blind spot at the heart of city planning and infrastructure, and the blind spot is the car. The blind spot is the belief that if we just replace every car with an electric vehicle we'll fix the transport problem. The blind spot is developing huge tracts of suburban sprawl, totally remote and disconnected from workplaces, from public transport, from local services, from shops and from parks so that we all have to drive and get stuck in traffic to simply access the essentials. The blind spot is believing that adding just one more lane will stop congestion, when really it's just going to mean that more drivers access that road and the same congestion shortly reappears.

This is an enormous waste of human life potential. We're a wealthy country that has the ability to ensure everyone can live a good life. Is a good life, though, being stuck in traffic for two hours each day when you could be at home with your kids, reading a good book or playing sport? This is not a diatribe against drivers. There's something great—a freedom—about the independence of driving around in your own vehicle, but how much freedom do we feel when we're stuck in traffic? Think about it like this: if your commute is an hour each way every day, that's 10 hours a week wasted in traffic. If you multiply that by, say, the 48 weeks in a year that you might make that commute and by the 45 years of your working life, do you know what you get? You get 21,600 waking hours lost to commuting. That's nearly four years of life spent in your car just getting to work. At least half of that could be avoided if we had a transport system that was about giving people time. We need to give people back the freedom to get around the city however they like. We need a real plan to give people back those thousands of wasted hours so they can spend time doing the things that make life worth living.

Last week, the Climate Council's report showed that if we are to reduce our emissions in line with what is required to keep global warming at anything like a safe level, noting that transport is the fastest growing source of emissions in Australia, we need to cut our car trips by more than half by 2030 and we need to more than triple our trips on public transport. This is a wake-up call for all levels of government. The media and many politicians have been obsessed with this idea of electric vehicles as the solution to transport. This report clearly showed that electric vehicles will not be nearly enough, for a number of reasons. Firstly, they take an enormous amount of resources to produce, and if every household in the world wanted to have two electric vehicles, we just simply cannot sustain that degree of usage of resources. Secondly, the uptake of EVs will simply be too slow. Even under the best-case scenario of the government's EV strategy, by 2040 over 60 per cent of cars on the road will still be petrol cars. Finally, and importantly, EVs will not solve the problem of horrendous traffic congestion and the enormous waste of time that it represents.

For all these reasons, it's clear that we need a rapid shift from car usage as the dominant mode of transport to public and active transport. Despite all this, the government has set targets for EVs but none for share of trips by public or active transport. The government needs to urgently set that target, as the states are actually failing miserably. For example, the Queensland government expects only nine per cent of trips to be on public transport by 2050. The Climate Council says that target should be 49 per cent by 2035. So, instead of wasting billions on stadiums and road widenings, the government needs to urgently consider mandating 50 per cent of all transport spending to go to public transport and 20 per cent to active transport. In addition to that, the government can and should introduce a trial of free public transport across the country.

Finally, the federal government needs to develop a national plan for all new development to include standards for local access to services, to shops and to public and active transport connections so people can get to where they need to go quickly and without having to get in the car. Without this, transport emissions will continue to rise and more and more hours of people's lives will be wasted in traffic rather than spent on the things that make life meaningful.

Housing

Ms MILLER-FROST (Boothby) (16:34): Prior to coming to this place, I worked in the housing and homelessness sector, so this is something I am passionate about and something I know a bit about. There's been a lot of noise about our election commitment to deliver the \$10 billion Housing Australia Future Fund, more commonly known as the HAFF. It's a huge investment in social and affordable housing through a funding source that continues into the future.

We know that too many Australians are finding it difficult to find a safe, affordable place to call home, and for those who do have a place many are facing increasing pressures from rising rents and higher mortgage payments. We all know that the current housing crisis is a supply issue and it has been developing over the last decade. We need more rental properties. We need more for-purchase properties, more social and affordable properties—more properties across the housing spectrum. But the HAFF is only one thing amongst a raft of housing measures that Minister for Housing Julie Collins has been implementing since we were elected just over a year ago, and each of them is an important part of working towards a solution.

Over the last 12 months, the Albanese Labor government has helped more than 50,000 Australians into homeownership. In 2022, we released \$575 million of extra funding, which is even now being put to work. Projects are already under construction, and more projects will be coming forward under the expanded Affordable Housing Bond Aggregator. In our first budget, we had the National Housing Accord, which includes funding for another 10,000 affordable rentals, to be matched by the states and territories with another 10,000 affordable rentals.

In this latest budget, we are helping 1.1 million Australians with the rising cost of rent by increasing Commonwealth rent assistance by 15 per cent. That's the largest increase in 30 years. We've released an additional \$2 billion in financing for more social and affordable rental housing by increasing the guaranteed liabilities of the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation. We're also providing an extra \$67.5 million to states and territories in the coming year through the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement, the NHHA, as well as delivering more than \$1.6 billion in a one-year extension to the agreement while we work out the new National Housing and Homelessness Plan. We're also working on our Help to Buy shared equity plan. This is a shared equity model similar to the one that we have in South Australia that has been working for close on three decades. It's not rocket science. It works.

We've been making considerable progress, but, as many in this place know, the Housing Australia Future Fund is critical to our housing agenda. The HAFF will fund tens of thousands of social and affordable rental homes, with 30,000 homes in the first five years. The only thing stopping us from being able to get a start on building those extra 30,000 homes is a truly unholy alliance between the Liberal and National parties and the Greens. People in this place say they want a solution to the housing crisis, but actions speak louder than words.

Labor has always been the party that supports social and affordable housing. We're not pretending that we can fix the housing problem overnight. Houses do take time to build. We're not pretending that the HAFF is the solution to everything. It is part of a raft of housing measures, many of which I have listed here and many of which are already underway. We know that, after a wasted decade when it comes to housing, there is much to do to ease pressure on Australians, but we are getting on with it. I'd encourage those who are holding back progress to quit their grandstanding, no matter how many likes it gets on social media, and get out of the way. The Albanese government has our constituents at heart, and we need to provide housing.

Digital Economy

Mr FLETCHER (Bradfield—Manager of Opposition Business) (16:39): The Australian economy has experienced significant digital transformation over the last decade. Ride-sharing technologies, online accommodation providers and online shopping are all digital platforms that have empowered consumers and businesses with greater choice and convenience. They have helped foster a more competitive marketplace. There's another technology that could deliver real consumer benefits: digital currency. The potential efficiency gains and consumer benefits from using blockchain technology as a means of recording and executing transactions could be very substantial. That's why it's pleasing to see the Reserve Bank of Australia conducting a trial of a central bank digital currency in partnership with the Digital Finance Cooperative Research Centre.

In recent weeks I have had the chance to meet with some of the companies participating in the trial. One project, led by fintech business NotCentralised, is testing the use of digital currency to address the problem of subcontractors in the construction sector not being paid. This problem could be addressed by making payments in digital currency and attaching one or more conditions to the payment so that the money is automatically released when those conditions are met. For example, the head contractor would pay the electrical contractor in digital currency with the embedded condition that the payment is released when an independent third party, such as a certifier, issues a certificate confirming the work has been done. Importantly, the subcontractor would know the payment would flow

once the certificate was issued. Another company, Unison, is looking at digital currency as a way to allow a business to receive payment from a third party on an invoice it has issued to a customer. During the trial, the invoices would be transformed into automated payment tools and fractionable, high-liquidity assets. Small and medium-sized businesses could benefit from improvements to supply chain finance efficiencies and a possible reduction in financing costs. Fintech company Imperium Markets operates in exchange for buyers and sellers of bonds. The company is leading a project showing that bonds and deposits can be traded and settled instantly. Currently, bonds sit in escrow for one or two days after a trade but, if parties buying and selling bonds used digital currency, payment could be made instantly, removing the escrow period. Innovative payment platform Manoeuvre, another trial participant, is using the trial to explore cross-border settlement and custody. By increasing their exposure to blockchain technology, they anticipate being able to identify opportunities to improve foreign-exchange transactions through improvements in transparency and speed.

I must confess that, prior to these visits, I was somewhat sceptical about digital currency. I associated it with offerings like Bitcoin and Ethereum, which seemed to me to be vehicles for speculation and hype, bedevilled by the fundamental problem that there was no reliable way for the holder of digital currency to convert that holding at a reliable valuation into cash issued by sovereign nation and widely accepted as a medium of exchange. But these meetings over the past few weeks have been very instructive as each of these companies has explained to me the potential that they see for blockchain-based digital currency to allow people and businesses to transact with each other in more speedy, flexible and efficient ways. In many of the trials that I described, there are real businesses and transactions involved. NotCentralised, for example, informs me it is having its technology used in a building project in Queensland, and Unison plans to use its technology in transactions involving a motor vehicle dealer.

It's also interesting to consider the opportunities for a central bank digital currency issued by a globally respected jurisdiction such as Australia to potentially become used by people in other countries where the rule of law is not as robust as in Australia. I think that is a relevant consideration as we think about the digital economy opportunities for Australia. We have, as a nation, made significant progress in the digital economy. There's more to do. A central bank digital currency is an interesting area to explore. I commend the Reserve Bank, the Digital Finance Cooperative Reserve Centre and the trial participants, and I look forward to learning about the results of these trials.

Premier of Western Australia Western Australia Government

Ms MASCARENHAS (Swan) (16:44): It's been a big week in politics. In this place we've passed the Constitution Alteration (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice) 2023. Also, when I touched down in Canberra on Monday, I learnt that the great WA premier Mark McGowan had resigned. Being the Premier of WA demands more than just political acumen. It requires vision, integrity and the ability to navigate challenges while serving the best interests of the state who often views its needs as unique from those who hail from the east coast.

On the national stage, Mark McGowan is known for stepping up and leading in a crisis. We lived virtually COVID-free when we didn't have vaccinations, which meant we could go jogging and eat kebabs whenever we liked. I also think it would be useful to highlight some of McGowan's fantastic achievements during his time as Premier. The McGowan government diversified the WA economy through the jobs plan and the economic recovery plan. The government was still able to achieve these ambitious policy goals through COVID while delivering six consecutive budget surpluses.

Western Australia has recorded the lowest average unemployment rate in the country since 2021, with strong wages across all sectors. The best wages policy for workers is a jobs policy that targets high employment, and the McGowan government has delivered this in spades. During the pandemic we learnt that we should make more things here, and McGowan knew that this was good policy before the pandemic. The McGowan government returned railcar manufacturing to WA at the Bellevue Railcar Manufacturing Facility, and in doing so created 200 long-term manufacturing jobs. This righted a terrible wrong of the Court Liberal government, which closed the Midland Railway Workshops in 1993, instantly destroying a key industrial base and skills capacity in Western Australia.

Another signature achievement of the McGowan government is METRONET, which is about enhancing Perth's public transport systems and creating a world-class transportation network. This project was partly funded by the Commonwealth government and encompasses the construction of new railway lines, expansion of existing lines, lifting dangerous level crossings and generally improving Perth's connectivity. Fundamentally, a train station at Perth Airport makes us a world-class city. The Forrestfield and airport line was opened last year, and I was lucky enough to attend the opening with the Prime Minister and premier Mark McGowan. This link between the city centre and the Perth Airport is a very exciting development for Perth people.

Finally, the achievement I would also mention—which is probably my favourite and isn't talked about enough—is Collie's Just Transition Plan. For those that don't know much about Collie, it is a coalmining town that has existed

for many decades, and it's where we have many coal-fired power stations. The McGowan government announced the closure of coal-fired power stations by 2030. By doing this, it provided the community with knowledge of what the phase-out would look like, but part of this is looking at a just and orderly transition and making sure we look at the way those workers transition from one industry to another.

This is a policy area that's particularly close to my heart because I grew up in a mining town. I grew up in a Nickel mining town, and when my dad was made redundant there was no opportunity for a just transition. The Labor government is looking at how we do this in a smart way, where we look at workers but we also look at our energy needs as well. We will continue to make use of our great bounty of critical minerals, and what we can do simultaneously is add value to the things we mine and make sure we have more advanced manufacturing in these regions.

When Mark McGowan was first elected as Premier, the state budget of WA was running on empty and unemployment was close to six per cent. The Hon. Roger Cook inherits a very different Western Australia—one that is thriving. I'm looking forward to seeing the way that Roger leads this mighty state. I will say that he is smart, energetic and also compassionate.

Canning Electorate: Lakelands Station

Mr HASTIE (Canning) (16:49): For the residents of Lakelands, Madora Bay, San Remo and Meadow Springs, the wait is almost over. In 10 days the long awaited Lakelands train station will finally open. This piece of infrastructure is the result of years of tireless advocacy from the North Mandurah community—a community who fought hard for this project despite opposition and criticism from WA Labor. Lakelands and its surrounds is home to more than 20,000 people, mostly young families. Lakelands has a number of schools, with another planned to open in nearby Madora Bay in 2025.

This Liberal funded station was planned before the construction of the Mandurah train line and will fill a 23-kilometre gap between Mandurah and Warnbro. It will be a time-saver and opportunity-maker for locals, making the lives of many a whole lot easier. One Lakelands resident, Tony, told me he would regain 90 minutes of valuable time with his family each day once the station opens, because locals like him will no longer be forced to waste time travelling south before heading back north.

The Lakelands train station didn't happen overnight. In fact, some residents have been waiting decades for this station to arrive. I first heard their frustrations while door-knocking eight years ago. Their message was clear. They were promised a train station, and they were upset that it hadn't been developed. When the suburb was developed nearly two decades ago, residents were sold lots on the promise of a train station. They were told that they would have access to public transport at their fingertips, meaning no sitting in traffic at peak hour or putting up with the challenges of a congested train station in central Mandurah.

But more than a decade later there was still no train station in Lakelands, and they were angry that Labor wasn't listening. Their wishes were being ignored by their state Labor MPs, so together with my community we built a strong grassroots campaign to secure funding. What did WA Labor do? They relentlessly opposed this. The McGowan government was intent on building a station at Karnup instead of at Lakelands, and this was despite then Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, Alannah MacTiernan, stating back in 2008: 'We made it very clear in the master plan that future stations would be built and that one of the stations would be Lakelands. We stand by that.' Ms MacTiernan went on to say: 'I agree absolutely. I can understand that the communities of Lakelands and Madora Bay would like a new railway station. It would be very good for them.'

Indeed, that same year the member for Mandurah, David Templeman, said: 'Frankly, Mandurah needs a new train station. My preferred location is the locality of Lakelands.' It's worth noting that, for years, the member for Mandurah sat across from Premier Mark McGowan at the cabinet table without securing a single dollar for the station. That is not something the community will forget. Labor's opposition to the train station continued with transport minister and recently factionally anointed Labor deputy leader Rita Saffioti mocked federal Liberal support for the project as 'embarrassing' and a 'shallow commitment'. This is extraordinary, given the former coalition government delivered \$64 million—80 per cent of total funding—to get this project off the ground. Others in Labor dismissed it as 'the train station no-one needs'. The evidence is clear. Labor had to be dragged kicking and screaming every step of the way. It's embarrassing that they now want to take credit for a project they fought so hard against.

Labor's late change of mind only happened because locals refused to back down. So let me say this very clearly. If it was up to Labor, if it was not for the community's hard-fought campaign, we would not be opening this train station this month. As a community we fought hard. Faced with a united local campaign and the \$64 million that I secured from the former coalition government, Labor had no choice but to come to the table. We made them listen. They didn't want the train station, but we are delivering it in ten days time. I'm very excited by it. I grew up in Sydney, and I lived three minutes from a train station. My parents put me on a train at 10 years old, and I still

remember the freedom I felt using public transport. So for many kids, particularly in Mandurah, and for many people who waste time and lose a lot of time sitting in traffic and congestion, this train station is a game-changer. I fought for it, I represented you here and I'm glad that, together, we are delivering it.

International Relations: Australia and Malaysia

Mr LIM (Tangney) (16:53): Recently I attended an event hosted by the Australia Malaysia Business Chamber. Australia and Malaysia have a longstanding friendship built on shared history, exceptional people-to-people links and strong bilateral cooperation from World War II through to our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This year, 2023, marks 68 years of Australia's diplomatic presence in Malaysia.

Not long after the election, in June 2022, the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator the Hon. Penny Wong, travelled to Kuala Lumpur and Kota Kinabalu in Sabah, a region with longstanding ties to Australia and a region where the foreign minister was from. During the visit, Foreign Minister Wong reaffirmed Australia's commitment to being comprehensive strategy partners and discussed economic recovery, climate action, education ties and health security. The visit showcased the deep and enduring friendship between Australia and Malaysia.

It is no secret that Malaysia is one of Australia's key trading partners, and the two countries have a longstanding relationship. In recent years, there has been a renewed focus on strengthening this relationship, with both countries recognising the benefits of increased trade and investment ties. Australia is committed to engaging with Malaysia and the ASEAN region more broadly to facilitate trade and investment flows. This includes exploring new opportunities to expand our already strong trade and investment relationship, including through the Malaysia-Australia Free Trade Agreement, MAFTA.

MAFTA is a comprehensive and high-quality agreement that further integrates the Australian economy into the fast-growing ASEAN region. This agreement entered into force in January 2013 and grew on the benefits already flowing to the Australian economy from the ASEAN-Australian-New Zealand Free Trade Area. Malaysia is also a party to both the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership. Australian businesses can use one of the four trade agreements to trade with Malaysia. These multiple channels and pathways for trade to take place between Australia and Malaysia go to show how both countries value cooperation and continue to endeavour to build platforms to collaborate.

Our geographical links are what naturally draw our two countries together, as Australia is within the neighbourhood of ASEAN countries. This has allowed for businesses in many industries to flourish and for opportunities to arise. But we cannot simply rest on our laurels and rely on our past accomplishments. We must continue to work together to build on the strong foundation that has been laid before us and to look forward to the future with a sense of shared purpose and optimism. This is why the Australian government is committed to deepening our ties of friendship and cooperation in the years ahead. Whether it is through increased trade or investment, through cultural or educational exchange programs or through joint efforts to address global challenges such as climate change and terrorism, we have a shared responsibility to work towards a better future for our region and for our neighbourhood.

The Australian government has recognised the importance of building strong business ties between Malaysia and Australia by providing support and resources to businesses looking to expand their operations in Malaysia and the ASEAN region. Through our trade and investment agency, Austrade, we offer a range of services, including market intelligence, business matching and trade missions. Australia and Malaysia share a long history of economic and cultural ties, which has been further strengthened by our shared geography and a common interest in regional stability and prosperity. It is through organisations such as the Australian Business Chamber, which plays a crucial role in fostering trade networks and people-to-people relationships between our two countries, that opportunities for trade arise. I look forward to seeing more pathways and opportunities created for the business community to flourish in both Australia and Malaysia, building on our commitment to the future of our shared prosperity and cooperation.

House adjourned at 17:00

Thursday, 1 June 2023

The **DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Payne)** took the chair at 09:30.

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Indi Electorate: Health Care

Dr HAINES (Indi) (09:30): Today I want to share a vision of our rural health workforce. It's a vision to train our next generation of doctors, nurses and allied health practitioners; to attract research excellence and innovation to our region; to bring together our major health education institutes, TAFEs, universities, Defence and Albury Wodonga Health. It's a vision to make Albury Wodonga Health the regional health research and education capital of Australia. We will do this by establishing a collaborative education and research centre co-located at the new hospital in Albury currently under redevelopment. This centre will be a purpose-built facility which brings together clinical practice, research, education and training. It will pool resources for regional health research, and it will enhance our cross-border data collection and analysis.

Albury Wodonga Health is the only cross-border health service in the nation. It services a large catchment of 300,000 people with higher than the national rates of chronic disease. Within 15 years this catchment will grow by a third. By 2040, we will need a hospital and workforce capable of handling 150,000 emergency presentations, 40,000 surgeries and 1,900 births every year. This centre is the key to attracting, training and retaining high-quality staff to meet this surge in demand. This joint proposal has come from Albury Wodonga Health, the University of New South Wales, La Trobe University, Charles Sturt University, Wodonga TAFE and TAFE NSW. There is potential for the Army School of Health to join as a partner as well.

Last month I sat down with these partners to discuss what this proposal could mean for us because, if there is one thing I know, it's rural health care. Before becoming an MP, I spent my whole career in rural health, firstly as a clinical nurse and midwife, and then as a researcher. One of the key things that were looking at was one of the best ways to grow and retain a strong regional health workforce. I've seen how people suffer when we fall short, but I have also seen what success looks like. At the University of Melbourne Department of Rural Health we pioneered this model, and I want to see this grow and develop on the border.

Trust me when I say I know this proposal will work. I know what this means for our region. It's a big vision. Like every journey, it starts with a single step, and the first small step is this one: a modest funding request to scope and develop this proposal. When I leave this Chamber, I'm off to see the Minister for Health and Aged Care. I will also be seeing the Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Health. I hope they get used to seeing me, because we need this funding and we need it urgently to get this journey on its way.

Comrades Marathon

Wreck Bay

Dr LEIGH (Fenner—Assistant Minister for Competition, Charities and Treasury) (09:33): In Reconciliation Week, it is appropriate that that House has passed the Voice to Parliament referendum bill, now for consideration with the Senate.

It was a pleasure on Tuesday morning to join the member for Robertson and other conveners of Parliamentary Friends of Running, the member for Gippsland and the member for Warringah, with Rob de Castella's Indigenous Marathon Foundation group and a range of Canberra supporters of the work that the Indigenous Marathon Foundation does. I am pleased to be a long-time supporter of the foundation, having run the six World Marathon Majors as a supporter of theirs. I'm off to South Africa on Sunday week to run the 87-kilometre Comrades ultramarathon, the world's largest and oldest ultramarathon.

We are fortunate now to have in the parliament 11 First Nations representatives, including six in the Labor caucus. My own understanding of First Nations issues has been greatly enhanced by the privilege of representing the people of Wreck Bay in the Jervis Bay community. When Canberra was formed, the notion was that every capital city needed a port, and so the electorate of Fenner includes the Jervis Bay Territory. Wreck Bay is a beautiful community with thousands of years of connection to the land.

Over recent years though the housing has fallen into some disrepair. There are 152 people across 49 households in Wreck Bay, according to the 2021 census, and there has been a degree of disrepair in the housing stock. In last year's budget, we invested \$5 million for repairing housing in Wreck Bay; in this budget, we've made a historic investment of \$45 million. I was pleased to join the minister for regional development, Kristy McBain, in Wreck Bay recently to discuss this announcement with the community and how houses will be brought up to standard in conjunction with the Wreck Bay board.

I want to acknowledge members of the board—Annette Brown, Beverly Ardler, Jeffrey McLeod, Erica Ardler, Julie Moore, Jeff Williams, Gavin McLeod, Paul Ardler and Darryn Sturgeon—and thank them for the work they do for the community.

I recognise too that there has been a recent settlement reached in the PFAS contamination issue. And while this comes with a monetary settlement, it has been described by the plaintiffs as being 'bittersweet'. Damage has been done and I acknowledge the hurt that this issue has caused to members of the Wreck Bay community.

Bowman Electorate: Telecommunications

Mr PIKE (Bowman) (09:36): Poor mobile phone reception can be a significant inconvenience and safety risk for those living in certain areas of the Redlands. It makes it difficult for people to stay connected with loved ones, conduct business and even make emergency calls. This is not just an issue in the far reaches of the bay islands in my electorate; it's also experienced in many pockets of our mainland suburbs.

Official mobile coverage maps are often not accurate to the realities on the ground. In the Redlands, many known areas of poor mobile reception are not reflected in these official maps which are used to determine new network improvements. In today's digital age, having a reliable mobile phone service is not a luxury but a necessity. It should be a reasonable expectation that people living in our suburban community should be able to enjoy excellent mobile coverage. I'm determined to advocate for better mobile phone coverage across the Redlands.

This month I've sought the help of local Redlanders to develop a map of local mobile reception strength. With the help of several thousand local responses to my survey, I've been able to identify specific blackspot areas and better understand the extent of the local problem. The data clearly demonstrates reception issues exist at North Stradbroke Island, the SMBIs, Point Halloran, Victoria Point, southern Redland, Bay, large areas of Cleveland and Thornlands, Sheldon, Birkdale, Mount Cotton and other notable pockets throughout the city. This information will inform my efforts to work with mobile phone companies, all levels of government and other stakeholders to deliver infrastructure improvements.

The former federal Liberal and Nationals government funded more than 1,300 mobile base stations across Australia to improve coverage, including improvements on Russell Island and North Stradbroke Island in my electorate. I'll be applying pressure on the new government to match this level of investment and ensure that we get our fair share for the Redlands. Of course, we don't hold much hope given that the most recent round of blackspot funding saw 74 per cent go to Labor held electorates. This is despite the ALP holding only one-third of seats in regional areas.

I'm pleased to see that the Auditor-General has advised there is merit, including a potential audit topic, for round 6 of the Mobile Black Spot Program in their work program. I hope this audit goes ahead and some recommendations get us to a point where we can let the data and the evidence lead investment decisions rather than politics. I want to thank all the Redlanders who took the time to rate the strength of their signal through my survey. By participating in this community survey process, you have helped make a positive change in our community.

Hasluck Electorate: Cost of Living

Ms LAWRENCE (Hasluck) (09:39): People all around Australia, and in fact all around the world, are experiencing higher inflation and the difficulties it then causes. It is truly a global problem caused, in large part, by disrupted supply chains during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and of course the Ukraine-Russia war. Knowing that it is a shared global problem does not make it any easier for people, and in Hasluck people are doing it tough.

Hasluck has a very high population of people paying mortgages—52.3 per cent compared to the national average of 35 per cent—and they are wearing the brunt of any increases in interest rates to reign in inflation. Additionally, 18.6 per cent are renting, and the supply demand constraints in housing mean that they are also experiencing increases in rent. When I consider policy and legislation in this place, and in my work as a member of the House economics committee, I keep those people, fully 70 per cent of my constituents, front of mind.

The Albanese government has implemented a range of measures both in the budget and over the last 12 months to address cost-of-living pressures. This government has been careful, however, to do this in a way that will not add to or exacerbate inflation. The government has supported substantial wage increases for those on the minimum wage, and, in the budget, supported a 15 per cent increase in salaries for workers in aged care. These are life-changing increases, and I call upon all those aged-care facilities in my electorate and around Australia to sign the pledge to pass on those increases in full.

From 1 July, just over a month away, 96 per cent of families who use child care will be better off under the government's cheaper-childcare package; this is over 5,600 families in Hasluck alone. The budget also contained measures for fee-free TAFE for 300,000 extra students, ensuring people can skill up as they need to and take charge

of their career as we transition to newer energy jobs and pathways—particularly, again, in Hasluck, at our Midland TAFE facility, where we have a renewable energy trade focus.

After taking bold action to cap energy prices late last year, the government has provided, in concert with states and territories, further energy price relief in the budget—a measure that will help over five million households and over one million businesses. The budget assisted those who currently depend on our social security safety net with increases in JobSeeker and youth allowance, and an increase in rent assistance when it's most needed. In the area of health there are cheaper medicines due to the cap on prescriptions and the 60-day script measures, together with the tripling of the Medicare rebate for groups most in need.

When I'm out doorknocking in my electorate, my constituents speak to me about the issues that matter the most. It's pleasing for me to respond and say, 'We are listening, we're hearing you,' and we're responding with the policy measures to create relief in those homes.

AUKUS

Mr VIOLI (Casey) (09:42): It was a pleasure to launch the Parliamentary Friends of AUKUS this week, alongside my colleague, my fellow co-chair from the other side of the House, Luke Gosling MP. The AUKUS pact with the United Kingdom and the United States represents Australia's most significant leap in defence capability in our nation's history, born under the hard work of the former Liberal government and particularly the former prime minister, Scott Morrison. Not only will AUKUS deliver a world-class submarine fleet; our nation will also benefit from emerging technologies such as quantum computing, artificial intelligence, undersea drones and hypersonics. The AUKUS pact should be, and is, above politics. It is an ambitious partnership that will outlast this government and this parliament, which is why I decided to co-chair the parliamentary friends group on AUKUS.

It was the former Liberal government that agreed to the creation of the Trilateral Security Partnership, noting the security challenges in the Indo-Pacific region. We recognised the importance of keeping Australians safe and strengthening our close ties with our partners and friends in the UK and the US, and it's wonderful to see the new government has continued this pact.

At our first event, we heard from Commodore Peter Scott about the life of a submariner. Commodore Scott joined the Royal Australian Navy as a 17-year-old midshipman in 1983, and has recently published his book, *Running Deep: An Australian Submarine Life*. It was great to be joined at our first event by former PM Morrison, who was instrumental in the creation of the AUKUS pact, and to hear his insights and appreciation for this new friendship group as a platform to maintain momentum on AUKUS both here in Australia and with our overseas counterparts.

Our vision for this group is that it becomes a place to discuss the many considerations brought about by the AUKUS agreement, from costs to workforce and everything in between. Our nation has a lot of work to do, and this group provides a platform for parliamentarians to facilitate these nation-building discussions. At our launch, many opportunities and challenges were raised, including how we attract young people to a career in the submarine industry.

This is new territory for Australia. That's why bipartisanship is so vital. I look forward to having many more of these important discussions with stakeholders, industry and those from the other side of the House, to ensure we can make the most of the AUKUS pact for the benefit and security of our nation.

Bruce Electorate: Visas

Mr HILL (Bruce) (09:45): We all love to talk about the things that make our communities and electorates distinct. You represent the national capital, a beautiful place—with terrible mobile phone reception, as we know. The thing that distinguishes my community in south-east Melbourne though is the human diversity. The cities of Greater Dandenong and Casey are some of the most multicultural places in the country. Greater Dandenong is the most multicultural place. There are people from more than 150 countries speaking more than 200 languages, with more than 100 different faith groups, every day.

We are rich with that human diversity but we are also globally connected, and daily life isn't just local. People are constantly connected to all parts of the globe, every corner of the world, every day, every hour of every day, on WhatsApp, Facebook, FaceTime, Signal, Zoom, Teams meetings, staying in touch in every time zone with family, friends, loved ones, doing business. So my electorate office is an outlier.

It's a little bit weird when I talk to my colleagues. The biggest issue is not Centrelink, it's not the tax office, it's not the NDIS, it's not the NBN, it's not emergency relief, it's not Medicare. Eighty or 90 per cent of the stuff that comes through my front door, that my staff deal with, is cleaning up the shocking mess of nearly one million visa and citizenship applications that this mob, to their eternal shame, left behind.

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr HILL: They laugh! They just don't get it. This is an essential service in a multicultural community. They're still arguing about it! We've reduced this million backlog by more than 40 per cent. Visitors seeking weddings, birthdays, funerals, time together—most of those visas now take a few days. But there are also citizenship delays, and partner visas, parent visas, child visas and orphan visas are banked up.

We've employed 645 new staff and sped up the processing. Our country should have welcomed thousands of citizens years ago, instead of leaving them with their lives in limbo. Less than three per cent of the case load now have been waiting more than five years, and we're getting through them. The average time's down to seven months. Partner visas, though? This mob will never apologise to the couples that I've spoken to who've lost their chance in life to ever have children, waiting four or five years. Their time for IVF has passed.

The opposition laugh about this when you raise it, but these are real human beings not statistics. The worst, of course, is people from Afghanistan. Thousands in my electorate, with more than 10,000 people having been born in Afghanistan, have never met their own children or haven't seen them in years—five, six, seven, eight, nine or 10 years! That's deliberate discrimination.

There was a rule the Liberals put in place, to grab these people's visas. We've removed it and we're now working through this case load. Nothing can ever make up for those lost years though. Shame on you.

Deakin Electorate: Infrastructure

Mr SUKKAR (Deakin) (09:48): At the same time that this Labor government wants to bring in 1.5 million migrants we're seeing savage cuts to infrastructure projects throughout the eastern suburbs. So for anybody who's dealing with traffic bottlenecks and issues with parking stations, right now, it'll be a whole lot worse when Labor implement their 1.5 million 'Big Australia' policy. In addition to that, Labor is now cutting or threatening to cut a range of projects in my electorate of Deakin.

The Labor Party is threatening to abolish, to cancel, a \$30-million project to improve car parking at Ringwood station. Ringwood station is one of the most important transport hubs in the eastern suburbs, where you can't get a car park after 7 o'clock in the morning. We now have the Labor Party threatening to cancel the project funded by the former coalition government. This is a project where the local Maroondah City Council has done a great job in pulling together a wonderful plan for the precinct, to ensure that people can get parking when they arrive at their station. But, no, the Labor Party is threatening to cancel that.

This is in addition to the Labor Party threatening to cancel a nearly \$50 million upgrade to Canterbury Road, to add both inbound and outbound lanes. Everybody who lives in the vicinity of Canterbury Road—in Bayswater North, Kilsyth South and Croydon South—knows the traffic congestion on Canterbury Road just gets worse, and now Labor is threatening to cancel that project.

In addition they're threatening to cancel the Tortice Drive and Warrandyte Road intersection upgrade. It is a very small upgrade, but it's important for safety. People can't do a right-hand turn out of Tortice Drive in the morning without fear of an accident. It's dangerous for pedestrians. The Labor Party is threatening to cancel that project.

This is, sadly, in addition to the project that we know has been cancelled by the Labor government. One of the first things they did when they were elected was cancel the \$50 million upgrade to Dorset Road in Croydon. Everybody who travels along Dorset Road knows that it is becoming busier and busier and is in desperate need of that upgrade.

The reality is that Daniel Andrews dictates to this Labor government where they spend their infrastructure dollars in Victoria. He gets his pet projects funded and everybody in the eastern suburbs is required to suffer with worse congestion and worse access to public transport. It's a disgrace that the Prime Minister and this Labor government are dancing to the tune of Daniel Andrews.

Cambodia

Mr BURNELL (Spence) (09:51): I start by offering my congratulations to Hun Sen for his party's crushing victory in Cambodia's recent election. Oh, no, that's right; I may have jumped the gun on this one. Cambodia's general election has not yet occurred and will instead be held in 52 days time, with polling day being 23 July. One could be mistaken for thinking that the outcome of this election is a foregone conclusion. Is it because Hun Sen is loved by the people of Cambodia to such a profound extent? It might explain how Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party can claim to have received over 75 per cent of the vote at the last election with a reported turnout of 83 per cent. That result led to the CPP winning 125 out of the 125 seats in the National Assembly. This result puts even the great Mark McGowan's victory in WA back in 2021 to utter shame.

The CPP are one big election-winning machine. It could not possibly be due to every opposition voice being deemed to be treasonous as well! One of which is Kem Sokha, who was recently handed a 27-year prison sentence for treason, taking away his rights to vote or stand for office indefinitely.

Across the globe elections can be a time of great uncertainty. Some countries do not even pretend to have elections that are free and fair. Other countries may adopt a more hybrid approach to their democracies. I've been involved in many elections in my time, as have many in this chamber today. Some elections you can observe from the outset do not resemble what you and I would expect to see in an election. Opposition movements in Cambodia, like the Candlelight Party, have been disqualified from even running and even fielding candidates on 23 July. Detractors omit the fact that the Cambodian government goes to great lengths to try to engage with members of the opposition—or, alternatively, try them in absentia.

On the subject of those in absentia from Cambodia, I look to our proud Cambodian diaspora, both those located in my electorate of Spence through a number of organisations and places of worship and those in groups, such as the Australian-South East Asian Network. We are better as a nation for the melting pot that is our multicultural diaspora in Australia. I am blessed to possess so many within my electorate of Spence. Whilst on 23 July nobody within our Cambodian diaspora will be shocked to hear of the eventual election results, I will continue to stand with our Australian Cambodian community.

Bushfires

Mr STEVENS (Sturt) (09:54): I thank the nearly 1,000 members of my electorate who have signed the joint petition that I established with two of my state colleagues—Jack Batty, the member for Bragg, and John Gardner, the member for Morialta—calling for appropriate levels of investment in fuel load management coming into the bushfire season in the upcoming summer period. Regrettably, the Labor government have not put the appropriate resources towards the management of fuel load and other important initiatives for bushfire preparedness. We are running a community campaign calling on them to put those investments in place, because we know in the foothills of the Adelaide Hills—not just in my electorate and Jack's and John's electorates but throughout the Adelaide Hills—there is an enormous bushfire risk. It has been the case in decades gone past that there have been very tragic bushfires that have gotten out of control out there, particularly the Ash Wednesday bushfires that we've spoken about in this chamber before. This is something that should be bipartisan.

We need to back our CFS brigades in particular, who have the on-the-ground knowledge and expertise. They merely need the resources to make sure that they can do the job they want to do, which is manage fuel load, make sure that fire access ways are cleared as the season approaches and make sure that they've got contingencies in place and they've got all of the intel and information that they need.

We also need to make sure that we're supporting communities to have bushfire action plans. Everyone that lives in a bushfire risk area needs to have a plan for what they will do if the unthinkable happens and they get a communication that indicates they need to be wary of that risk and probably have a plan to leave their property. No-one should be coming up with a plan for what to do when they get that text message or hear about it on the news; they should have a plan ready to go. I think that is the case broadly in the communities of the Adelaide Hills, although, obviously, when people have recently moved in there and haven't had that level of experience, we want to keep the awareness up. Thank you very much to those that have joined this campaign. Thank you to my state colleagues that are a part of this important awareness initiative.

It's a community initiative. Government plays a part, and we want the government to be investing in appropriate resources to make sure that our community brigades have got what they need. We also want to work together as a community, not play politics with this, and to do everything we can to make sure that we're prepared. We hope nothing catastrophic will happen this summer, but the most important thing is that we prepare for the worst, and that's how we can avoid it.

Swan Electorate: Roads

Ms MASCARENHAS (Swan) (09:57): Sometimes, when engineers design roads, they do it without foreshadowing increases in traffic flows, and sometimes some intersections are problematic and are known as black spots. I'd like to recognise the safety initiative that the Keating Labor government introduced around black spots, realising that small, local fixes to our traffic problems can save lives.

Today I'd like to discuss three projects in the electorate of Swan that have been granted a total of \$600,000 in black spot funding. These three projects are a part of 24 projects across Western Australia that are set to benefit from this program. Thanks to this program, \$225,000 will go to the installation of traffic calming measures on the northern approach of the Marquis Street roundabout in Bentley. This is one of those big roundabouts near Curtin University. As a former Curtin student, I saw firsthand how backed up and chaotic that roundabout could become during peak hour traffic. Another \$225,000 project is around restricting right-hand turns onto Lawson Street from Farnham Street in Bentley. This will stop risky right-hand turns across two lanes of traffic and ensure that people aren't waiting for a tiny gap in traffic on Manning Road before they can turn.

I wrote to my constituents to let them know about these foreshadowed improvements, and I'm pleased to see that locals are excited to see these upgrades. I've received several letters of thanks, and I'd like to comment on one from Isaac. Isaac has been living in Bentley for more than 15 years, and the Marquis Street roundabout intersection has been dangerous for all of that time, particularly between Mondays and Saturdays. For Isaac, the effect of this particular roundabout has been profound for his life. When he does school drop-off, he could do the five-minute quick way via the roundabout, which is actually quite dangerous, but instead he chooses to take a 15- to 20-minute detour to make sure that his kids get to school safely. This extra 20 to 30 minutes each school day will save Isaac up to 80 hours a year. This is more time with family, less fuel cost, less greenhouse gases and less traffic. I'd like to thank Isaac for his email. His story is a great example of how the Black Spot Program is working in my electorate. The Lawson Street intersection and the Marquis Street roundabout black spots are no more than 500 metres away from one another. I'm looking forward to the great work that Main Roads and the City of Canning do to work together to improve the safety and flow to and from Curtin University. There's also Rivervale, which has some great calming initiatives as well, on Kooyong Road and Francisco Street. This will help improve traffic flows near child care.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Ananda-Rajah): In accordance with standing order 193, the time for members' constituency statements has concluded.

BILLS

Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2023-2024

Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2023-2024

Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Bill (No. 1) 2023-2024

Second Reading

Cognate debate.

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr LIM (Tangney) (10:00): Today I stand before you with great pride and excitement to share the remarkable achievement of the Albanese Labor government. As we celebrate our first anniversary of forming the Albanese Labor government and my first year of being the member for Tangney, I am filled with an overwhelming sense of happiness and relief as I address you all, for I have witnessed a remarkable transformation in the hearts and minds of those I serve. Just a few weeks before the budget announcement, I went doorknocking in my electorate, and the despair and frustration that came from my constituents really affected me. What they said echoed the same feeling as though one were crying for help. It was a desperate plea for change. For far too long, the unaffordability of health care has cast a dark shadow upon the lives of our fellow Australians. After a once-in-100-year pandemic that changed the world for many, the rising cost of living, coupled with rising medical fees, had created a barrier between those in need and the essential care they sought. I listened attentively as they shared their stories of financial strain, recounting the many painful decisions they were forced to make. To choose between putting food on the table and seeking medication or medical attention was an unthinkable predicament, yet it plagued the lives of countless individuals and families in my electorate of Tangney. But today I stand here with renewed hope and unwavering pride, for many of my constituents' pleas have been heard.

The recent federal budget announcement is the largest ever investment into bulk-billing in the history of Medicare, an historic \$3.5 billion investment that will triple the bulk billing incentive and give an immediate injection to support patients and general practice, strengthening the heart of Medicare. For my electorate of Tangney, it provides an immediate benefit to 73,772 constituents: 31,164 people under the age of 16 and 42,608 concession cardholders will all get bulked-billed care, thanks to this multibillion-dollar investment. Imagine the relief and peace of mind this will bring to families across our nation. No longer will parents have to think twice about taking their child to the doctor when they fall ill, fearing the financial strains it may cause. No longer will seniors have to choose between their necessary medication and putting food on the table. No longer will individuals with low incomes delay seeking medical attention until their condition worsens. This investment will transform the lives of millions of Australians, as I know it will in Tangney, ensuring that they can access timely health care without the risk of financial stress.

As I reflect upon my most recent doorknocking, which was just last weekend, I want to share with you all the change in my constituents' disposition. The same individuals who once wore expressions of despair now bear smiles of gratitude and hope. They have eagerly shared their relief with me, recounting the new-found peace that comes with the knowledge that health care is no longer a luxury but a right accessible to all. My constituents' positive feedback is not merely because of monetary investment but because it represents a profound shift in our nation's

priorities. Health care is a fundamental right, not a privilege reserved for the fortunate few. It reflects our society's compassion, fairness and commitment to the wellbeing of every individual in Australia.

Unfortunately, bulk-billing has been on a sharp decline for the past nine years. The neglect of the previous government towards Medicare has made it increasingly difficult for every Australian to afford basic medical services. Coupled with the increasing cost of living, financial barriers have hindered many Australians from receiving the health care they need. This significant allocation of investment into bulk-billing demonstrates the Albanese Labor government's unwavering commitment to improving the life of all Australians and ensuring access to quality health care, regardless of their socioeconomic status.

The effective planning and compassionate decision by the Albanese Labor government to take a practical measure to break down those barriers and build a more equitable and inclusive healthcare system has been welcomed by many of my constituents. GPs who operate local medical clinics in my electorate wrote to me to welcome this long-awaited investment in bulk-billing. Medical clinics that were on the cusp of not providing bulk-billing services are now planning to restore their bulk-billing program. Bulk-billing has long been the cornerstone of Medicare, providing Australians with the opportunity to receive medical treatment without any out-of-pocket expenses. However, we recognise that more needs to be done to ensure that this essential service reaches every corner of our nation and benefits all Australians, regardless of their financial status. With this unprecedented investment we are expanding the scope of bulk-billing, allowing more providers to offer their services with no additional cost to patients.

Through this funding boost, the Albanese Labor government will also increase rebates by more in a single year than the former government did in seven years. On top of increasing the investment in bulk-billing, we are investing a \$1.5 billion indexation boost to every single Medicare rebate, which increases the amount that your doctor receives for every single Medicare service, reducing the pressure on GPs to charge you more to get the health care you need. By doing so, we are ensuring that every Australian, regardless of their socioeconomic background, can seek medical care when they need it without the burden of worrying about how they will pay for it.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the hardworking Minister for Health and Aged Care, who, despite inheriting a health care system that was underfunded and neglected rose to the occasion, with unwavering determination. To the Minister for Health: I commend you for your tireless efforts in the face of unprecedented challenges. You navigated our nation's health system through the recovery from the pandemic and, as we emerged on the other side, you have laid the foundation for a revival of the pride of our health care system—Medicare. Your commitment to the wellbeing of all Australians, your unwavering dedication to improving access to quality care and your vision for a thriving healthcare sector have been truly commendable.

It is through the leadership of the Albanese Labor government that we stand here today witnessing the dawn of a new era of Medicare. But this investment goes beyond just improving access to health care. It represents the Albanese Labor government's belief in the power of unity and compassion. It demonstrates our commitment to building a society where no-one is left behind, where everyone has the opportunity to live a healthy and fulfilling life. It signifies our collective understanding that the wellbeing of one Australian is intricately linked to the wellbeing of all Australians. The investment into bulk-billing is the Albanese Labor government's stand against inequality in health care. One year has passed since we were entrusted to represent and serve Australians. Affordable health care was one of the biggest concerns raised during the election. I'm honoured to stand here today, one year later, to say how very proud I am of my team, my colleagues and the Albanese Labor government.

I stand before you here today not only as a member of parliament but also as a parent who has experienced firsthand the profound impact of Medicare on the lives of everyday Australians. It is with a grateful heart that I share my personal journey, for it serves as a reminder of the importance of accessible health care and the transformative power of a system designed to put people before profit. In 2006 and 2008 my own daughter faced the unimaginable battle against cancer. The weight of that burden was overwhelming, and in those dark moments my family found solace and strength in the knowledge that we could focus solely on her recovery without the added worry of the potential cost of medical expenses.

Medicare, born out of the vision and compassion of the Labor government, became a consolation for my family. The relief my wife and I felt knowing that our daughter's treatment was covered, that we could solely concentrate on her wellbeing, is indescribable. We were spared the anguish of having to navigate through the financial constraints of medical bills while also struggling with the challenge of my daughter's illness. It is with a deep sense of gratitude that I stand here today knowing that the very system that saved my daughter's life will now be revived and allowed to thrive under a Labor government. As we move forward, let us remember that there is more work to be done for health care and that the Albanese Labor government is working hard to make repairs to Medicare, which was so weakened due to the severe neglect by the previous government.

There are still many hurdles to get through, many lives to be touched and many more stories of hope and gratitude to be shared. It is our duty as representatives of the people of Australia to ensure that the legacy of Medicare endures and its benefit reaches every corner of our nation. Through this budget we have sent a clear message that in our country your socioeconomic status will never be a barrier to receiving the care you deserve. We acknowledge that a healthier Australia is a stronger Australia. We are determined to build a future where good health is within reach for every individual regardless of their circumstances. As we embark on this transformative journey, let us remember that the true strength of a nation lies not in its wealth or power but in its compassion and care for its own people. Thank you, and may this historic investment pave the way for a brighter, healthier future for all Australians.

Mr JOYCE (New England) (10:14): To have to have compassion, you've got to have the economy able to earn the money to do it. What this budget failed to do—using New England as an example—is invest in that crucial infrastructure to drive the economy forward and to keep the money coming in so you can pay for Medicare. I acknowledge the concern that the member for Tangney would have had for his daughter having cancer, but you can only have that compassion if you can pay for it. That way you pay for it is to make sure you have an economy that hums and earns money. But when the Labor Party comes out and cuts money from things like Dungown Dam, that reduces the capacity of this economy to make money. It reduces the employment and manufacturing opportunities that rely on the security of water infrastructure to earn money for the nation to pay for compassion.

When we see Inland Rail kicked into the long grass, we see the Labor Party doesn't have a vision. There's this ridiculous concept where we have an inland rail that doesn't go from Melbourne up to Brisbane. It goes from Melbourne to Parkes and from Newcastle to North Star, and they're not actually connected up. It is just ludicrous. You now have a stranded multibillion dollar investment that is completely and utterly ineffective because it doesn't go from Brisbane down to Melbourne. And they've got no intention of building it. How do you expect to get the economy humming, if you're going to leave the trucks on the road rather than put the transport on the rail, if you can't drive forward these inland towns?

Now everything else is going to reviews—like the Singleton bypass. We've got 19,000 people driving down George Street in the seat of Hunter, which is a Labor seat, and it's on review! So are they just going to continue with this morass of traffic, going through the middle of a country town, when we should have the motorway extended? That bypass should be expedited, not put to a review.

Likewise, there's the Muswellbrook bypass—another review. On the New England Highway there should be a Tenterfield heavy-vehicle bypass. We've got trucks going down to 40 kilometres an hour, loaded with such things as petrol, driving through the middle of a country town. It's taking us not to the country we should be but back to some country from pre-antiquity. These trucks have to be moved out of town. It's safer, it's quicker, it's better for the economy and it drives our capacity to pay for compassion, to pay for the services such as your NDIS and your Medicare. You've got to have an economy that hums.

Now we've got a further impost coming on, an environmental impost, biodiversity offsets. There's this mad fascination with wind factories. There'll be new transmission lines in the seat of New England going from Limbri to Weabonga, over people's farmland—while they see their power bills go through the roof. Their power bills are going through the roof and we're cluttering and littering the landscape.

You'll never see people who hold this as a virtue wanting it in their electorates. No. It's got to be out in regional electorates. You've got to have your virtue somewhere else. Make it a bumper sticker. Put it on your car: 'I love wind factories as long as they're not in Hunters Hill,' 'I love wind factories as long as they are not at Middle Head,' 'I love wind factories as long as they're out in Western Australia or up in New England, where people in other seats that claim the virtue can't see them,' and, at the same time, 'Let's make it so that poor people can't afford their power bills,' because that's what has happened. That's what we've done to them. We've made poor people poorer.

There are so many things. We're trying to move timber again from up above Port Stephens Cutting, which means we have to upgrade Port Stephens Cutting. It's very dangerous having logging trucks go down there. But now that's under review, getting that road fixed: let's just leave it dangerous—let's just leave it dangerous for the mums and dads driving up and down that road. We get to Canberra and become so fascinated with issues inside this building and have no comprehension of people in regional Australia and exactly how their lives are.

Gwydir Highway improvements are also under review. The New England Highway has to be duplicated. That's under review. Even the Goonoo Goonoo Road duplication, from Greg Norman Drive to Calala Lane in Tamworth—\$32 million—is under review. Tamworth is a growing city with a growing water problem. The population's moving up from Sydney into the new suburbs that are being developed all the time. You can see it when you fly over there. But we've got to have the infrastructure to keep up with the growth. The prices of houses in Sydney are becoming too dear, and people are moving out of Sydney and into Tamworth. Being a person who was born there, it amazes me how quickly it has grown.

We also have to look at the budgetary requirements, especially for veterans. We were promised so often that this was going to be better than what we had. It's great to see the minister here. The backlog in veterans affairs was the biggest thing. They haven't got better; they got worse. In the 2022-23 year, Labor's first year in office, just 11 per cent of DRCA liability claims were determined within 100 days. That's worse than the 16 per cent of the previous year, when we were there. In Labor's first year in office, just 90 per cent of the DRCA permanent impairment claims were determined within 100 days. That's worse than the 27 per cent in the previous year. In their first year of office, just 40 per cent of DRCA incapacity claims were determined within the first 100 days. That's worse than the 54 per cent in the previous year.

Even with a greater investment, Labor is doing a worse job. We've seen a massive increase in staffing. DVA average staffing levels have gone from 1,964 to 3,129, but they can't turn around their processing. This delay in processing is one of the hubs of where we are with the royal commission, trying to make sure that this thing actually works. So what is going on? Why are they going backwards? In fact, they managed to create a record in the number of claims that were outstanding. After February it was over 41,132—I can't find the number, but it's around that—and that was worse than any peak that happened under the coalition. It has gone backwards.

Labor has no plans for any new veterans hubs beyond those announced last year, two of which are completing hubs put in place and fully funded by the former coalition government. Because there are no further hubs going forward, that means the Mid North Coast of New South Wales around Coffs Harbour, where so many veterans are, doesn't get one. Wagga Wagga, with the three arms of the Defence Force there, miss out. Mackay miss out. Wide Bay miss out. The Sunshine Coast, greater Melbourne, Mornington Peninsula—that means Labor has axed plans for eight veterans hubs that were fully costed and announced by the previous coalition government.

Veterans employment transition grants such as a Soldier On, disaster relief and payments to RSL have been cut. They were supposed to maintain the incapacity payments for veterans studying. This is where a person is maintained on 100 per cent of their pre-injury earnings so that they can go to a course and get themselves back into society and back onto civvy street with new qualifications to assist them for the rest of their lives. But Labor has got rid of it. At no stage did the government flag that this scheme was a failure or was under review, but it was just lost. Veteran homelessness—the words do not appear once in the portfolio budget statements.

Government members interjecting—

Mr JOYCE: Veteran homelessness—is it there? Veteran homelessness does not appear once in the portfolio budget statements. The reason it's not in the portfolio budget statements is that the minister is not in the cabinet. He is in the back room, and he's not being heard. That's where veterans issues are, in the back room not being heard. We support the Veteran Games, and we hoped that the Labor Party would support the Veteran Games, which are incredibly important, but we don't hear about it. I urge the minister, seeing as he's here, to reassess the decision to reject that funding.

This is something very close to my heart: a program for the funding of World War I unmarked graves has been cut. Labor's first budget last year slashed more than \$2 million from a dedicated program to mark the private graves of World War I veterans. People came back from the First World War, fell on hard times from the atrocious things that happened there, with shell shock and gas, and their lives were completely turned upside down and destroyed. Families fell apart. A lot of those people, when they died, ended up in pauper's graves—unmarked graves—around the countryside. In country areas, we don't even know that the person in that plot served our nation and put their lives on the line for our nation. They're in an unmarked grave.

Now we're talking to people who believe there are probably only a couple of hundred thousand dollars left in the program. I'm going down to Tasmania to talk to some of these people to try and see what we can do to drive this program ahead. Surely if they put their lives on the line for our nation, they deserve the dignity of a grave with a headstone on it that acknowledges them. Surely they deserve that. The World War I unmarked graves funding from the coalition was \$3.7 million over the forward estimates. Labor's funding was \$1.5 million spread across four years, but in 2023-24, there is just \$200,000 allocated for the program. That's on payment measures page 87 if you want to have a read of it—

Mr Keogh interjecting—

Mr JOYCE: Maybe if they let you into the room, they'd let you read your budget papers before they go out.

Now we have the Australian War Memorial. Last night was quite an interesting night. Something has happened since November last year. History has changed. In November last year, apparently there was neither the legal position nor the evidence for Frontier Wars, but last night it turned up. They can't actually nominate where it is, they can't actually nominate how they changed legal opinion and they can't actually show you the change in legislation; they've just changed. It's just changed. Could it possibly be that it's somehow part of the Voice campaign? Has this become part of the political process? What a slight, to start manipulating how the Australian

War Memorial works for political purposes without being able to show any redirection via reason of change in legislation or a change in facts, but just because that's what the zeitgeist wants and that's what the zeitgeist has determined. I think it's a disgrace. I think that is an absolute and utter disgrace, and I will certainly be pursuing that.

In the War Memorial the appropriations for ordinary annual services is at \$42.1 million in 2023-24, which is less than what we put towards it, which was \$46.1 million in the year prior. The War Memorial should be constant, should be unsullied by any of the issues of the pertinent political zeitgeist of the day. It should remain unaffected by the political whims and nuances that might rattle around in this building.

There are things we welcome in the budget. Replacing and modernising the ICT systems is good. The Sir John Monash Centre in France—that's a good decision. Grandparents caring for children of veterans—that's a good decision. Volunteer training and suicide recognition intervention—that's a good decision. But it is also incredibly important that the veterans' affairs minister be in cabinet. He shouldn't need—

An opposition member: Well done, Barnaby. You're doing him a favour.

Mr JOYCE: We shouldn't have to. In the year of the royal commission, which I was one of the people fighting for, you need to have the minister in the cabinet. That's why I believe so many of these things are falling through the cracks.

I would like to close by acknowledging that this year is the 50th anniversary of Australia's participation in the Vietnam War. I would like to acknowledge the 523 who died, the over 3,000 that were wounded, and the thousands of families affected not only by the person going away but by their circumstances on their return. I apologise on behalf of the Australian people for how they were treated. Never in the future should anybody ever be sullied by reason of offering their lives for our nation. That is an issue for the politicians to deal with and take the barbs for; never ever the soldier.

Mr KEOGH (Burt—Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister for Defence Personnel) (10:29): Australians can have no doubt that supporting defence personnel, veterans and families is a key priority for the Albanese Labor government. Twelve months and two budgets in, we are seeing great progress. When we came into government, the Department of Veterans' Affairs was chronically underfunded and under-resourced. The former secretary of the department made clear in estimates last year that the department, based on the resourcing constraints from the previous government, would have never cleared the veterans compensation backlog. That has serious consequences for veterans and their families. The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide has made it clear that the Department of Veterans' Affairs claims backlog was unacceptable and could lead to suicidality and suicide in some cases. We've now turned that around. In September last year, the claims backlog was upward of 45,000. Despite the shadow minister's protestations, we're actually now down to about 36,000. That's a 20 per cent drop from the peak, and it continues to fall.

That is due to the investments made by the Albanese Labor government. After just one year, I can now confirm that DVA is better funded than it has been in three decades. We've allocated \$322.3 million, across the last two Labor budgets, to employ and retain additional staff in DVA to get through the backlog and make sure it never happens again. There's \$341.1 million to fund the modernisation and sustainment of ICT systems that the former government left to degenerate, \$46.7 million to fund the delivery of 10 veterans and families hubs across the country—unlike the opposition, who announced hubs and then didn't fund them in their budget—and a \$24 million veterans employment program.

It's important that we're supporting those who support veterans. When we came into government, there was a shameful backlog in paying invoices to those that provide services to veterans. Now, 90 per cent of invoices are being processed through DVA within 20 days. Since coming into government, we have increased the annual totally and permanently incapacitated payment by \$1,000, which will better support some 27,000 veterans. Last year we introduced the Defence, Veterans' and Families' Acute Support Package to support working-age veteran families in crisis. Recognising that families look different all over the country, in this budget we announced the expansion of that to grandcarer veteran families. We've improved access to mental health supports, including \$22 million to extend the PTSD therapy dog program and \$2 million to continue mental health awareness and suicide intervention training to make sure volunteers that support veterans have the best training that they need.

In recent months, we've been hearing that some GPs have made commercial decisions to stop seeing veterans using veteran cards. Veterans will soon be able to better access GPs, with the tripling of the veterans access payment, and I'm pleased that we are hearing that GPs who had previously said they would stop servicing our veterans are now reversing that decision. This \$33.3 million investment will come into force on 1 November and will make sure veterans aren't out of pocket while supporting GPs to treat veterans and balance their budgets.

We have also expanded defence homeownership for both defence personnel and veterans. Vitaly, we've now acted on all 13 recommendations of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide interim report,

including fixing staffing and resourcing in the department, bringing the claims backlog down, improving access to information for loved ones and breaking down the barriers that were deterring people from giving evidence to the royal commission. We're reforming more than a century of veterans legislation—which has been an absolute nightmare for veterans, their families and their advocates—by simplifying this into a single scheme. We're developing a defence and veteran families support strategy.

One of the six immediate priorities identified in the response to the Defence Strategic Review is the need to grow and retain our ADF personnel. Notably, we've introduced a \$50,000 bonus payment for ongoing service as part of the Albanese Labor government's commitment to investing in the growth and retention of our highly skilled defence workforce. The Albanese government is moving to immediately respond to the review by investing approximately \$400 million to establish this continuation bonus initiative.

People are of course defence's most important capability, and this extends to the families who support those who serve. In the last 12 months, we've increased support for ADF personnel and their families with the formal recognition of contemporary family structures, expanding a number of health and lifestyle benefits to personnel and their families. The Albanese government is already delivering important reforms in this area, including through the \$46.2 million expansion of the Defence Home Ownership Assistance Scheme that was announced in the October budget. But we know there is more that can be done to improve these systems. We will undertake a review into the defence housing system to ensure that it is fit for purpose into the future.

The Albanese government deeply appreciates those who serve in our ADF. Investing in those members and increasing the value proposition will support our service personnel and ensure that Australia has the defence structure and posture needed to meet our strategic circumstances. We will ensure we're laying the strongest possible foundations for a better future for our veterans.

After a wasted decade under the Liberals, the Albanese Labor government is working hard every day and getting on with the job of creating a strong foundation for a better future. We know family budgets are under pressure. After nine years of cuts and neglect, the Albanese government is strengthening Medicare for all Australians, with the biggest ever investment in bulk-billing. This historic \$3.5 billion investment will triple the bulk-billing incentive, making it easier for more than 90,000 people in Burt to access a GP. This is on top of the federal government's \$3.2 billion contribution to health and hospitals in Western Australia. We will also make hundreds of medicines cheaper by allowing millions of Australians to buy two months worth of medicine for the price of a single prescription and we're also providing more than 26,000 aged-care workers in WA with a pay rise.

And we're delivering real cost-of-living relief through boosting JobSeeker by a minimum of \$40 a fortnight, decreasing energy bills for households and small businesses in Western Australia, and expanding the eligibility of the parenting payment for parents until their youngest child turns 14. This will make eligible single parents \$176.90 better off each fortnight. And we're increasing rent assistance for more than 6,000 households in Burt. The Albanese Labor government is also moving to help more people into homeownership sooner, by expanding eligibility for the Home Guarantee Scheme. The Home Guarantee Scheme has already helped approximately 1,100 people in Burt. Some 6,100 families in Burt will also be better off from 1 July with the delivery of our cheaper childcare package, and we're investing in the early childhood education workforce.

The Albanese government's NDIS budget initiatives include \$73.4 million to better support participants to manage their plan within budget so that they can access their supports in a flexible way to better achieve their goals. This will help around 4,000 NDIS participants in Burt. We're investing in education, with a \$400 million contribution to deliver an additional 300,000 fee-free TAFE and VET training places nationally. We continue to invest in nation-building infrastructure across Western Australia, including \$3.7 billion towards METRONET and \$125 million towards electric bus charging infrastructure. The Albanese government's \$2.4 billion investment in the NBN in our last budget will see more than 30,000 premises in Burt have access to higher internet speeds.

We're committed to building a stronger future for our nation. This is about delivering for our country. After just one year in office we know there is still a lot of work to do and a lot of mess that needs to be cleaned up after a wasted decade under the Liberals and Nationals, but this is a responsible budget and a practical budget. We'll keep delivering reasonable, common sense initiatives that provide our community security and certainty while building stronger foundations for a better future.

Mr CHESTER (Gippsland) (10:38): I want to make some observations today in relation to the native hardwood timber industry in Victoria. I make a very simple point from the outset: the people of Victoria are facing a Dan-made disaster. The decision by Premier Dan Andrews to bring forward his heartless ban on native timber harvesting in that state was a direct contradiction—in fact, a lie, when you consider his original plan was 2030. Without any warning whatsoever, thousands of timber workers and their families in small communities right throughout regional Victoria have been told, 'From 1 January next year, you will not have a job.' Their jobs are going because of one man, and that is the Premier of Victoria.

My towns are resilient. They can survive fires, floods and droughts and they have worked together through COVID, but small towns can't survive the madness of Premier Dan Andrews. This decision to bring forward what was already a stupid decision has caused massive unrest right across my electorate and throughout regional Victoria. There will be devastating impacts—and I say that without any risk of being accused of exaggeration. There will be devastating social, environmental, economic and cultural impacts, all because of a premier who has made a decision based on political science, not environmental science. Make no mistake; there is no transition plan. There is no transition to plantations; the plantations aren't in the ground, and the trees won't be ready to harvest. It is a complete fabrication to suggest this industry can transition to plantations in the time frame to 2030, let alone seven months. Seriously, it is time for Labor MPs in this place and in Victoria to show some guts and stand up for blue-collar workers.

The very reason why this decision is a kick in the guts for regional communities is they have a world-class and sustainable industry. I challenge these people who are out there putting out press releases saying, 'How wonderful it is we're banning native timber harvesting' to spend one day in one of those communities, to go to a coop and understand what actually happens in the hardwood timber industry in Victoria.

The trees being harvested today were regenerated 60 or 70 years ago from previous logging operations. There is a myth being perpetuated by the Greens in this place and the eco-warriors out in the community, suggesting that, somehow, we're harvesting old growth forests. It is a fantasy. Go out into those communities and understand what you're actually talking about. In this country we have, quite rightly, an incredibly proud record of national parks and reserving high conservation value areas which will never be logged. No-one is harvesting old growth timber in Victoria today. It is a lie, and the green warriors out there, these extremists, are destroying country towns based on a lie, a complete fabrication. The trees we're talking about are in areas that have been harvested before, 60 or 70 years ago—we call it a regeneration forest.

I don't know why the Labor Party in Victoria and the Victorian Labor MPs in this place have crumbled and become so out of touch with blue-collar workers that they don't bother going out and listening to the concerns of the people they used to represent. The workers in my timber mills, the workers who drive trucks, who do the harvest and haulage work, who work in the downstream industries around furniture manufacturing, used to think the Labor Party supported them. They used to think that, if they joined a union, the Labor Party would be there to support them. Dan Andrews and Victorian Labor MPs are so gutless that they put out a press release sacking them all. They didn't go out to communities, didn't talk to local mayors, didn't talk to the mill owners, didn't talk to the workers. They put out a press release saying, 'You're out of work in six or seven months time.'

Old Labor MPs were never like this. I've got a lot of respect for old Labor MPs. This is what Joel Fitzgibbon, the former member for Hunter, had to say in relation to this announcement:

Stopping native forestry in one state to import the product from another state is not a plan, it's a pathway to more extreme bushfires, greater import dependence, and more deforestation and fauna extinction in developing countries. In a state hospital or state school crisis the Commonwealth wouldn't leave the matter to the states, it would engage.

Mr Fitzgibbon went on to say:

Like many things, people tend not to think much about where their wood products come from. There are two answers, our forests and the forests of others. In Australia, we hold ourselves to world's best forestry practices. Many of the countries we import from do not.

This is the crux of the issue. A sustainable well-managed forest industry is 100 per cent renewable. Whenever the loggers, the harvesters, go through an area, they are required by law to regenerate. That coop is regenerated, and in decades to come the next generation of growth is able to be harvested for the things we want. The demand is not going away. If you want your hardwood floor, if you want structural grade timber, if you want furniture, it's coming from hardwood.

People need to understand that these communities love the bush, respect the bush and work in the bush on a daily basis. They are using rotational harvesting of regenerated forest to generate wealth in those communities and to be part of a supply chain which people in the city depend on. Yet here we have Melbourne Labor MPs celebrating that you're kicking them in the guts and kicking them out of their jobs.

The greatest insult of all is this \$200 million so-called transition plan. I say to the Premier: 'No-one wants your money, Premier; they just want their jobs. They want the decency of being able to go out there and providing for their own financial security by working in the bush and delivering a product that is world-class and completely renewable.' I say that the demand is still there, and Joel Fitzgibbon referred to it in his comments. The demand for hardwood's not going away and it can't be replaced—other than taking timber from other states into Victoria, which is happening already. We're already taking timber from Tasmania and New South Wales and processing it in Victoria. That's going to happen more in the future. Or we take it from overseas. Great idea. What a genius. Take more wood from countries with lower environmental protocols, but don't support your own world-class industry.

I'll just make a point on plantations. This will come as a shock to a lot of people. I challenge you to think about a parcel of land. You decide to plant trees on it. A plantation, either pine or blue gum, what we traditionally call a plantation, is a monoculture. Where is the biodiversity outcome in a monoculture of trees? The greenies supposedly say, 'Let's transition to plantations.' That's the sole answer to this question. Pine has a very important role to play. It's a softwood, obviously, and it's used for a whole range of things that hardwood is not required for. So you do need pine plantations, but it's a monoculture. Then think about the same parcel of land being allowed to regenerate as a mixed-species forest and then harvested on a rotational basis, so 60 or 70 years down the track. That is in fact a mixed-species plantation. It was actually planted by the loggers in the first place all those decades ago. We need to understand the consequences of decisions like this—the economic, social, cultural and environmental consequences.

In my community alone, there will be hundreds of direct job losses in little towns like Orbost and Heyfield and Swifts Creek. If you take the working-age people out of those communities and they head off to other areas to get work, you don't have a footy club, you don't have a netball club, your school's not viable, businesses start to shut down. We've had death by a thousand cuts in this industry for the last couple of decades, but this will be the final straw. Some of those towns will not be able to continue to function as you think a town should.

The point that really hurts these communities is the complete lack of respect they're being shown by people in the city. I'm sorry, but it is a city-country divide issue. People in the city, in their concrete jungle, want to tell people in the bush what jobs they can't have. They don't want to live there—don't get me wrong, they don't want to live in Orbost, they don't want to actually do the work, they just want to tell them what jobs they can't have. Now people in Orbost are about five hours drive from Melbourne. There is no town just round the corner you can go and get another job at. If you lose your job in Orbost, you leave that town. That's not fair. That is simply not fair. These people have, in many cases, major investments in their equipment and they're paying that equipment off through their own hard work. And their partner may well be working at the school or the local bush hospital, whatever it might be. They are committed to those towns; they are ingrained in those towns; they want their futures in those towns. And until last week they thought they still had a future, right up until Dan Andrews made that announcement, which was the greatest kick in the guts that Gippsland's had in my time as a member of parliament.

But I say to Dan Andrews: 'These people aren't going to take this lying down. You might think you can kick people in the guts when they're lying down, but I tell you now Gippslanders are tough, and they'll get up and fight.' There will be protests. There will be rallies. These people, who I love and respect, will stick together. They'll unite and they'll take on the Premier—and they'll take on this Prime Minister as well, because they know he's using weasel words when he pretends to support the forestry industry. We've watched his speeches in parliament this week, and they know what tricky weasel words the Prime Minister's using to try and get around the issue. They know that he's backing Dan Andrews 100 per cent. So, Prime Minister, I say this to you as well, in all sincerity: get ahead of this. Do not go down with Dan Andrews on this terrible, heartless, reckless decision, which will increase our dependence on imports and cost small-community members their jobs and livelihoods in those areas.

It's not just me saying this. My community is overwhelmingly in support of the position I've taken. This media release from the Wellington Shire Council on the announcement was put out last week:

Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews has devastated the futures of over 650 timber workers throughout Wellington Shire.

... ..

The Premier's announcement to end native timber harvesting in Victoria in 2024 is a kick in the guts for timber communities, putting on full display the Premier's disregard for local people and a preference for policy and voters in inner Melbourne.

That's from the mayor of Wellington shire. The mayor of East Gippsland shire, a former Labor candidate, was quoted in his press release as saying:

"It completely flips East Gippsland upside down and does so without a logical explanation or a plan for the future," ...

... ..

"Six months is not a reasonable timeframe to transition. The decision disrespects East Gippsland communities and our economy."

That's the point. It is complete disrespect for all Gippsland communities. I was in Heyfield on Monday before I came to parliament, and the community was asked to get a few representatives to turn up to meet with the *Today* show to talk about their industry. With just 24 hours notice, 400 people rallied for the *Today* show to show their strength and their support for the timber industry.

But I guess in all this the question remains: what can we do to stop the madness? I know that people are tired. They shouldn't have to fight for their jobs. I know they're tired and they're sick of this. But the question of what we can do to stop the madness is one that really rests with the Prime Minister, because now we have other members in this place advocating for a total ban on native timber harvesting in our country. The Prime Minister last year, before

the election, tweeted his support for the industry after the Australian Forest Products Association conference. He went to Tasmania and he said:

Labor supports your industry, your family and your community.

... ..

The Greens have tried to take my job for the last twenty years—I have beaten them every time and I will take up the fight against them to protect your job too.

I say to the Prime Minister: these are nice words, but you have to back it up, and I can tell you right now that your party, new Labor, this light-green Labor movement that does everything the Greens want it to do, is heading down a pathway where blue-collar workers are deserting you, for good cause, because no-one has the courage to stand up for their jobs. Those opposite aren't comfortable with this conversation. I know why: because they know it's true. They know it's true that they've sold out blue-collar workers for Green preferences. So I say to you, Prime Minister: a tweet or a press release is fine, but will you actually help timber workers in Victoria or will you surrender meekly? I have enormous respect for those old Labor lions who would fight on behalf of blue-collar workers. This new Labor is timid. It's a shadow of its former self, and the blue-collar workers know it. I challenge those opposite to actually stand up for a sustainable forest industry in Australia and stand up for working-class families.

Ms ROBERTS (Pearce) (10:53): I rise to speak about the Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2023-2024, which is focused on making the lives of all Australians better. 'Stronger foundations for a better future' is not just a tag line. It is what drives us, and we are delivering a range of measures to create a better future and a better nation. The Albanese Labor government is listening to our community and is efficiently and effectively governing for everyone. We have passed more than 80 pieces of legislation, including bills that help ease cost-of-living pressures. Since the Australian people voted for a positive change in federal politics a year ago, we have been working hard to deliver exactly that, laying the foundations for a stronger and more resilient economy.

Families in my electorate of Pearce in Western Australia are grateful for the numerous measures that provide substantial cost-of-living relief in these very challenging global economic times. I hear their very positive feedback on the productive approach that this government is taking. I remind these families that I am here to be your voice in Canberra, and the Albanese government is here for you. We understand that Australians are under the pump. That is why our No. 1 priority is providing responsible targeted relief. Importantly, we are providing cost-of-living relief that is affordable and prioritises those who need it most. Our \$14.6 billion cost-of-living plan will bring down out-of-pocket health costs, support vulnerable Australians, create more affordable housing, provide help with power bills and boost wages. We have delivered a carefully considered, responsible and practical budget to alleviate inflationary pressures in response to the current local and global financial conditions, while also laying the foundations for growth by supporting clean energy and investing in value-adding industries. We are investing in skills technology in small business and delivering historic investments in Medicare, making it cheaper and easier for Australians to see a doctor. This budget breaks down the barriers and helps those experiencing disadvantage and exclusion, ensuring that no-one is left behind.

The bill also strengthens the nation's budget. A surplus is forecast for this year, with less debt followed by smaller deficits when compared with recent budgets. We are continuing our robust progress on restoring Australia's economy from the mess we inherited from the coalition. It was an economy defined by a decade of stagnant wages, energy policy chaos, flatlining productivity, weak business investment and skills shortages. That is in stark contrast to the Albanese Labor government's past year in government, during which we have been kicking many goals.

To expand on health care we have committed a \$2.2 billion package of measures to strengthen Medicare to make health care more accessible and affordable. We are making medicines cheaper and easier to access, a welcome move for all Australians who rely on medications. For the first time in 75 years the maximum cost of general scripts has gone down under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. The maximum general co-payment has been reduced from \$42.50 to \$30 since 1 January. That means that a family with three scripts a month can now save around \$300 to \$400 a year. That cuts the cost of medicine by up to half for at least six million Australians. We are also making it easier for Australians to see a doctor when they need to, by improving after-hours access to primary care.

Out-of-pocket health costs are being further reduced by tripling bulk-billing incentives for GPs. This is the largest investment in bulk-billing in the history of Medicare, and a measure welcomed by Australian families. This measure also enables easier and cheaper access to health care by millions of Australians. That means better health care because people do not have to choose between their budgets and their health. Under this budget we have made medicines even cheaper by introducing 60-day dispensing. This means fewer visits to the pharmacy and one dispensing charge instead of two. This decision will include more than 300 common medicines which will be approved for two-month supply to patients. We listened to the advice of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee. This will halve the number of visits to GPs, so that patients whose condition is stable and who have

been on their medicines for some time will have greater convenience and lower costs. It will reduce the pressure on our busy general practices.

The move to 60-day dispensing has been welcomed by the Consumers Health Forum and by the communities. The CHF is the national peak body for Australian health consumers, and the forum has found that many people are struggling as cost-of-living pressures bite. They are having to choose between buying family essentials and buying the medicines they need. This is simply not a situation our government would like Australians to be in, and that is why we are taking decisive action to improve access to cheaper medicines and health care.

We have committed \$11.3 billion over four years to fund the outcome of the Fair Work Commission's record 15 per cent pay rise for 250,000 aged-care workers across the country from 1 July 2023. This is a move that is long overdue and will help restore dignity for both aged-care workers and the elderly Australians that they care for. We are also making life easier for thousands of single-parent families by extending their financial safety net. We are raising the cut-off age for the youngest child for the single parenting payment from eight years to 14 years. That will ensure that mothers and fathers raising children by themselves can have a sense of financial security. On all fronts, we are continuing our fiscally responsible governance as we work to recover from the pandemic and the effects of global instability.

The world has experienced the largest energy shock since the oil crisis in the 1970s due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. As a government we have had to respond appropriately. We have taken action to remove some of the bite from higher power prices by providing relief to over five million households and one million small businesses. Under the Albanese Labor government's energy price relief plan, every household in WA will receive a \$400 electricity credit with targeted electricity support, totalling \$826 for those households in most need. The scheme will be delivered in partnership with the Western Australia government. Around 90,000 small businesses in WA meeting the definition of an electricity small customer will receive quarterly bill relief of \$650, automatically, from 1 July 2023.

This budget supports pensioners, renters and parents. We are responsibly increasing the base rate for JobSeeker and other payments for 1.1 million people. We have successfully argued for a minimum wage increase. We have passed legislation to get wages moving again. We are looking after those who need it most. We have invested in fee-free TAFE and VET places to ensure we have the necessary workforce for our economy and to ensure skills and education are accessible for everyone. In addition to the 180,000 fee-free TAFE places we initially funded, we have, under the budget, funded an additional 300,000 fee-free TAFE places.

We have legislated cheaper child care. Thousands of families in Pearce are set to benefit from the scheme from 1 July. The changes will cut costs by about \$1,700 per year for the average family, earning \$120 a year, who have a child in care three days a week. Ninety-six per cent of families in the system will be better off under Labor's changes, and no family will be worse off. Cheaper child care is another way we are easing cost-of-living pressures on families and making it easier for parents to return to paid work or to work more paid hours if they wish to. I know that families in Pearce are awaiting cheaper child care to help with their family budget.

We want to save Australian manufacturers. We are investing in our nation. We have a plan. We are investing \$20 billion in Rewiring the Nation, a quarter of a billion dollars in community batteries for 100,000 households and \$25 billion in reducing emissions for clean energy and market stability. There's over \$60 million for small businesses to become more energy efficient, half a billion dollars in the Driving the Nation Fund and over \$100 million for community solar banks to benefit 25,000 households.

I am also proud that this budget delivers for women. Equality for women is at the heart of what we do as a Labor government. This budget provides for a significant investment in Australian women. We are delivering programs and policies that are designed to permanently shift the dial on women's equality and to last long beyond the term of this parliament. We are investing in addressing violence against women. We are modernising paid parental leave, improving gender pay gap transparency and preventing sexual harassment at work. The majority of care workers are women and they will benefit from the 15 per cent aged-care pay rise. We are also supporting women's economic equality and helping to close the gender gap with investments to support highly feminised workforces.

There's around \$4 billion being invested to increase funding to government and community organisations through reforms to indexation, including for organisations delivering women's safety initiatives. Many of these services also have highly feminised workforces. There's \$8.6 million for the Australian Skills Guarantee, including national targets for women in apprenticeships, traineeships and cadetships. There's \$72.4 million to build and retain the early childhood education and care workforce, 92 per cent of whom are women.

There's \$67.5 million to support homelessness services during the transition to the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement. This supports jobs that are overwhelmingly done by women, including assisting women

and children who are experiencing domestic and family violence. There's \$91.3 million to a better mental health care workforce, through additional psychology placements, 80 per cent of whom are women.

The Albanese Labor government is making investments to support women's health and wellbeing, including \$26.4 million to support health and medical research focusing on women's health to develop targeted treatments and improve health outcomes; and \$16.8 million to introduce a new MBS item for an EndoPredict brand gene expression profile test to determine a patient's risk of recurrent breast cancer. As a survivor of breast cancer, I absolutely welcome that investment. I commend this bill.

Mr PEARCE (Braddon) (11:05): Deputy Speaker Wilkie, as you would be aware, around two-thirds of Tasmania's exports from mines, forests, farms and the sea come out of the electorate of Braddon. The Port of Burnie, Tasmania's largest port, transits five million tonnes of generalised containerised freight and more than 50 per cent of Tasmania's TCU containerised freight each year. Combine this with the Port of Devonport, home of the *Spirits*, the *MV Mersey II* and *MV Liekut*, run by SeaRoad, and the figure increases to 94.2 per cent of Tasmania's container freight transiting through the north-west coast of Tasmania and the electorate of Braddon.

It has always bewildered me that even though our region makes this significant contribution to our state and national economy, Braddon historically continually missed out on receiving the federal investment that the region deserved. When this investment did flow, it seemed to me that it was more out of pity, a result of a cap in hand from previous members in my position, focusing on our weaknesses. What that did to the confidence and self-esteem of the rising generation was not optimal.

Instead, when I was elected in 2019, I vowed to focus on our region's potential and the positive strength of our region of Braddon. Working with businesses, local governments, state governments, community groups and individuals, we identified the projects that would move us forward and set up our region for generations to come. Armed with this information, I set about talking up our region, showing by the north-west, the west coast and King Island were a sound investment for business that would return dividends many times over in future years.

That businesslike, outcome orientated approach worked. Over my first term, the electorate of Braddon received the second-highest federal investment of any electorate in the nation. More than 700 projects were shared equally across our eight local government areas, delivering \$1.3 billion into local economies. No region in my electorate missed out. These investments have started to build infrastructure and have provided the services our region needs and deserves. These investments have employed thousands of Tasmanians, supported thousands of small businesses and kept money flowing in local communities and into the pockets of local families. These investments represented value for money and started the journey towards our region reaching its enormous untapped potential.

The 2023 budget was the Albanese government's opportunity to confirm that they have the same commitment that I speak of—the same commitment as the previous government—and that they were willing to continue the journey with those who live in the north-west, the west coast and King Island and continue to invest in our wealth-creating world's best industries and key infrastructure projects. Contrary to popular belief, governments don't create wealth; it's small business that creates wealth. That's where my head's at. Government's job is to provide the right business environment for those businesses to create wealth, and to get out of their way and let them get on with what they do best: turning a dollar, moving our economy forward and reinvesting in our region.

If you are government who can't think like a business, who don't have a business approach, then you only have one strategy, and that is to increase taxes. Increasing taxes on businesses, increasing taxes on hardworking families—even when Prime Minister Albanese promised that he wouldn't do this, it is, at the end of the day, the only move that Labor has in its playbook. Labor's decision to axe the low- and middle-income tax offset measure will impose the biggest tax increase in our country's history. This isn't targeted at the rich. Labor is squarely targeting hardworking, middle-income Australians, like those in my electorate—nurses, teachers, tradies, disability workers, waiters et cetera. Ninety per cent of all taxpayers across the north-west, west coast and King Island will be hit—the young, the old and everyone in between. If you earn less than \$126,000, you will have up to \$1,500 less in your pocket because of this government's measure. If you earn \$50,000, you'll be around \$20 a week worse off.

At a time when the cost of living is skyrocketing, families are really struggling. They're struggling with the mortgage, they're struggling with rent, they're struggling to pay the fuel bill and they're struggling to pay the grocery bill. This budget was an opportunity for this government to step up and begin to tackle rampant food price inflation. This is the No. 1 issue that I'm hearing right across our region. People are making really serious choices at the grocery store check-out.

Instead of implementing one single practical measure that would bring down the cost of living that all families are experiencing, the Albanese government is imposing a new \$153 million biosecurity levy on our farmers. Not only will this new tax apply to three of Braddon's most important export sectors—farming, fishing and forestry—but also, to rub salt into the wound, this tax on our farmers will be used to pay for the biosecurity risk imposed by

their international competitors as they import competitive products into the state. It is counterintuitive and defies logic. Farmers will have no choice but to pass this on through the supply chain. It's marvellous how gravity takes effect when it comes to the impost of cost. This will result in higher prices at the check-out and will hurt families.

Then there's a truckie tax. If trucks grind to a halt then our economy grinds to a halt. Yes, trucks carry loads, but they, more importantly, carry the country. Amid record high inflation and diesel costs, now is not the time to tax our trucking sector with an increased road user tax. Again this government is interested not in the bush but rather in the city. This charge will disproportionately affect regional Australians, who rely more heavily on trucking for the distribution of products throughout the supply chain.

The road user charge is designed to cover the cost of maintenance of roads due to heavy vehicle traffic. This applies to each litre of diesel consumed by heavy vehicles on public roads. From 1 June the current rate of 27.2c per litre of diesel will increase until it reaches 32.4c for the 2025-26 financial year. The trucking industry can't absorb this additional cost. They're already running on the smell of an oily rag. Like the biosecurity tax on our farmers, gravity will take effect and this cost will be passed down the supply chain to those families I talked about who are doing it tough. Everybody loses.

It was the coalition that began record investment in the aged-care sector. I genuinely welcome this government's continued investment in aged care. All Australians, no matter where they live, deserve to have a dignified and respectful life as they age. That's why in the lead-up to the 2022 election the federal Liberal government pledged to address the shortfall of aged-care services on the west coast of Tasmania. Our \$3 million commitment meant that the west coast's requests for further aged-care beds in Queenstown would be fulfilled. The Liberal Party clearly understand that taking older residents away from those local communities and back up the coast is unviable. They need to age with dignity in the regions where they grew up.

Unfortunately, this important commitment to the communities on the west coast and, more importantly, the town of Queenstown has not been met by the Labor government. It continues to be ignored, despite several pieces of correspondence I have written. I've written to the Minister for Aged Care. The response from the Albanese government was that they will not be making any commitment to aged care on the west coast. Three million dollars is a moderate investment in budget terms in the big scheme of things. This region makes such an enormous contribution, such as the contribution I talked about earlier, and this is a priority for me, my region, my people and my communities. I ask the government to recommit to this \$3 million of extra funding for west coast aged-care facilities.

I believe in small government. I believe the further away from Canberra and the more local we can make our decision-making, the better value for money taxpayers receive. Let's keep the bureaucrats out of it. Hardworking taxpayers right across the north-west, the west coast and King Island have every right to expect that a fair share of their taxes are invested right back into the region where they pay them.

This is something the former government had a proud history of delivering, with programs such as the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program, which directly funded our eight local councils in my region so they could invest in these projects that were important to them. The Stronger Communities Program fund delivered equal funds to every electorate right across the nation so wonderful community organisations could find small capital projects and fund them. Under this Albanese government, both programs have been axed. Both programs have injected billions of dollars into the electorate of Braddon and have resulted in hundreds of projects being effectively and efficiently delivered, from painting the Currie Lighthouse on King Island to providing exercise equipment in South Burnie, redeveloping a skate park in Ulverstone, constructing a new dog park in Smithton, delivering a tip shop at Devonport—I tell you what, that's being heavily utilised as we speak—resealing the roads right across Latrobe, updating the Wynyard sports centre and delivering a series of road safety initiatives right across the west coast. The list goes on and on.

To further demonstrate that this government has an absolute lack of understanding of life within the bush, while axing these programs, they have announced the single biggest increase to the Public Service in 15 years so that they can implement competitive, Australia wide Canberra-controlled alternatives, which is exactly the antithesis of what I was just speaking about. It's shameful, and regional and rural Australia has missed out. The bush has been forsaken.

There were around 1,187 fatalities on our nation's roads in the 12 months to end of February, 45 more than in the same period last year. It's a travesty. In Tasmania, this represented a 36.8 per cent increase in lost lives. It's devastating. It's sad and confronting that that statistic means Tasmania has the highest per capita road death ratio of any state in the country. Armed with this evidence, the government should be recommitting to continue funding in our critical road and road safety programs within the great state of Tassie—programs such as the Black Spot Program, the Roads to Recovery program, the Bridges Renewal Program, the Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program. These four programs support our state. They remedy exactly what I'm talking about right across our eight local councils as they undertake priority road safety upgrades.

Previous governments from both sides knew the value of these programs both in economic terms and in terms of lives saved. They knew that, without this federal investment, councils simply don't have the support and capital that they need to conduct those works themselves. The required maintenance simply would not get done. It wouldn't go on. Every previous government knew this, but not the Albanese government.

This government has turned its back on these regional and rural roads. These four vitally important programs have been included in what Labor is calling their 90-day infrastructure review. I know that the infrastructure minister visited our electorate on a number of occasions, but that was obviously just for the photo op, as far as I'm concerned. She should have worked out pretty quickly that if she is to be a loud and clear advocate then these programs must continue. Local councils and their communities require certainty that these programs are not at risk of being axed.

To the minister and to the government, I say: the bush is important. The bush is hurting, and it's hurting the people that can't afford it—that really suffer the most. I am pleading with the government to reconsider prioritising regional and rural communities like the electorate of Braddon, because those families need that surety at the moment. They live in communities right across the electorate of Braddon which have the potential to overcome the current hurdles that they're going through. So let's look after the bush.

Mr GEORGANAS (Adelaide) (11:19): I'm proud to be standing here as part of the Albanese government, who genuinely cares and delivers on its promises. I've seen firsthand how the Albanese government is having a positive impact on the lives of so many in my electorate and around the nation. All of us hear from our constituents, and I do the same in my electorate of Adelaide, who are feeling more settled having a government who actually shows that it cares. But we know that we still have a very long way to go. We know that the cost of living is affecting people, and that's why we're acting on it.

Just recently, I had a constituent who came to see me in my electorate office, to plead with me for assistance with NDIS home modifications. He has a son who has no arms—that was his disability—and was on a two-year waiting list for approval of urgent and necessary home modifications. Just imagine not having any arms, or the use of your arms, and not being able to access modifications through the NDIS for your home so you can live a reasonable life. One of the ways this government cares is that I was able to reach out for the Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme, the Hon. Bill Shorten, who sets up connections with department people and us to discuss directly the issues we have with the NDIS. We were able to get results and to deliver for this family, after they were waiting for two years. I thank the family for bringing this to my attention, and I thank the minister, the Hon. Bill Shorten, for the hard work he is doing in this area. I'm very proud my constituent had a voice and felt he could reach out to me and ask for help. I'm very grateful that his son now has the required instruments in his house and is able to live largely independently; that is really important. And they're grateful as well to have a government that listens to them and is on their side, delivering.

That's why the 2023-24 budget commits more than \$732 million over four years to improve the effectiveness and delivery of the NDIS for people with disability, and to improve its sustainability. It's also why \$429.45 million is being delivered and invested to upskill the NDIA workforce, which is very important. That is why this Albanese Labor government's NDIS budget initiatives include \$73.4 million to better support participants to manage their plan within budget so they can access their supports in a flexible way to better achieve their goals. The budget provides for assisting around 4,815 NDIS participants in my federal seat of Adelaide, who, like my constituent's son that I just spoke about, need our help to not only have a better life but have a better future that they can be proud of, and live in dignity. That is something we can all be proud of as well, because the life of every single Australian matters.

We can also be proud we've delivered the largest-ever increase to the bulk-billing incentive in the history of Medicare. We saw Medicare absolutely run down over the last 10 years: no increases, no incentives for bulk-billing—just a government that really didn't care. One of our core promises was to strengthen Medicare and ensure that Medicare becomes an integral part of our health system for every Australian, and we are doing that by increasing the bulk-billing incentive. Would you say there is more to do? Yes, there is a lot more to do. But providing this benefit of the bulk-billing increase will provide an immediate benefit to 78,277 Australians in Adelaide—which is a big number. We've halved the price of medicines, another achievement I'm proud of, making it cheaper for people on low incomes, on pensions, that require medicines on a regular basis. And we've invested billions into aged care. Keeping Australians safe is a commitment that we have made and we will keep. We will keep on working to achieve goals that make Australian lives better.

In the last couple of weeks, I had the Minister for Financial Services, the member for Whitlam, attend my electorate, and we ran a great forum with the minister. We called it 'Be scam aware'—be aware of the tremendous number of scams that are going around. I hosted the Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Financial Services in the electorate. We had a great turnout. A great number of people attended, and we made sure that those who attended left with the tools that they need to protect themselves from scams.

I was pretty surprised, in a room of about 80 people, by the number of people who had been scammed, by up to \$60,000—smart, intelligent, educated people. It is an area that I think needs a lot of attention to ensure that we are doing everything we can as governments but also to ensure that banks, insurance companies and other financial services—people that deal with our money on a day-to-day basis as part of their business—put in place measures that protect their customers' livelihoods and money. I was quite surprised by the number of people there who had been scammed or knew of someone who had been scammed, and we're not talking small amounts. Yes, there were some small amounts in there, but one chap spoke about losing \$60,000 through some scam that had come through as a text message or something. I know we're all busy, and one of the messages was: 'We're all busy. We get hundreds of text messages per day. Just before you click, take a deep breath, let it go, read it and then click, or don't click at all, which is the safest way.'

Deputy Speaker, we know that we have a role to play in this area, which is why this government is delivering its commitment to disrupting illegal text scams with the establishment of an SMS sender ID registry. That was in the budget with investment of over \$10 million. That means a register will be set up with all of these numbers, and then telcos will have the responsibility for banning them from sending out text messages or any form of message. So the government is investing in what matters, and we are investing in Australians.

My office has heard from constituents, primarily pensioners, who have expressed excitement about the 423,000 households in South Australia who are expected to be eligible for a \$500 rebate because of the estimated \$127.2 million for energy bill relief in 2023-24. This worthy contribution will be matched by the South Australian government.

Being an inner-city electorate, Adelaide is home to a very high volume of rental properties, and we know that rents are going up and that we have a rental crisis at the moment. For example, when I first became a member in 2004, rarely would we have people coming in to speak to us about homelessness or saying that they were on the cusp of becoming homeless. We're now seeing people regularly. Every week, two or three people who are on the cusp of becoming homeless or have just become homeless will pass through the office, and we're not talking about people who perhaps have never worked; we're talking about the working poor.

If there's something that is a crisis and needs all of our attention, it is homelessness and the ability for people to put a roof over their heads, whether it be by rent or by purchasing. I think we have to work hard on this as much as we can to create extra housing and rental assistance and assist those emergency shelters who do such a great job in my electorate. The Hutt Street Centre, for example, houses hundreds of people every night, and their numbers are swelling. They're finding it difficult to actually sustain their business model, because of the great numbers that turn up. So somehow we have to find a way to assist these agencies, who are doing a tremendous job at the moment, in dealing with numbers that they've never seen before.

The government has put some measures in place to secure our country's housing future, and it's investing billions of dollars in new support to help people through these difficult times. I'm not saying it will be the end, but it's a start, and we should work on that start as a foundation to build on it. The government will support an additional \$2 billion in financing for more social and affordable rental housing by increasing the guaranteed liabilities of Housing Australia. This boost from \$5.5 billion to \$7.5 billion, effective from 1 July, will enable Housing Australia to continue to support the development of social and affordable rental homes by providing lower cost and longer term finance to community housing providers.

It's important to have a good mix of housing. It gives the people who are building them an incentive to build them while, at the same time, ensuring that we have social housing, and affordable housing and rental properties in a great mix. One of the greatest examples I've seen of this is from the Dunston era—that great Labor Premier of South Australia—when they developed West Lakes.

West Lakes has some very high-end properties, but amongst those very high-end properties was a mixture of what were old housing trusts houses and community housing. It's one of the best developments I've seen in Australia. It had a good mix that allowed people to rent low-income rental properties and allowed people to purchase high-end properties, thus giving those developers an incentive to go in there and actually build. And it had low-cost housing as well. They were all in the one mix. It was done fantastically. And if you haven't seen West Lakes—it's not in my electorate; it was in my old electorate of Hindmarsh—I'd encourage you to have a look at how it was done in the late seventies. What a great model it was from the great Premier Don Dunstan.

The funding boost for housing that I was talking about earlier is the government's commitment to deliver more social and affordable rental homes. We've delivered a record-breaking increase in rental assistance, as we all heard in the budget, and this is an increase that hasn't been improved for over 30 years. This ensures that in my electorate 8,355 households will benefit from a 15 per cent boost to the maximum rates of Commonwealth rent assistance.

The Albanese Labor government has also delivered on this and will continue to deliver for all Australians. I'm proud that my electorate in Adelaide will be home to an innovative cultural precinct, with the support of the government, which is providing \$39 million as part of the Adelaide City Deal. One of the aims of the cultural precinct is to house our First Nations peoples artefacts. They're all over the place in Australia at the moment—in warehouses, in basements. It will all be documented and housed in this one space. It's very important for First Nations people, but it's also important for all of us as these artefacts are part of our history and part of Australia's history.

We're working not only to improve the lives of Australians to give them a better future, but we're also committed to delivering a quality of life that all can enjoy. Being an Australian is about being part of a community that delivers much more. I know in my electorate that cultural diversity is huge. Last time I looked, we had something like 180 different languages spoken in my electorate. Everything from Arabic to Chinese, to different dialects of Indian, Greek, Italian et cetera. One of the driving forces behind these communities is entrepreneurship. You can see it. They start up little businesses. In the northern part of my electorate, on Prospect Road, you see Afghan supermarkets and restaurants, barbers, insurance brokers. You can see them thriving on Prospect Road, and they've rejuvenated the whole area. It's really great to have an electorate that is growing in eateries, restaurants and many other small businesses. With these areas thriving, the arts, sports and culture then start to thrive.

The government is restoring a national vision for our cities, delivering the first comprehensive national urban policy in over a decade. We're investing \$350 million to support suburban communities by improving productivity, sustainability and liveability. I am proud that businesses in my electorate will also be supported as we move to a better future for the federal seat of Adelaide and all of South Australia.

The government is saying it's going to support up to 270,000 small businesses in SA. And I'll point out that many of these small businesses are within my electorate. I have the CBD and all the inner-city suburbs around the CBD in my electorate. This will be delivered through a turnover of up to \$10 million by temporarily increasing the instant asset write-off threshold to \$20,000. Eligible assets will need to be first used or installed and ready for use between 1 July 2023 and 30 June 2024. And there is much, much more that we're doing. I'm proud to be part of this Albanese Labor government.

Dr RYAN (Kooyong) (11:35): As a citizen, parent, doctor, medical researcher and now proud representative of a federal electorate, I feel hugely passionate about our healthcare system and how we need to protect and improve it. There is a global consensus that effective primary health care is crucial for creating a healthier and more prosperous society. Recent evaluations of the sector have universally urged for radical reforms to modernise Medicare, which provides the foundations for primary health care around Australia. This four-decade-old scheme is now letting us down by driving up costs. It's focused on quantity of care rather than quality. Moreover, a disproportionate amount of dollars and workforce are allocated towards a smaller proportion of the population with acute health needs while many of those with chronic and complex conditions are not receiving the care that they need.

Many of the budget announcements of 2023 elicited a collective sigh of relief from health experts and commentators. The government has demonstrated a real commitment to revitalise and modernise general practice. In 2021-22 approximately 190 million consultations were recorded by Australian GPs. These amounted to a cost of \$40 billion to Medicare. The new \$3.5 billion allocated to triple the bulk-billing incentive will likely reduce the cost barrier for many to afford primary health care. It's a great start, but the reality is that, in electorates like my own, it is unlikely to significantly alter bulk-billing rates. The increased incentive, significant though it is, applies only to GP consultations with children under 16, pensioners and concession card holders. If the GP can't afford to bulk-bill, the reality is that these incentives are irrelevant.

This tinkering around the edges of Medicare reimbursement is insufficient to compensate for nine years of frozen rebates and the current effects of inflation. There are also concerns that these changes disproportionately reward those undertaking short consultations rather than those with a casemix of longer consultations for more chronic disorders. In fact, what they will potentially do is promote churn-and-burn medicine rather than really high-quality health care. The reality is that we have to enable doctors to see patients for as long as they need to be seen, and we have to compensate them appropriately for that.

This budget included little for mental health. Some funding was provided for programs which were otherwise about to end and some was provided for additional places in psychology training programs. The announcements earlier this week by the Minister for Health and Aged Care around additional funding for patients affected by eating disorders were also welcomed. But the reality is that mental health care services in this country remain universally understaffed and underfunded. I'm very glad that the minister has noted that this budget only just lays the groundwork for improved mental health care in Australia.

I've advocated for the extended prescription dispensing length provided in this budget. I do believe that it is good policy. Doubling the amount of medication that can be dispensed with a single prescription will increase productivity by decreasing the time that we spend in pharmacies and in GP surgeries getting routine prescriptions. It will reduce the out-of-pocket costs for many medications by \$180 per medication per year. Many constituents in Kooyong will save more than \$1,000 a year as a result of this change, quite apart from the cost of their GP visits. It's a really significant benefit for those individuals.

Community pharmacists have expressed concerns about this change, and I am really supportive of measures to improve the quality of care that we provide in our medical system while increasing its cost efficiency. It's entirely appropriate that we review the scope of practice of all medical and allied health care professionals. For community pharmacists, that should include arrangements around dose administration aids, vaccination, delivery services and support of residential aged-care facilities. Pharmacists also have an important role to play with the dispensing of prescription vapes. In most contexts, vaping is a scourge. We need stronger regulation and enforcement of e-cigarettes, including controls on their importation, their contents and their packaging.

Community pharmacists should be paid fairly for the services that they provide, but so should hospital pharmacists—so should physios, OTs, psychologists, ambos and all of our allied healthcare professionals. We as a country have to value the work that our most valued professionals provide for us, but we have to ensure that the care and services they provide are best practice. It has to be safe, it has to be judicious and we have to ensure that our healthcare dollars are spent such as to optimise patient outcomes.

It is fair to say, somewhat unexpectedly, that prescription medications have become a somewhat hot topic in this country. Most recently, we've learned that startups like InstantScripts, Eucalyptus, Midnight Health and Mosh are helping people access medications without them being seen by a medical practitioner either in person or via telehealth. This can be done via online quizzes, texts or emails. I welcome the changes that will come into effect on 1 September, which will effectively stop online medical clinics from prescribing drugs to patients they have never seen. This is a dangerous and exploitative model of tick-and-flick medicine. It is at odds with everything that we want to achieve in providing best practice health care for Australian patients.

The gargantuan task of rejuvenating and modernising Australian general practice has been outlined in a number of policy documents over the years, particularly the *Strengthening Medicare taskforce report*. Many of those documents have underscored the importance of data and digital technology in the general practices of the 21st century. But, regrettably, there are no references in the recent budget to how we can optimise the use of clinical data stored in our GPs' software, and this remains a significant and essentially untapped resource. At this point, remarkably, we cannot document the reasons that prompted the 190 million visits by Australians to their GPs last year, nor do we have any insight into the actions that those GPs took at those visits.

If we did have decent data, we could use it to identify individuals at high risk of hospitalisation, individuals whose conditions are likely to deteriorate, individuals who might benefit from early intervention or from more targeted therapies. The data we do have is problematic because we have variable coding and a lack of universally agreed terminology for common conditions, like diabetes, hypertension or depression. There have been piecemeal activities by the government and commercial operators to facilitate a collection of GP data over the last few years, but a recent survey identified more than 100 separate datasets that are currently in place. They extract data from GPs in different ways, using different tools and different data governance frameworks.

Australian general practices are now incentivised to provide a proportion of their clinical data to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Ten agreed quality indicators have been recorded annually since 2020, but these record only very basic processes of care, like smoking status, weight or alcohol consumption. That's the limit of the data we record. Just consider that for a minute. For each of the 190 million GP consultations last year, we recorded only a very small fraction of the information that we could use to provide insights into the quality of the care we receive. Instead, we rely on the most basic NBS administrative data. We have not yet found the best way to record our invaluable medical data such as to optimise patient outcomes.

In an era of evidence based medicine, we've come to rely heavily on randomised clinical trials to determine the efficacy of various treatments and interventions. But we don't generally monitor their use in real-time settings, which means we are uncertain about the effects on communities, the post-hoc effects of those medications and settings that are different from those in clinical trials. This poverty of clinical data leaves us with a critical gap in our knowledge on how to apply treatments in different settings and in different populations.

The My Health Record has had a chequered 10-year history in its development. Our governments have already sunk more than \$2 billion into it without any tangible public benefit. Even the minister himself, Minister Butler, recently labelled it a waste of money for patients and for the health system. It has an ongoing cost of \$500 million a year to maintain. It beggars belief that the Albanese government has invested another \$950 million in My Health Record. It would be wiser to establish, at a fraction of the cost, a national interest dataset, as was initially

recommended by the 2017 Productivity Commission inquiry report *Data availability and use*. Fostering transparent, consistent, best-practice data governance processes, we can begin to build a real capacity for GPs, for patients and for researchers to analyse and use our complex clinical datasets. Critically, a national primary care data network of this nature could build trust and confidence in our community. Patients need to know that their data will be used for the public good, but they also need to note that privacy, security, access and commercialisation processes are appropriately governed using an agreed best-practice framework.

We have a wonderful healthcare system. We have a national treasure chest of world-class health professionals. Our medical research is amongst the best in the world, and our hospitals and GP services are extremely important to all Australians. I commend this government for making definite improvements to our healthcare system after years of underfunding and of lack of vision, but I implore the government to extend its vision to talk to the experts about our data collection and about all aspects of our service provision. We can and we should provide better health care in Australia. I look forward to working with the government to that end.

Mr ROB MITCHELL (McEwen) (11:46): I rise today on my wife's birthday, so happy birthday, Lisa. She's at home, and no doubt I've got to make sure the flowers get there on time. Today I proudly rise to support the Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2023-2024. I'm proud to be part of a government that can balance fiscal responsibility with providing cost-of-living relief to Australians most affected by the cost-of-living crisis. I'm especially proud of this responsible budget for our communities in McEwen, who were left behind for nearly a decade and now are finally being listened to. With this, on top of the boost for investment in local infrastructure that the government put through the October budget, like the Wallan ramps and the Macedon Ranges Regional Sports Precinct, the people of McEwen can be assured that this Albanese government stands with us and supports us. This is in stark contrast to how we were treated for nine years under those opposite, where time and time again we were totally ignored. The coalition legacy in McEwen is one of neglect and loss for our areas, with broken promises, empty rhetoric and no investment. This is why I stand proudly with a government that invests with our communities and shows up for our people.

I had the honour of accompanying our Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, in our beautiful electorate back a couple of weeks ago, the first time a prime minister had shown up in our communities outside of an election period since Julia Gillard—and that's telling. We welcomed the PM to Occasional Child Care Centre Diamond Creek, a local Nillumbik shire run centre. There the Prime Minister met with local educators and children at the centre. On arrival we met with Vicki Ward, our wonderful state member for Eltham, and with local councils and, of course, the centre staff before heading to the centre and to a welcoming reception and a lovely sign as we walked in.

Between entertaining the kids, we were able to talk about the investment we are making in early childhood education in the electorate. That means a staggering 6,500 families in McEwen will be better off because of the Albanese government's childcare package. Something we were really pleased to talk to the staff about was the \$72 million to be invested to build and retain early childhood education workforce nationally. This will increase the quality of care that our wonderful childhood educators will be able to provide to students across Australia, including, in fact, the kids of Occasional Childcare Centre Diamond Creek. Emma Mobbs, a parent who uses the centre, advised that the reforms to childcare rebate coming on 1 July will have a significant impact on the family budget. She has two children in the care centre, and the rebates will see costs go down by at least \$20 a day for her first and more for her second child.

But this trip wasn't just about conversations about policy in the budget; there were also big conversations about what the children at the centre's favourite animals were, where the Prime Minister proudly got out photos of his dog, Toto, and showed the kids, who were just in awe. They had a great time looking at the different pictures that he had, and I think it gave us an insight to a prime minister that actually cares and can take the time to listen and interact with people. It was a beautiful, sunny day in Diamond Creek, and the PM and I left having made wonderful connections with the children and staff. The Prime Minister especially noted the wonderful care the centre provides, and I couldn't be more proud of the way the whole show turned up that day.

All these stories just reinforce the importance of adequate funding in the childhood education space and why our government has had to act swiftly to support and build the industry that is responsible for the building blocks of our kids' futures—actually, our country's future. Quickly, I would like to especially thank the director, Anne Luttick, for having us there, talking with us and showing us around this wonderful place. We have met a few times now, as I presented her husband with a saluting certificate for his time in the Middle East, and she is very, very inspiring with the pride and passion in the way she talks about the work she does.

Early childhood education isn't the only education sector the government has increased funding to. In primary and secondary education, we have invested \$4 million in Victoria through the Teacher Workload Reduction Fund to take the pressure off and maximise the value of teachers' time. For our recent and future school leavers, or those who are interested in upskilling and changing careers, I'm pleased to highlight this budget's investment in

postsecondary education: \$127 million to fund 4,000 additional university places over the next four years to boost the number of STEM graduates. It also provides 20,000 additional university places for disadvantaged Australians, including 4,000 additional places in Victoria. Further, in the jobs and skills sector, specifically to McEwen, over 3,000 apprentices will benefit from a \$54 million investment into Australian apprenticeship supports to improve completion rates.

The Prime Minister's visit wasn't the only one we had in McEwen; we also had the wonderful Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care visit Riddells Creek. We welcomed my very good friend Ged Kearney to discuss the government's record \$3.5 billion investment to GPs to bulk bill, tripling the current incentive and acting as an immediate injection to support patients in general practice. This is the largest ever bulk billing incentive increase in the history of Medicare, and it will provide benefit to some 70,000 people right across our communities. We were especially thrilled to take in the Riddell Country Practice in Riddells Creek. We spoke to the management consultant, John Cross; the practice manager, Angela Williams, and GP Greg Rowles. John Cross spoke of the difficulties faced by rural and regional practices attracting and retaining GPs—something that is not unique to our area; it's a problem right across the nation. We listened to the concerns within the professional community. We spoke of the extended healthcare concerns GPs are being presented with, especially with the need for mental health services following the pandemic.

We were able to speak to how the government is working to strengthen Medicare and assist GPs to provide the best primary care they can, because after nine long years of cuts and neglect, the Albanese government is making Medicare stronger for all Australians. Our historic investment in Medicare delivers the largest ever increase to bulk billing incentives, making it easier for Australians to visit a doctor and be bulk billed. The government is also delivering on its promise for cheaper medicines. Over 35,000 people in McEwen will be able to buy two months worth of medicine for the price of a single prescription for more than 300 common PBS medicines. Overall, it will save people around \$200 a year on every single medicine they take, which is about \$1.6 billion across the nation.

While we were at the practice, we also took the opportunity to talk to a local pharmacist, who raised his concerns about changes the system. We spent time listening to his concerns, and I have taken them back to the health minister. It was a great visit that showed that the government is not only listening to health care professionals but acting.

We're also working very hard to improve the quality of aged care and support for Australians by investing in aged care. In this budget, we are unlocking funding that will mean 69 more recommendations from the aged-care royal commission be implemented. We are doing this by helping older people live independently at home. We've capped administration fees and banned exit fees, and we're delivering 9,500 more aged-care packages while we develop the Support at Home Program. This budget allocates \$11.3 billion over four years to fund the 15 per cent pay increase in the award for many aged-care workers. This will support approximately 56,000 aged-care workers in Victoria. We are doing this because Labor understands that looking after workers will mean that our parents, grandparents and, eventually, we will receive better care and support. Overall, the changes made to the health and care sectors in this budget will start to ease the burden on the workforce, the patients and the system overall. This budget provides that responsible relief that was missing for nearly a decade.

Importantly, this budget reinforces the safety net for Australians, and I'm proud to be part of a government that is doing all it can to ease the burden for those most in need. We are doing this through Commonwealth rent assistance as part of our \$14.6 billion budget package. Ultimately, this means that payments will increase \$40 a fortnight. This will help some 13,500 people in our communities who will receive an increase; almost 500 jobseekers aged between 55 and 59 in McEwen who will have their payments increase by \$92 a fortnight; 425 single parents on JobKeeper in McEwen with children aged between eight and 14 who will move to parenting payment single, giving them an extra \$176 a fortnight; and 11,870 households in McEwen who will benefit from a 15 per cent boost to the maximum rate of Commonwealth rent assistance. This boost to payments will help ease some of the pressures that people are facing every day due to the tumultuous global situation, while making sure our country stays in a strong position.

On top of the social support that this budget gives to Australians, the government is looking to continue to protect and improve the National Disability Insurance Scheme. We are making sure that the people who are receiving NDIS payments are at the centre of the NDIS. We're committed to delivering on its important promise to rebuild trust with NDIS participants, their families and their carers, but also, importantly, to making sure that it is sustainable into the future. A \$732 million investment over four years will improve its effectiveness and delivery, including over \$73 million to better support participants to manage their plan and access supports to achieve their goals. This will assist over 3,500 NDIS participants in McEwen.

We have also prioritised support for our returned service personnel. As the late President of the United States John F. Kennedy said, 'As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words but to live by them'. We know that, and that's why this government is increasing support for veterans and implementing the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. This budget is

putting our words into action. More than 340,000 veterans and dependants across the country, including almost 3,000 veterans in McEwen, will benefit from the \$328 million in the budget to support assessing services through the Department of Veterans' Affairs. Of that, \$64 million will retain almost 500 DVA staff to deliver frontline services to veterans and families and clear the claims backlog. These are some of the public servants that the Leader of the Opposition said he wanted to cut in his budget in reply speech, when he said we have too many public servants. Under the former government, veterans were waiting over 1,000 days to have claims heard because of the shortage of staff. We've put humans back in control and working with veterans and their families to actually bring outcomes. Over 100 veterans in McEwen will benefit from the delivery of our commitment to increase the annual rate of the totally and permanently incapacitated veteran pension by \$1,000 a year. Actions speak louder than words, which is why we as a government are acting swiftly on implementing these reforms and boosting funding in this area.

The government is continuing investment in Victoria. This House will know—members will have listened to me and to my colleagues from Victoria—how we missed out for a decade under the previous government. Labor is investing in genuine nation-building infrastructure. Creating economic productivity connects communities and works towards a lower carbon economy. We are doing this by investing in infrastructure projects like the \$150 million for Camerons Lane into the northern freight terminal, \$1.75 billion for North East Link and, of course, crucial projects in our community, like the Watson Street ramps.

For the electorate of McEwen, we are seeing huge upgrades in infrastructure. We are now getting our fair share, with \$2.4 billion for the NBN in last year's budget seeing over 20,000 premises in our communities have access to higher internet speeds. On top of that, there is a \$10.1 million investment in public safety mobile broadband to support connectivity for our first responders. We know the investment in this infrastructure is critical to our peri-urban and regional communities, and I fully support the work being done here.

With all these investments in the state of Victoria and in our beautiful electorate of McEwen, I am proud to support this responsible budget—a budget that gives relief where it is needed most to the most vulnerable members of our society; a budget that invests in health, our kids' future and our grandparents; and a budget that supports workers, creates jobs and redresses our infrastructure deficit. This budget is a budget that embodies the great Australian value of making sure everyone gets a fair go.

Mr VIOLI (Casey) (12:01): It's a joy to speak on this budget, on the appropriation bills. There's a lot in it and I will focus on the start, with the challenges this budget has. I note the member for McEwen had a lot of infrastructure investment in his electorate, and, clearly, the residents of Casey know it's gone straight out of the Casey electorate over to McEwen. Whether it's the Canterbury Road upgrade, the Clara Road upgrade or the \$150 million Roads for the Community program, it's good that at least we know where that's gone; it's left our community and gone to the member for McEwen's, who was clearly happy. Interestingly, he mentioned the North East Link funding. My understanding from the latest reports is that program was under review—so it is interesting that a member opposite maybe has some inside information that that's going to go ahead, despite the review happening at the moment. I'm not sure what's happening there; we'll dig into that one. It's interesting that some seem to know what's happening with that review and others don't. But I digress.

I want to focus, to start with, on the top line of this budget and how it's impacting all Australians, and all residents in Casey. We all know the situation that many people in this country are going through, with this cost-of-living crisis and the high inflationary environment. Yesterday we saw the monthly inflation rate increase to 6.8 per cent. We should always remember these numbers are not just numbers on a page; they are numbers that are impacting people every day when they go to the supermarket, when they put petrol into their car, when they pay their mortgage, when they want to pay for their children's sporting fees or when they have to, tragically, take their children out of community activities because they can't afford either the fees or the transport costs, of petrol in particular, to get their children to those events. It's so important that this budget is doing everything it can, but not to hold inflation at where it is at or make it worse; it should have been a budget that would drive inflation down. We're at seven per cent, and our target band is two to three per cent. We're in an environment where we have not seen inflation this high for generations. It should be a budget that drives it down.

It's amazing when you listen to the Treasurer speak in question time. In dorothy dixers from his own side, he quotes many economists. But it all talks about how this budget, at best, will not add to inflation—and that's not his job. Of course he shouldn't be adding to inflation, at seven per cent. His responsibility should be to drive inflation down, and he's not doing that. He admits that in his own words by continuing to quote the Reserve Bank governor, economists and experts that it might not at best drive inflation up. That's the wrong aim. To start with, he completely does not understand the challenges that Australians are facing because his focus is potentially on keeping it at six or seven per cent—and we saw that yesterday with the increase to 6.8 per cent.

The Treasurer doesn't really quote Bill Evans much. Bill Evans said this budget is more expansionary, or stimulatory, than any of the budgets from the 10 years before the pandemic, when inflation was within our target band. This budget spends more and drives more growth, hence driving inflation, than any of those budgets.

We've also got to remember when we talk about this Treasurer, Dr Chalmers—he likes to be referred to as a doctor, but he's not a doctor in economics.

Mr Brian Mitchell: He earned it!

Mr VIOLI: He did earn it. He earned his doctorate in politics: in Paul Keating, in focusing on Paul Keating. This is the Treasurer who said—what did he say?—'It's the recession we had to have.' This Treasurer knows a lot about politics. He spent a lot of time getting an education in Paul Keating. And what he does very cleverly is spin the numbers to play the political game, with the off-budget spending, over \$45 billion, which drives inflation. Even though he can move it off the budget and put it over in off-budget spending, it still drives inflation, because inflation does not care about moving numbers around. It's a nice accounting trick that the Treasurer likes to use with his political spin—doctor spin—so he can make sure that he can stand up and give a headline, but Australians know. They know every day, when they go to the grocery store. They know every day, when they have to put petrol in the car or when the electricity bill comes in, that words and spin from the Treasurer don't actually cut it.

He's got another nice little trick that he's using in question time and in the media at the moment. He talks about his claim of banking 82 per cent of savings—the upgrades that we have from the surplus that was delivered, from the revenue growth, from the strong unemployment rate of 3.5 per cent that he inherited and from the strong exports in terms of trades that we've got. But that 82 per cent, again, is a nice little trick, because what is conveniently excluded is the aged-care spending increase that the government is paying for. Both sides support it, and it's good that we're supporting aged-care workers—that's not the issue—but what he's done with his little change of words is he has decided that that's not a decision of government, so he can remove that spending and say that he's banking 82 per cent. But he's not, actually. He's actually only banking 70 per cent. He likes to talk about how he's more economically responsible than the former treasurer Josh Frydenberg. The last budget from Treasurer Frydenberg and Prime Minister Morrison actually banked 75 per cent of savings, and that was in a lower inflationary environment. So, again, we've got this great little political spin from Dr Chalmers. He's renowned for, as we said, the off-budget spending. But Australians know every time they go to the grocery store that they're actually paying more.

There's another thing we heard from this Treasurer, from the Prime Minister and from the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations. As a candidate, I obviously engaged deeply and listened a lot to what the then opposition was saying, and there was a lot of talk about real wages and how if the opposition, the ALP, got into government they were going to bring real wages down. Real wages are the crucial thing when it comes to wages, because real wages are the money you take home each month or each week in actuality. That's what you get to keep. We do not hear this government talk at all about real wages anymore. They talked about it a lot before the election. They will now not talk about it. And the reason the Prime Minister, the Treasurer, the minister for workplace relations and many opposite won't talk about real wages is that the reality is Australians' real wages are going backwards. They are continuing to go backwards under this government. Again, you know it's true because you know it every time the pay packet comes in and you have to go to the grocery store or you have to put petrol in your car. This government promised real wage increases. They're not delivering real wage increases, by their own numbers, in this term of government.

To go back to our original point, one of the key ways to drive real wages up is to bring inflation down, because if the cost of goods is less, then the money you earn can buy more. Every Australian knows that, because you're doing that and making those decisions every day. We hear a lot of political spin from this Treasurer. We'll continue to hear it. But the reality is this budget, at best, by his own admission, will keep inflation at 6.8 per cent or seven per cent, as we're seeing, which isn't in the target band of two per cent to three per cent. If it stays at this level, the RBA Governor will have to continue to increase interest rates to get it down to our target band of two to three per cent.

This Treasurer is not doing the heavy lifting to help the RBA Governor. He's leaving it to the RBA. He likes to quote him, as he did yesterday, but he's leaving the heavy lifting to the RBA Governor, which means that interest rates will continue to go up. We see reports today that the market is now predicting that rates will go up again next week. I genuinely hope they won't, because I know that will hurt and cripple many families who are trying to pay their mortgage. But this is what happens when a Treasurer doesn't make the tough decisions to drive inflation down.

Those are some of the challenges at the national level that all Australians are struggling with. I now want to talk about my community of Casey. We're struggling with all of those issues, particularly in our business community, which is made up of many great people and great small businesses in agriculture, manufacturing, wine production, tourism and trade. There are amazing organisations. There are so many small-business owners and tradies. In fact,

I'm proud to represent the electorate that has the highest percentage, as a percentage of the workforce, of tradies in the country. Master Builders had that data recently. It's a great example of people who are getting up every day and working hard. They're putting their life on the line. There are many challenges for many small-business owners. They are struggling at a time when the cost of living is going up and their inputs are going up.

There are many businesses I could talk about, but I have one great example. I want to quickly talk about Laurie from Aussie Growers Fruits. Yarra Valley Hilltop is one of their great brands. I had an opportunity to chat with him this week. His energy bill in the last 12 months went up over \$200,000. He fears it can go up another \$200,000, to \$400,000, in the next 12 months. He's doing it tough. He's looking for support. His business started over 20 years ago. It was an empty paddock. He built a factory with a vision of supporting local fruit producers, particularly strawberry producers. He does a strawberry jam, for example. All of that product comes from local farmers in the Yarra Valley in my electorate of Casey. It's a great example of strong local manufacturers making a difference, supporting businesses and creating an economy.

This government talks about energy relief, but it's another example of the political spin that we hear from this government. We all got rushed back here in December to make these important changes, but energy prices are continuing to go up. The Prime Minister and the Minister for Climate Change and Energy sit in parliament in question time and crow about the amazing job that they've done. Guess what? The policy is not working. Laurie knows it and business people and families in Casey know it.

There's another interesting thing. They had to wait for the budget—and the member for Longman knows this—because it's all about the political spin. They talk about energy relief. In a cost-of-living crisis, every day and every week makes a difference. They talk about how people in Victoria will get \$500. They talked about that in December. Not one dollar has gone to a resident or business in Casey—not one dollar. Let's be clear why it hasn't.

If the government wanted to, they could have had that legislation and made those decisions at the start of this year. They could have given you that relief, that money, four or five months ago, but they chose not to. The reason they held off giving you that money, that relief, is politics. By making the announcement in December they've been able to drag it out in question time and the media. They've talked about the relief and how they're supporting Australians.

This is the important bit for Dr Chalmers and his political science degree—and this is what former treasurer and prime minister Keating would have taught him. He needed that announcement on budget night because he needed to stand up with the Labor faithful and state, 'We're supporting Australian people.' But they haven't delivered a dollar. That's the choice he made. As the Treasurer of this country, whose responsibility is to support the Australian people and struggling families, he made a choice in December last year with the Prime Minister. They chose to delay your relief so he could stand up on budget night and make a big announcement about how they were going to help you. That was a choice. They could have given you that relief earlier this year. Because they've got the numbers and a very supportive Senate, they can push through whatever they want, and they chose to make you wait six to eight months so they could get a political announcement.

There are many other tragedies in this budget, particularly for farmers. There is a new tax coming around biosecurity that means, essentially, Australian farmers—all the farmers in Casey—are going to be paying more money to bring in products from overseas, increasing competition. I support biosecurity measures—we need those—but the importers should be paying it. The farmers of the Casey should not be paying more money. Residents and people in supermarkets will pay more money because, when your farmers pay more, they have to pass it on. Woolies and Coles will pass it on. That's because they're not making the tough decisions to make importers, who are bringing the risk in, pay that money. It's another example of abandoning farmers and driving inflation up.

Ms MASCARENHAS (Swan) (12:16): After nearly a decade of waste and neglect, the Albanese Labor government is working hard to deliver the better future for all that Australians voted for last year. This is a responsible budget and a practical budget. Globally we're in uncertain economic times, but this budget delivers security and stability, and that's exactly what the Australian public need right now. This budget tackles our immediate economic challenges and helps ease pressure on families. We're delivering targeted relief to the most vulnerable Australians to make sure that no-one is left behind. This budget will help create opportunities that all Australians can share in. This budget lays the foundation for a stronger economy and a better future, building for the long term while helping Australians who are under pressure right now. We know that households and businesses are feeling the pressure, and we know that there's a lot of work to do, and we're getting on with the job.

I speak to Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2023-2024 at a time when many in my community are looking for leadership in government. Under the previous Liberal governments, we've had a decade of waste and neglect. We had a prime minister, in the member for Cook, who refused to be accountable to the people. When the fires plagued the east coast in 2020, his response was that he 'didn't hold a hose, mate'. When the federal government didn't order enough

vaccinations, it was okay because it wasn't a race. When COVID ripped through our aged-care homes, it was a matter for the states.

Opposition members interjecting—

Ms MASCARENHAS: The thing is, we need to understand our history so we know where we're going. We need to understand that so we don't repeat the mistakes of the past. On learning about the member for Cook's secret ministries, he said that if he had to do it again he would. No leadership and no accountability was the order of the day.

When it came to the cost of living, we saw a government that was actively avoiding doing anything to soften the issue, including not looking at economic productivity. When this government promised a \$1-an-hour pay increase to our lowest-paid workers, the member for Cook labelled the opposition leader a loose unit. We were talking about \$20.33 an hour. Under the previous Liberal governments wage growth was at low records. The former finance minister, Mathias Cormann, described low wage growth as a deliberate design feature of our economic architecture—very intentional. It was a neoliberal, intentional policy design which was basically designed to—I can't think of a parliamentary term—basically stuff Australians over.

Australians had been doing it tough because the previous government failed to have a plan. Under the previous government inflation rose by 2.1 per cent in the March 2022 quarter, the greatest increase in inflation in decades. Yet each day, in this place, they ask a question about inflation, wilfully ignorant of the biggest hit to our community that occurred during their watch. What's the coalition's signature of a cost-of-living policy? It's \$14 billion worth of JobKeeper payments to businesses turning multimillion dollar profits and having no expectation for them to pay it back and, simultaneously, chasing individual JobKeeper recipients with debt collectors because they received a few dollars more than they should have. We need to have a look at accountability mechanisms and get the measures right.

What do people doing it tough get when the coalition is in government? Announcements but no policy, handouts to the top end of town and the demonisation of JobKeeper and JobSeeker recipients. Doris from Carlisle wanted Labor to invest in skills for the future. Under the previous government there was no investment in TAFE, yet when we invest in education and skills we build a better future.

So what are we doing for the people of Swan? A part of it relates to cheaper medicines. We have introduced 60-day dispensing. This will happen from 1 September. It's really great policy and will save money in people's back pockets. We're also introducing cheaper child care. I know that some members, on the other side, also have children and may see this as a positive policy that will increase our nation's productivity. It also means we unlock more workforce in our communities and see increased incomes for households and great education opportunities for our children.

We're also strengthening Medicare. We learnt during the WA pandemic that when you get health outcomes right you get good economic outcomes. That's the reason WA kept the economy going. In Swan, I met with Dr Nick Bretland and Anastasia from Rowelthorpe Medical Centre in Bentley. Their patients are largely from the aged-care sector or are pensioners with a disability. Most of their patients are bulk-billed, but it has become financially unviable for them to bulk-bill patients. The first thing they told me when we met was that the Medicare rebate for GPs had only increased by 1.6 per cent in 10 years. This is one of the most important parts of the Australian identity, of what makes us different from other countries, having a strong bulk-billing system, and we didn't have good processes in place.

General practitioners are also at the forefront of preventative health care in this country. Preventative health care is really important for us to invest in, because it saves us costs in the future. In the mining industry, we call that preventative maintenance. The same principles apply to human bodies. The interpersonal work that GPs do with their patients allows for better health outcomes. Labor's \$3.5 billion investment, tripling the bulk-billing incentive, is an immediate injection to support patients and general practitioners and strengthen the heart of Medicare. Labor built Medicare and will always protect it. The fundamental reason for that is we believe that all Australians should have access to universal health. There are 72,621 people in my community who will directly benefit from the largest bulk-billing incentive in Australian history.

We're also working at raising JobSeeker and improving rent assistance. What Labor's doing is part of a bigger picture: investing in training and jobs for the future. When we invest in skills for the future it means we have jobs for the future. One of the things industry has been telling us is that they need more skilled workers, and the thing we didn't have under the previous government was management of how our economy works.

One of the reasons we had the Jobs and Skills Summit was that we needed to bring workers, employers, unions and community leaders together to think about a vision for the future and go, 'How can we work together?' The truth is, the Albanese Labor government has been looking at unifying Australia rather than dividing the country, because

what we can achieve together is so much more compared to when we're divided. So, we had the Jobs and Skills Summit; we had concrete outcomes from that. Part of that related to paid parental leave provisions, which we're expanding. We're also increasing the flexibility associated with that.

Another thing we're also doing is looking at industry of the future. One of the things we saw during the pandemic was supply chains breaking down. We saw a lot of people want a lot of toilet paper—amusingly, we manufacture most of our toilet paper—but we also saw critical things that we needed in Australia that we didn't have access to. When we went to manufacturers and said to them, 'We need your help with building face masks because we need to keep our health workers safe,' local manufacturers actually went out and designed this. And the thing that we haven't seen done in Australia is building our manufacturing capabilities so that we can build more things here to increase our resilience. We also need to make sure that we have high-skilled, good-paying jobs that are actually competitive with other countries. One of the things I hear from some manufacturers is that they are cost competitive for products, but they're not actually getting the opportunity to participate in procurement for the supply chains, so that's something we also need to fix.

We've also been talking about action on climate change. This is a moment where Australia can be united. Unfortunately, under the previous government, this was something that was politicised. The thing I would say, taking a worldwide perspective, is action on climate change is not political; it's just science. So my question is: do you accept the science of gravity? Great! That's why we're here on earth.

Mr Young interjecting—

Ms MASCARENHAS: Did I hear you say that climate science is a cult?

Mr Young interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Chesters): Order. Let's give the speaker an opportunity to be heard in silence.

Mr Young interjecting—

Ms Mascarenhas: But that is—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Longman will have an opportunity to make his remarks at a later date.

Ms MASCARENHAS: Action on climate change is great for the environment, it's great for the economy and it's good for communities. And I can tell you that science isn't a cult; it's a fact of life. If you want to go back to high school and learn some basic scientific principles, I encourage you to do that. I'd also say that conservative governments across the world are accepting the science. Science is not political. It's not a religion. It's just a fact. You can be religious and accept science—I am one of those people. This government is acting on climate change, and we want to do this. We want to unite communities and give businesses what they've been asking for for so long—that is, certainty. They want certainty so they can invest in markets and make good investment decisions, and that's not something we've seen over the last 10 years.

One of the first things that we did when we went into government was legislate to reduce our emissions by 43 per cent by 2030. We didn't need to legislate that, but one of the reasons we did that was because we wanted to send investment signals to the community, saying, 'We accept the science, and we want to decarbonise.' And the thing we saw after that was investments flowing through, which was amazing to see. The truth is that we need to continue to do more.

One of the things that we've seen, particularly on the east coast, is an increase in energy prices. One of the reasons for that is the ratio of fossil fuels in the electricity mix. It also relates to reserves for our energy use. One of the things we have in WA is reserves of our gas for domestic electricity use, and we haven't seen that on the east coast. We've also seen an increase in renewable energy in the ACT territory grid. When you look at increases in electricity costs, when you have more renewable energy, your prices don't increase as much, and the reason why is you don't have—the sun and the wind don't care if there's some dictator in an overseas country who is basically saying: 'Hey! We want to invade this country, and this is going to have a shock ripple effect on energy and commodity prices across the country.' Sorry, I went on a rant on climate change.

The other thing that I'd talk about is the aged-care royal commission. One of the things that we said during the federal election is that we wanted to restore dignity to our oldest and most experienced citizens across this country, and we have not seen that. We had the aged-care royal commission, and some of the stories that we heard were incredibly shocking. What we wanted to see is dignity and respect but also good health outcomes, so a part of that related to the nutrition of residents in aged care and making sure that they have access to quality food. A part of that was making sure that residents have more minutes with care workers to make sure that they're getting quality care with people. A part of that related to 24-hour nursing. We wanted to put the nurses back into nursing homes, something that was really important.

Essentially, what we're doing is going through a process of cleaning up the decade that was wasted under the previous coalition government, and I'm really proud of the Albanese Labor government. This government has some of the most experienced and talented cabinet members we've seen in this place for such a long time. But I'd say that we've still got more work to do, and I'm looking forward to implementing some really great policies.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr BRIAN MITCHELL: I move:

That the Federation Chamber do now adjourn.

PricewaterhouseCoopers

Ms DANIEL (Goldstein) (12:31): Trust, truth, integrity and accountability were what voters in Goldstein voted for, and without those things confidence in our democracy suffers and disenchantment with leadership increases. The PwC scandal is an opportunity to restore public confidence, but only if accountability is clear. In the last two years alone, even as people within the Public Service, including the Taxation Office, were aware of what PwC had done, the company secured contracts with federal government departments worth more than half a billion dollars. Further, Parliamentary Library research reveals that, in the months since the scandal broke back in January, PwC has secured further contracts worth a total of nearly \$6 million with the defence department alone: \$4.6 million for management advisory services, another \$25,000 for management advisory services, another \$874,000 for management advisory services, \$10,000 for education and training services, another \$36,000 for education and training services, another \$142,000 for education and training services and another \$140,000 for management and advisory services. In Senate estimates this morning, the education department acknowledged it entered two contracts with PwC after 23 January, when the scandal first surfaced publicly, one of them as recently as 20 April.

The growth in private consulting to government is linked to cuts to the Public Service, with the Australian National Audit Office finding the previous government spent \$20.8 billion on contractors and consultants in its final year, the equivalent of 54,000 full-time staff, or 37 per cent of the Public Service. This is something the current government has described as a shadow workforce, and the government has committed to rebuilding government agencies. The government, though, now has a bigger motivator than just cost, with the revelations about PwC opening up much bigger questions about integrity and, indeed, allegations of potential corruption now referred to the AFP.

It's also a matter of serious public interest, with hundreds of millions of dollars going to each of the big four consulting companies—PwC, EY, KPMG and Deloitte—across hundreds or thousands of contracts, which, as I've said earlier, are still being signed up to apace. Governments have previously been repeatedly warned that advice may be framed to elicit repeat business—in other words, to make money—rather than to deliver the best outcomes for Australian taxpayers. The PwC saga goes further, with the accusation that confidential government information was used to deliver tax benefits to other clients in a form of insider trading.

Former Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull acknowledged on RN this morning that he regretted the growth in the use of consultants during his time at the top, but he did little or nothing to stop it. And what was the Public Service to make of the message from the member for Cook shortly after he became Prime Minister in 2018, when he instructed them, 'The Public Service is meant to be an enabler of government policy, not an obstacle'? I beg to differ. The job is to give frank and fearless advice.

The current Prime Minister condemns what has happened at PwC as an 'absolute scandal', but he dodged the issue when I asked him yesterday to suspend all current contracts with PwC and establish an integrity review of Commonwealth relationships with all large private consultancy companies. Yet that's just what the New South Wales parliament is doing right now. Pressure is also mounting on the Victorian government to pull back from its reliance on the big consulting firms, and I would argue that we need to open this up once and for all at a federal level.

The Centre for Public Integrity argues that the big four should be considered as lobbyists. Certainly, it's another reminder that the rules surrounding lobbyists in this place are far too porous and that at the very least we need real-time disclosure of ministers' diaries as a matter of law. Truth, integrity and accountability were what voters in Goldstein and elsewhere around the country voted for last year—government done differently and trusted leadership. As I've said, the PwC scandal could be an opportunity to restore public confidence, but only if accountability is clear. If the Prime Minister won't trigger an integrity review, perhaps the National Anti-Corruption Commission will when it's stood up later this year.

Environment

Mr LAXALE (Bennelong) (12:37): In May last year, after a decade of neglect, decay and climate change denial, the Australian people voted for a government that would be committed to delivering real action for the environment and climate change. After just one year of the Albanese Labor government, we are delivering on our commitment to put the environment and climate change front and centre. We are paving the way for a more sustainable and prosperous future for all Australians.

We have legislated an emissions reduction target in that year, becoming one of only a handful of nations across the world to do so. In that year, we've reformed the safeguard mechanism to ensure that it actually does what it's meant to do—force our biggest emitters to reduce their emissions year on year. We are rewriting our old and broken environmental laws so that we can better protect our precious natural environment. This government is determined to ensure that our environmental laws are robust, effective and long lasting, making sure there is no room for the future exploitation or destruction of our precious national environment. To enforce those laws, we will also establish the Commonwealth Environment Protection Agency. It will make informed decisions about the developments that affect our environment and whether or not they should proceed, and it will enforce environmental law.

On top of all this, we're putting our money where our mouth is, delivering a budget for the environment and climate change with wins across the board. This budget delivers significant resources for the protection and restoration of our natural wonders. Our commitment of \$225 million towards protecting koalas and their habitats is just the beginning. We'll also extend our efforts to safeguard other threatened species across Australia, as their survival is intertwined with the health of our natural ecosystems.

We also know the damage that plastics cause to our fragile flora and fauna. It's imperative that we produce less plastic, that we use less of it and that we find better ways to reduce the plastic we already have. As part of this government's comprehensive approach to recycling, we launched the \$250 million Recycling Modernisation Fund and have allocated \$60 million to support the development of new recycling infrastructure specifically for hard-to-recycle plastics, including soft plastics. The Recycling Modernisation Fund has already secured funding for 48 additional plastic recycling facilities, with 11 of them already being successfully delivered. And I look forward to Coles and Woolworths re-establishing their plastic drop-offs, because I've got a garage full of soft plastics.

Our commitment to the environment is not only limited to our terrestrial realm. We understand the importance of preserving our oceans. That's why we're investing \$163 million to ensure the Australian Institute of Marine Science can continue its world-leading scientific research to protect vital ecosystems, including our Great Barrier Reef. We're backing up our commitment to restore and repair nature with comprehensive programs aimed at repairing and rejuvenating our invaluable and precious World Heritage sites. These sites, with their rich cultural and national significance, deserve our utmost care and attention.

The Albanese government will protect and restore some of our most precious icons, with extra support allocated to Commonwealth national parks, including important heritage sites such as Kakadu, Uluru and Kata Tjuta. We're establishing a national flood warning system that will provide reliable and prompt information to communities in flood prone areas as well.

Our determination to combat the pressing issue of climate change is unwavering. The urgency of the situation demands immediate action, and that's precisely what the Australian people voted for and what the Albanese Labor government is delivering. We have made our firm commitment to achieve net zero emissions—a clear departure from the years of those opposite. We refuse to let political inertia hinder our progress any longer. We're embracing a future that is sustainable, environmentally responsible and geared towards leaving our world better than we found it.

We're empowering individual families to become active participants in this transition to greener energy by allocating \$1.3 billion to support households in upgrading their homes with solar and energy storage technologies. This funding will help households unlock the potential of renewable energy to reduce power bills but also help locals reduce their carbon footprint. To promote the adoption of renewable energy, we're also delivering community batteries across Australia. One is already in my electorate, in North Epping, but 400 will be funded across Australia. That will encourage the uptake of solar power and help reduce energy bills.

These are just some of the measures we've taken. I believe we can go further, and I will do that in my time here in parliament.

Queensland: Infrastructure

Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (12:42): By my count, it's 3,341 days until the opening ceremony of the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, otherwise referred to as Brisbane 2032. When we decided to bid for this historic event, we did so as a nation and as the state of Queensland—especially South-East Queensland—with a big vision in mind. That vision was consistent with the International Olympic Committee and their new norms, which basically

say the days are gone where you host an Olympic Games with a view to ensuring you meet the prescriptive list of requirements from the IOC; rather, the day has come where you, as host, decide what is in your best interest as a location, and you leverage the games to deliver on that vision. For South-East Queensland, we know we are a booming population. We are a lifestyle capital. The population continues to grow. But, with that, we have issues of congestion.

Part of our vision for hosting the 2032 Games was to leverage the greatest event on the planet to invest in infrastructure. At the centre of that was to be rail connectivity right across South-East Queensland, with the starting point—which was agreed to, by the way, by three tiers of government—being between Brisbane and the Maroochydore CBD, that beautiful greenfield development site that will be the newest CBD in the Southern Hemisphere. Part of this is it's going to require money. What we said as three tiers of government was that this was our window to deliver on that vision. It's 37 kilometres between Beerwah and the Maroochydore CBD. As many people in my part of the world know, the rail line goes up the north coast. There's an opportunity to branch off at Beerwah and go all the way up the coastal strip, 37 kilometres. We had done, years before, a thorough study in conjunction with the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads. It was fully costed at \$2.9 billion. When you added a 10 per cent contingency it was \$3.2 billion. When you cut it in half, the federal government said it would deliver on a \$1.6 billion package to see that rail get built. That was the former coalition government. We were proud of that, and we were able to unite the Sunshine Coast community, regardless of their political stripe. Everybody knows there's no greater transformative project for our region than that rail line. But then there was a change of government—

Mr Rae: You didn't fund it, did you, Ted?

Mr TED O'BRIEN: and a few things happened.

Mr Rae: You're all press release!

Mr TED O'BRIEN: No. 1, the state government started to crab-walk away. The state government, still saying, 'We like the idea', refused to commit. They started to rubbish the very business case they participated in and had spoken positively about. The new federal Labor government started crab-walking away too—

Mr Rae: You left us a trillion dollars in debt!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Chesters): Order, Member for Hawke!

Mr TED O'BRIEN: quiet on whether or not they would deliver, and then they decided to postpone the release of that \$1.6 billion—

Mr Violi interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Casey: it's adjournment.

Mr TED O'BRIEN: pushing it into the future and compromising that project's being delivered by the 2032 games. Now the project is under 'review' by the federal Labor government. I believe the state Labor government has a secret plan to build rail only through to Birtinya-Kawana.

Ms Lawrence interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, Member for Hasluck!

Mr TED O'BRIEN: In other words, it's only going to be half a rail line.

What concerns me the most is a new strategy document put out by the department that suggested there would be a rail-line extension into the southern—underscore 'southern'—Sunshine Coast, not all the way to the Maroochydore CBD, and a high-frequency public transport connection between Maroochydore and Birtinya. In other words, the writing might be on the wall with this one. If indeed Labor has a plan not to deliver rail all the way through the Maroochydore CBD, it has an opportunity this Friday at the infrastructure summit on the Sunshine Coast to come clean, be honest, be transparent and tell the Sunshine Coast community what its actual plan is. The clock is ticking to 2032. Own up.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind members that it's the adjournment debate. I appreciate that it's Thursday, but we are so close. Let's just give each other respect and let people have their adjournment speeches in silence.

Vocational Education and Training

Ms LAWRENCE (Hasluck) (12:47): The Albanese government is making an investment of \$4.1 billion in what is a once-in-a-generation reform of our TAFE and vocational and educational training sector. It is investing \$4.1 billion in a joint-stewardship model with the states and territories.

I had a wonderful opportunity to study at TAFE, completing an associate diploma in Japanese. However, my completion was actually not of the course's duration and choosing. It was because the course was so underfunded that it was not able to continue. So my completion was not of the years that I'd hoped to study to get to a translator

level of qualification. Thankfully, Murdoch University identified the students that were studying alongside me and invited us to continue the associate diploma into a degree at that university, which I did embark on.

This commitment changes the future for Australians. So far, we have supported almost 150,000 Australians to take up the initiative of fee-free TAFE, including 15,000 Western Australians. Among those are 35,000 jobseekers around the country who are taking advantage of the opportunity to upskill and enter the workforce, ready to address the skills shortages in key sectors. We are investing this \$4.1 billion because we recognise the urgency of the skills crisis facing Australia today, and we are taking those necessary steps in collaboration, in partnership, with the states and territories to build the skilled economy of the future. In fact, on 23 August last year I hosted a green energy jobs and skills roundtable as a lead-in to the national Jobs and Skills Summit. There we heard from industries—large and larger—that support so many Western Australians in employment across the state. We heard from small business, we heard from unions and, most importantly, we heard from the training service providers themselves. The Treasurer participated by video link, recognising that the insights that these participants would share could help shape the future of our training and vocational sector.

The issues that they spoke to included the need for a renewed focus on the jobs and skills sector, better data, nationwide standards, better wages and conditions for apprentices, and more industry integrated training. The Minister for Skills and Training, Minister O'Connor, listened. He went beyond acknowledging the significant skills shortage. He emphasised the government's willingness to invest in this sector, and the Treasurer and the cabinet have backed him in. So the minister is working with his state and territory counterparts to deliver a new National Skills Agreement with guiding principles that include shared stewardship, fee-free TAFE, gender equality and qualifications reform.

Seeing the benefits already landing in my seat of Hasluck is exciting. The North Metropolitan TAFE, which is in Midland in the seat of Hasluck, is now the home of the renewable energy trades training centre in Western Australia, with a focus on training people to become wind turbine technicians for the wind farms that we will see across the nation. This is a \$3.24 million commitment at Midland TAFE alone. With the use of wind energy increasing across the state, a skilled workforce to install, maintain and repair wind turbines is critical. We recognise that. We listen to industry, we understand the changing direction with our transition to green energy, and we have acted.

It's not just the technical skills sector where we are offering fee-free placements. Nationwide, almost 30 per cent of enrolments in all courses have related to the care sector, in skill priorities like early childhood education, nursing and support work, and 60 per cent of the enrolments to date taking up these fee-free places are in fact women. So families across Hasluck will know that their children have access to the skills and training they need for the jobs of the future, and the opportunity for themselves to also upskill is now available. The places are there. The commitment to the courses and the training—unlike in my own personal experience—is guaranteed. I think we can all be deeply proud that we are creating a more skilled and smart Australia.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice

Mr VIOLI (Casey) (12:52): Last Sunday, 28 May, 58 people randomly selected across the electorate of Casey came together to talk about the proposed Voice to Parliament for Indigenous Australians. The attendees represented the diversity of the Casey electorate with respect to gender, age, heritage, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage, educational attainment, voting behaviour and location. They were selected by an independent organisation to make sure that they matched the demographics of the electorate of Casey. The afternoon began with a welcome to country from my good friend Wurundjeri woman Julie Coombs. The participants heard from the 'yes' and 'no' cases, from eminent Australians Aunty Jill Gallagher AO and Warren Mundine AO, and then they discussed the process and answered more questions.

Participants were surveyed about their views when they arrived and then again when they left. This survey was facilitated by independent engagement company democracyCo. All three organisations involved—democracyCo, Sortition Foundation and Hatrick and Co—are committed to improving how the voices of people are heard within our system of government, and they undertook this work in partnership with myself and the people of Casey pro bono. All the organisations are independent and nonpartisan. I would like to thank Emily, Emma, Lisa, Sonia, Chelsey, Kerry and Paul, who all worked very hard to bring this event together.

When participants arrived, a greater portion was in support of the 'no' case, and there was a considerable number who were unsure—almost 30 per cent. Hearing from the speakers and talking to each other resulted in a significant change in views, increasing the portion who supported the 'yes' case and substantially reducing the number of people who were unsure. When they left, the groups were polarised, with equal numbers supporting the 'yes' case and the 'no' case and only 11 per cent remaining unsure.

Why people supported either case reveals some interesting reflections on what equity means and whose voices need to be heard. There was considerable movement in people's views because of the conversation and information

that they received, with 23 per cent of attendees changing their views, and it was wonderful to see the way everyone engaged in a positive manner and respected their views.

There were a significant number whose firm views remained unchanged. The people who changed their view to 'no' indicated that they'd changed due to a lack of information or detail about how the Voice will be structured and implemented. People were asking for more information, and I wasn't able to give them that information, because those decisions will not be made until after the referendum. As one participant commented, using the real estate analogy: 'You're selling me a house that does not exist, and you want me to choose "yes" or "no" as to whether I'll buy it. That's not even a plan.' The people who changed their view to 'yes' said that they did this because it became clear to them in the session that the Voice won't impact on non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people and because they understood that something needs to change to improve the outcomes for Australia's First Nations people. I can understand the frustration of those who want more.

Interestingly, the feedback on the result of this matched the people who have come into the electorate office, either through my surveys or calling in unprompted, with 39.8 per cent of people saying 'yes', 45.7 per cent saying 'no' and 14.6 per cent still undecided. This information is important. This is the feedback from the people, because it will be the Australian people who will make their decision.

We had an opportunity to have a moment of unity around constitutional recognition and legislating voices that all in this House supported, but the government, unfortunately, decided not to take that moment to bring Australians together and make it a unifying position.

Government members interjecting—

Mr VIOLI: I hear the interjections from those opposite, but this is the feedback from the Australian people. These are the residents and people of Casey giving their view. They're the ones asking for more detail, because it will be the Australian people who will decide this referendum, and it's disappointing that this Prime Minister missed an opportunity to bring the nation together.

Silicosis

McEwen Electorate: Diamond Creek Junior Football Club

Mr ROB MITCHELL (McEwen) (12:57): You can stand up or you can stand by. This is the simple life lesson my dad taught me that has shaped not only my personal beliefs but my political career. It's the reason why I'm in this place and proud to be part of a government that has put working conditions and working rights back at the forefront of the agenda. The Labor Party is the party that was built by workers on the foundation of the great Australian labour movement. We are older than Federation, and we have grown and matured with the needs of the Australian people throughout the years. The core values that underpin the legislative agenda that this government has taken on, working conditions and reforms, are incredibly important to me. With the passage of the recent Fair Work legislation in this House and the passing of the Secure Jobs, Better Pay bill, I, along with my Labor colleagues, can proudly say we are standing up for the workers of Australia.

It is why it is also great to hear the Minister for Employment Workplace Relations talk about the current steps this government is taking to tackle silicosis. The member for Casey may laugh, but this is an important issue. It is why I commend the campaign that the unions have been running to raise awareness on the deadly dust, and I thank the ACTU for meeting with me and talking about this critical issue. No worker should ever have to be put into a position that will affect their safety and health in both the short and the long-term.

A study from Curtin University shows that between 80,000 and 100,000 people may be affected with silicosis. Six hundred thousand workers are exposed to silica dust each year, across a wide range of industries, whether it be cutting the marble for those fancy benchtops or from the dust of the cut rocks and mines. It's why the government has committed nearly \$10 million to tackle silicosis in the recent budget. We are actively investing in the protection of workers' health. This is an additional investment, on top of the \$3.9 million invested at the beginning of the year, that will go a long way to combating this deadly dust.

Educational programs and working with the states and territories are needed for more decisive bans. We are fixing the legislation and educational holes that have let workers fall through the cracks. Workplace rights are what brought me here, and I will stand up for the rights of workers for as long as I am able to serve in this place.

I entered the workforce when I was 16—a long time ago, when I had a full head of hair and they still made good music. I was a shoemaker in a company called Koala Shoes. I worked in a factory of 800 people with a bunch of my mates and a lot of new migrant workers who had limited or zero English. They were classified as unskilled, but I dare say that not many people in this place have anywhere near the abilities that they had.

Because they didn't have the greatest English they were often subjected to rampant discrimination. I remember a lady who was a grandmother. She had a job just to feed her family in this new country. She was spraying lacquer

and solvent on the shoes. There was no exhaust fan, and she collapsed from the fumes. That wasn't an uncommon occurrence. The employer didn't care for her wellbeing. They only cared about the production line and the profits. All the employer cared about was making sure they had the outcomes and high levels of production.

Migrant workers in this factory had no voice and no way of standing up for themselves. I remember watching on and remembering the lesson my dad told me: stand by or stand up. Where they didn't have a voice, I used mine. It wasn't fair and it wasn't right for these people, and I had an obligation to stand up and address the wrongs. We as a government have an obligation to stand up and address wrongs. We have an obligation to stand up for workers' safety, and that's what we're doing.

I commend the recent campaigns by the unions in raising awareness of silicosis. I commend the government for our work with the unions to protect workers' safety and lives. I look forward to seeing what will be done in this space.

I want to just quickly mention the Diamond Creek Junior Football Club. This Friday night they're having a sleep-out for motor neuron disease. We will have some Danihers there and some other AFL and WAFL footballers. I commend the club for what they're doing, the way they're working in the community and what they're doing to make sure that this horrible disease has got prominent awareness. I'm going to try to pop in there on Friday night. I know the kids are looking forward to it. The whole Diamond Creek community is behind this event to make sure that we have a successful event and raise lots of money to end this scourge. I say to the Diamond Creek Junior Football Club and the president: 'Well done. Keep up the great work. Thank you for all you're doing for our kids and our community.'

Question agreed to.

Federation Chamber adjourned at 13:02