



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

SENATE

Hansard

TUESDAY, 29 MARCH 2022

CORRECTIONS

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

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

PROOF

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

Governor-General

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

Senate Office Holders

President—Senator the Hon. Slade Brockman

Deputy President and Chair of Committees—Senator Susan Lines

Temporary Chairs of Committees—Senators Askew, Bilyk, Brown, Chandler, Faruqi, Fawcett, Fierravanti-Wells, McGrath, McLachlan, O'Neill, O'Sullivan, Polley, Sterle and Walsh

Leader of the Government in the Senate—Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham

Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate—Senator the Hon. Michaelia Cash

Leader of the Opposition in the Senate—Senator the Hon. Penny Wong

Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate—Senator the Hon. Kristina Keneally

Manager of Government Business in the Senate—Senator the Hon. Anne Ruston

Deputy Manager of Government Business in the Senate—Senator Jonathon Duniam

Manager of Opposition Business in the Senate—Senator Katy Gallagher

Senate Party Leaders and Whips

Leader of the Liberal Party in the Senate—Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham

Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party in the Senate—Senator the Hon. Michaelia Cash

Leader of The Nationals in the Senate—Senator the Hon. Bridget McKenzie

Deputy Leader of The Nationals in the Senate—Senator the Hon. Matthew Canavan

Leader of the Labor Party in the Senate—Senator the Hon. Penny Wong

Deputy Leader of the Labor Party in the Senate—Senator the Hon. Kristina Keneally

Leader of the Australian Greens in the Senate—Senator Larissa Waters

Deputy Leader of the Australian Greens in the Senate—Senator Nicholas McKim

Chief Government Whip—Senator Dean Anthony Smith

Deputy Government Whips—Senators Clare Chandler and James McGrath

The Nationals Whip—Senator Perin Davey

Chief Opposition Whip—Senator Anne Elizabeth Urquhart

Deputy Opposition Whip—Senator Raff Ciccone

Australian Greens Whip—Senator Nicholas McKim

Printed by authority of the Senate

Members of the Senate

Senator	State or Territory	Term expires	Party
Abetz, Hon. Eric	TAS	30.6.2022	LP
Antic, Alexander	SA	30.6.2025	LP
Askew, Wendy ⁽¹⁾	TAS	30.6.2022	LP
Ayres, Timothy	NSW	30.6.2025	ALP
Bilyk, Catryna Louise	TAS	30.6.2025	ALP
Birmingham, Hon. Simon John	SA	30.6.2022	LP
Bragg, Andrew James	NSW	30.6.2025	LP
Brockman, Slade	WA	30.6.2025	LP
Brown, Carol Louise	TAS	30.6.2025	ALP
Canavan, Hon. Matthew James	QLD	30.6.2022	NATS
Carr, Hon. Kim John	VIC	30.6.2022	ALP
Cash, Hon. Michaelia Clare	WA	30.6.2022	LP
Chandler, Claire	TAS	30.6.2025	LP
Chisholm, Anthony David	QLD	30.6.2022	ALP
Cicccone, Raffaele	VIC	30.6.2025	ALP
Colbeck, Hon. Richard Mansell	TAS	30.6.2025	LP
Cox, Dorinda Rose ⁽²⁾	WA	30.6.2022	AG
Davey, Perin McGregor	NSW	30.6.2025	NATS
Dodson, Patrick	WA	30.6.2025	ALP
Duniam, Hon. Jonathon Roy	TAS	30.6.2022	LP
Farrell, Donald Edward	SA	30.6.2022	ALP
Faruqi, Mehreen Saeed	NSW	30.6.2025	AG
Fawcett, David Julian	SA	30.6.2025	LP
Fierravanti-Wells, Hon. Concetta Anna	NSW	30.6.2022	LP
Gallagher, Katherine Ruth	ACT		ALP
Green, Nita Louise	QLD	30.6.2025	ALP
Griff, Stirling	SA	30.6.2022	CA
Grogan, Karen ⁽³⁾	SA	30.6.2025	ALP
Hanson, Pauline Lee	QLD	30.6.2022	PHON
Hanson-Young, Sarah Coral	SA	30.6.2025	AG
Henderson, Sarah Moya ⁽⁴⁾	VIC	30.6.2022	LP
Hughes, Hollie Alexandra	NSW	30.6.2025	LP
Hume, Hon. Jane	VIC	30.6.2025	LP
Keneally, Hon. Kristina Kerscher ⁽⁵⁾	NSW	30.6.2022	ALP
<i>Vacancy</i> ⁽⁶⁾	VIC	30.6.2022	ALP
Lambie, Jacqui	TAS	30.6.2025	JLN
Lines, Susan	WA	30.6.2022	ALP
McAllister, Jennifer	NSW	30.6.2022	ALP
McCarthy, Malarndirri Barbara Anne	NT		ALP
McDonald, Susan Eileen	QLD	30.6.2025	NATS
McGrath, Hon. James	QLD	30.6.2022	LP
McKenzie, Hon. Bridget	VIC	30.6.2022	NATS
McKim, Nicholas James	TAS	30.6.2025	AG
McLachlan, Andrew Lockhart, CSC ⁽⁷⁾	SA	30.6.2022	LP
McMahon, Samantha Jane	NT		CLP
Mirabella, Greg ⁽⁸⁾	VIC	30.6.2022	LP
Molan, Andrew James ⁽⁹⁾	NSW	30.6.2022	LP
O'Neill, Deborah Mary	NSW	30.6.2022	ALP
O'Sullivan, Matthew Anthony	WA	30.6.2025	LP
Paterson, James	VIC	30.6.2025	LP
Patrick, Rex Lyall ⁽¹⁰⁾	SA	30.6.2022	IND

Senator	State or Territory	Term expires	Party
Payne, Hon. Marise Ann	NSW	30.6.2022	LP
Polley, Helen Beatrice	TAS	30.6.2022	ALP
Pratt, Louise Clare	WA	30.6.2025	ALP
Rennick, Gerard	QLD	30.6.2025	LP
Reynolds, Hon. Linda Karen, CSC	WA	30.6.2025	LP
Rice, Janet Elizabeth	VIC	30.6.2025	AG
Roberts, Malcolm Ieuan	QLD	30.6.2025	PHON
Ruston, Hon. Anne Sowerby	SA	30.6.2025	LP
Scarr, Paul Martin	QLD	30.6.2025	LP
Seselja, Hon. Zdenko Matthew	ACT		LP
Sheldon, Anthony Vincent	NSW	30.6.2025	ALP
Small, Benjamin John ⁽¹¹⁾	WA	30.6.2022	LP
Smith, Dean Anthony	WA	30.6.2022	LP
Smith, Marielle Feuerherdt	SA	30.6.2025	ALP
Steele-John, Jordon	WA	30.6.2025	AG
Sterle, Glenn	WA	30.6.2022	ALP
Stoker, Hon. Amanda Jane ⁽¹²⁾	QLD	30.6.2022	LP
Thorpe, Lidia Alma ⁽¹³⁾	VIC	30.6.2022	AG
Urquhart, Anne Elizabeth	TAS	30.6.2022	ALP
Van, David Allan	VIC	30.6.2025	ALP
Walsh, Jess Cecille	VIC	30.6.2025	ALP
Waters, Larissa Joy	QLD	30.6.2025	AG
Watt, Murray Patrick	QLD	30.6.2022	ALP
Whish-Wilson, Peter Stuart	TAS	30.6.2022	AG
Wong, Hon. Penelope Ying Yen	SA	30.6.2022	ALP

Pursuant to section 42 of the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918, the terms of service of the following senators representing the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory expire at the close of the day immediately before the polling day for the next general election of members of the House of Representatives

Territory	Senator	Party	Senator	Party
Australian Capital Territory	Gallagher, K.R.	ALP	Seselja, Z.M.	LP
Northern Territory	McCarthy, M.B.A.	ALP	McMahon, S.J.	CLP

⁽¹⁾ Chosen by the Parliament of Tasmania to fill a casual vacancy (vice D Bushby), pursuant to section 15 of the Constitution.

⁽²⁾ Chosen by the Parliament of Western Australia to fill a casual vacancy (vice R Siewert), pursuant to section 15 of the Constitution.

⁽³⁾ Chosen by the Parliament of South Australia to fill a casual vacancy (vice A Gallacher), pursuant to section 15 of the Constitution.

⁽⁴⁾ Chosen by the Parliament of Victoria to fill a casual vacancy (vice M Fifield), pursuant to section 15 of the Constitution.

⁽⁵⁾ Chosen by the Parliament of New South Wales to fill a casual vacancy (vice S Dastyari), pursuant to section 15 of the Constitution.

⁽⁶⁾ Vacancy created by the death of Senator Kimberley Kitching on 10 March 2022.

⁽⁷⁾ Chosen by the Parliament of South Australia to fill a casual vacancy (vice C Bernardi), pursuant to section 15 of the Constitution.

⁽⁸⁾ Chosen by the Parliament of Victoria to fill a casual vacancy (vice S Ryan), pursuant to section 15 of the Constitution.

⁽⁹⁾ Chosen by the Parliament of New South Wales to fill a casual vacancy (vice A Sinodinos), pursuant to section 15 of the Constitution.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Chosen by the Parliament of South Australia to fill a casual vacancy (vice N Xenophon), pursuant to section 15 of the Constitution.

⁽¹¹⁾ Chosen by the Parliament of Western Australia to fill a casual vacancy (vice M Cormann), pursuant to section 15 of the Constitution.

⁽¹²⁾ Chosen by the Parliament of Queensland to fill a casual vacancy (vice G Brandis), pursuant to section 15 of the Constitution.

⁽¹³⁾ Chosen by the Parliament of Victoria to fill a casual vacancy (vice R Di Natale), pursuant to section 15 of the Constitution.

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

AG—Australian Greens; ALP—Australian Labor Party;
CA—Centre Alliance; CLP—Country Liberal Party; IND—Independent;
JLN—Jacqui Lambie Network; LNP—Liberal National Party;
LP—Liberal Party of Australia; NATS—The Nationals;
PHON—Pauline Hanson's One Nation

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

MORRISON MINISTRY

TITLE	MINISTER
Prime Minister	The Hon. Scott Morrison MP
Minister for Women	Senator the Hon. Marise Payne
Minister for Emergency Management and National Recovery and Resilience	Senator the Hon. Bridget McKenzie
Minister for Indigenous Australians	The Hon. Ken Wyatt AM MP
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister and Cabinet	The Hon. Ben Morton MP
Minister for the Public Service	The Hon. Ben Morton MP
<i>Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention</i>	<i>The Hon. David Coleman MP</i>
<i>Assistant Minister for Women</i>	<i>Senator the Hon. Amanda Stoker</i>
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development	The Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP
Minister for Agriculture and Northern Australia	The Hon. David Littleproud MP
Minister for Communications, Urban Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts	The Hon. Paul Fletcher MP
Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education	Senator the Hon. Bridget McKenzie
<i>Assistant Minister for Road Safety and Freight Transport</i>	<i>The Hon. Scott Buchholz MP</i>
<i>Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister</i>	<i>The Hon. Kevin Hogan MP</i>
<i>Assistant Minister for Local Government</i>	<i>The Hon. Kevin Hogan MP</i>
<i>Assistant Minister for Regional Development and Territories</i>	<i>The Hon. Nola Marino MP</i>
Treasurer	The Hon. Josh Frydenberg MP
Assistant Treasurer	The Hon. Michael Sukkar MP
Minister for Housing	The Hon. Michael Sukkar MP
Minister for Superannuation, Financial Services and the Digital Economy	Senator the Hon. Jane Hume
Minister for Women's Economic Security	Senator the Hon. Jane Hume
Minister for Finance (Vice-President of the Executive Council) (Leader of the Government in the Senate)	Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham
Special Minister of State	The Hon. Ben Morton MP

Minister for Agriculture and Northern Australia	The Hon. David Littleproud MP
Minister for the Environment	The Hon. Sussan Ley MP
Minister for Resources and Water	The Hon. Keith Pitt MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Waste Reduction and Environmental Management</i>	<i>The Hon. Trevor Evans MP</i>
<i>Assistant Minister for Forestry and Fisheries</i>	<i>Senator the Hon. Jonathon Duniam</i>
Minister for Foreign Affairs	Senator the Hon. Marise Payne
Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment	The Hon. Dan Tehan MP
Minister for International Development and the Pacific	Senator the Hon. Zed Seselja
Minister Assisting the Minister for Trade and Investment	The Hon. Dr David Gillespie MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Regional Tourism</i>	<i>The Hon. Michelle Landry MP</i>
Minister for Defence (Leader of the House)	The Hon. Peter Dutton MP
Minister for Defence Industry	The Hon. Melissa Price MP
Minister for Veterans' Affairs	The Hon. Andrew Gee MP
Minister for Defence Personnel	The Hon. Andrew Gee MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Defence</i>	<i>The Hon. Andrew Hastie MP</i>
Attorney-General	Senator the Hon. Michaelia Cash
Minister for Industrial Relations (Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate)	Senator the Hon. Michaelia Cash
<i>Assistant Minister to the Attorney-General</i>	<i>Senator the Hon. Amanda Stoker</i>
<i>Assistant Minister for Industrial Relations</i>	<i>Senator the Hon. Amanda Stoker</i>
Minister for Health and Aged Care	The Hon. Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care Services	Senator the Hon. Richard Colbeck
Minister for Sport	Senator the Hon. Richard Colbeck
Minister for Regional Health (Deputy Leader of the House)	The Hon. Dr David Gillespie MP
Minister for Families and Social Services	Senator the Hon. Anne Ruston
Minister for Women's Safety (Manager of Government Business in the Senate)	Senator the Hon. Anne Ruston
Minister for Government Services	Senator the Hon. Linda Reynolds CSC
Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme	Senator the Hon. Linda Reynolds CSC
Minister for Homelessness, Social and Community Housing	The Hon. Michael Sukkar MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Children and Families</i>	<i>The Hon. Michelle Landry MP</i>

Minister for Home Affairs	The Hon. Karen Andrews MP
Minister for Emergency Management and National Recovery and Resilience	Senator the Hon. Bridget McKenzie
Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs	The Hon. Alex Hawke MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Customs, Community Safety and Multicultural Affairs</i>	<i>The Hon. Jason Wood MP</i>
Minister for Industry, Energy and Emissions Reduction	The Hon. Angus Taylor MP
Minister for Science and Technology	The Hon. Melissa Price MP
Minister for Resources and Water	The Hon. Keith Pitt MP
<i>Assistant Minister for Industry Development</i>	<i>Senator the Hon. Jonathon Duniam</i>
<i>Assistant Minister to the Minister for Industry, Energy and Emissions Reduction</i>	<i>The Hon. Tim Wilson MP</i>
Minister for Employment, Workforce, Skills, Small and Family Business	The Hon. Stuart Robert MP
Minister for Education and Youth	The Hon. Alan Tudge MP
Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education	Senator the Hon. Bridget McKenzie
<i>Assistant Minister for Youth and Employment Services</i>	<i>The Hon. Luke Howarth MP</i>

Each box represents a portfolio. **Cabinet Ministers are shown in bold type.** As a general rule, there is one department in each portfolio. The title of a department does not necessarily reflect the title of a minister in all cases. Ministers are sworn to administer the portfolio in which they are listed under the 'Minister' column and may also be sworn to administer other portfolios in which they are not listed. 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. Anthony Albanese MP
<i>Shadow Cabinet Secretary</i>	<i>Senator Jenny McAllister</i>
Deputy Leader of the Opposition	The Hon. Richard Marles MP
Shadow Minister for National Reconstruction, Employment, Skills and Small Business	The Hon. Richard Marles MP
Shadow Minister for Science	The Hon. Richard Marles MP
Shadow Minister Assisting for Small Business	Matt Keogh MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Employment and Skills</i>	<i>Senator Louise Pratt</i>
Leader of the Opposition in the Senate	Senator the Hon. Penny Wong
Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs	Senator the Hon. Penny Wong
Shadow Minister for International Development and the Pacific	Pat Conroy MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister to the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate</i>	<i>Senator Jenny McAllister</i>
Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate	Senator the Hon. Kristina Keneally
Shadow Minister for Home Affairs	Senator the Hon. Kristina Keneally
Shadow Minister for Immigration and Citizenship	Senator the Hon. Kristina Keneally
Shadow Minister for Government Accountability	Senator the Hon. Kristina Keneally
Shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs	Andrew Giles MP
Shadow Minister Assisting for Immigration and Citizenship	Andrew Giles MP
Shadow Minister for Disaster and Emergency Management	Senator Murray Watt
Shadow Minister Assisting on Government Accountability	Pat Conroy MP
Shadow Minister for Industrial Relations	The Hon. Tony Burke MP
Shadow Minister for the Arts	The Hon. Tony Burke MP
Manager of Opposition Business in the House of Representatives	The Hon. Tony Burke MP
Shadow Special Minister of State	Senator the Hon. Don Farrell
Shadow Minister for Sport and Tourism	Senator the Hon. Don Farrell
Shadow Minister Assisting the Leader of the Opposition	Senator the Hon. Don Farrell

TITLE	SHADOW MINISTER
Shadow Treasurer	Dr Jim Chalmers MP
Shadow Assistant Treasurer	Stephen Jones MP
Shadow Minister for Financial Services and Superannuation	Stephen Jones MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Treasury</i>	<i>The Hon. Dr Andrew Leigh MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Charities</i>	<i>The Hon. Dr Andrew Leigh MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Financial Services and Superannuation</i>	<i>The Hon. Matt Thistlethwaite MP</i>
Shadow Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme	The Hon. Bill Shorten MP
Shadow Minister for Government Services	The Hon. Bill Shorten MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Carers</i>	<i>Emma McBride MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Government Services and the NDIS</i>	<i>Senator Kimberley Kitching</i>
<i>Deputy Manager of Opposition Business in the Senate</i>	<i>Senator Kimberley Kitching</i>
Shadow Minister for Education	The Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP
Shadow Minister for Women	The Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Education</i>	<i>Graham Perrett MP</i>
Shadow Minister for Health and Ageing	The Hon. Mark Butler MP
Deputy Manager of Opposition Business in the House of Representatives	The Mark Butler MP
Shadow Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care Services	Clare O'Neil MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Health and Ageing</i>	<i>Ged Kearney MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Mental Health</i>	<i>Emma McBride MP</i>
Shadow Minister for Climate Change and Energy	The Hon. Chris Bowen MP
Shadow Minister Assisting for Climate Change	Pat Conroy MP
Shadow Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development	The Hon. Catherine King MP
Shadow Minister for Cities and Urban Infrastructure	Andrew Giles MP
Shadow Minister for Northern Australia	Senator Murray Watt
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Tourism</i>	<i>Senator Carol Brown</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Tasmania</i>	<i>Senator Carol Brown</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Northern Australia</i>	<i>The Warren Snowdon MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Western Australia</i>	<i>Patrick Gorman MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Road Safety</i>	<i>Senator Glenn Sterle</i>

TITLE	SHADOW MINISTER
Shadow Minister for Defence	The Hon. Brendan O'Connor MP
Shadow Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel	The Hon. Shayne Neumann MP
Shadow Minister Assisting for Defence	Pat Conroy MP
Shadow Minister for Defence Industry	Matt Keogh MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Defence</i>	<i>Meryl Swanson MP</i>
Shadow Attorney-General	The Hon. Mark Dreyfus QC MP
Shadow Minister for Constitutional Reform	The Hon. Mark Dreyfus QC MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for the Republic</i>	<i>The Hon. Matt Thistlethwaite MP</i>
Shadow Minister for Communications	Michelle Rowland MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Communications and Cyber Security</i>	<i>Tim Watts MP</i>
Shadow Minister for Finance	Senator Katy Gallagher
Shadow Minister for the Public Service	Senator Katy Gallagher
Manager of Opposition Business in the Senate	Senator Katy Gallagher
Shadow Minister for Families and Social Services	The Hon. Linda Burney MP
Shadow Minister for Indigenous Australians	The Linda Burney MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Reconciliation</i>	<i>Senator Patrick Dodson</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Constitutional Recognition of Indigenous Australians</i>	<i>Senator Patrick Dodson</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Indigenous Australian</i>	<i>The Hon. Warren Snowdon MP</i>
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Communities and the Prevention of Family Violence</i>	<i>Senator Jenny McAllister</i>
Shadow Minister for Agriculture	The Hon. Julie Collins MP
Shadow Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government	The Hon. Jason Clare MP
Shadow Minister for Housing and Homelessness	The Jason Clare MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for External Territories</i>	<i>The Hon. Warren Snowdon MP</i>
Shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education	The Hon. Amanda Rishworth MP
Shadow Minister for Youth	The Hon. Amanda Rishworth MP
Shadow Minister for the Environment and Water	Terri Butler MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for the Environment</i>	<i>Josh Wilson MP</i>
Shadow Minister for Trade	Madeleine King MP
Shadow Minister for Resources	Madeleine King MP
Shadow Minister for Queensland Resources	Senator Murray Watt
Shadow Minister for Industry and Innovation	The Hon. Ed Husic MP
<i>Shadow Assistant Minister for Manufacturing</i>	<i>Senator Louise Pratt</i>

Each box represents a portfolio. **Shadow Cabinet Ministers are shown in bold type.**

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Tuesday, 29 March 2022

The PRESIDENT (Senator the Hon. Slade Brockman) took the chair at 12:00, read prayers and made an acknowledgement of country

DOCUMENTS

Tabling

The Clerk: I table documents pursuant to statute as shown on the Order of Business.

Full details of the documents are recorded in the Journals of the Senate.

COMMITTEES

Meeting

The Clerk: Proposals to meet have been lodged as follows:

Committees—authorisation to meet

Tuesday, 29 March

Select Committee on Job Security Private meeting, from midday

Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security Private meeting followed by a public meeting, from 4 pm

Wednesday, 30 March

Economics References Committee Private meeting, from 9.30 am

Environment and Communications Legislation and References Committees Private meetings, from 1.15 pm

Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters Private meeting, from 9.40 am

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Private meeting, from 4.30 pm

Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security Private meeting followed by a public meeting, from midday

The PRESIDENT (12:01): I remind senators that the question may be put on any proposal at the request of any senator.

BILLS

Treasury Laws Amendment (Cyclone and Flood Damage Reinsurance Pool) Bill 2022

First Reading

Bill received from the House of Representatives.

Senator RUSTON (South Australia—Minister for Families and Social Services, Minister for Women's Safety and Manager of Government Business in the Senate) (12:01): I move:

That this bill may proceed without formalities and be now read a first time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Senator RUSTON (South Australia—Minister for Families and Social Services, Minister for Women's Safety and Manager of Government Business in the Senate) (12:02): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I seek leave to have the second reading speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The speech read as follows—

This Bill will establish a reinsurance pool for cyclones and related flood damage. The pool will be backed by a \$10 billion annually reinstated Commonwealth guarantee and be administered by the Australian Reinsurance Pool Corporation (ARPC) from 1 July 2022.

The Bill will deliver on the Government's commitment to improve the accessibility and affordability of insurance for households and small businesses in cyclone-prone areas in northern Australia.

Improved access to affordable insurance is vital to the economic prosperity and resilience of households and small businesses.

Over 10 years, the pool is estimated to reduce premiums by \$2.9 billion.

The pool will provide coverage to:

- residential home and contents policies, including landlord insurance and farm residential cover;

- commercial property policies (including commercial strata) with a sum insured of less than \$5 million; and
- residential strata, including mixed-use strata schemes, where 50 per cent or more of floor space of units in the development is used mainly for residential purposes.

The pool is expected to cover more than 880,000 household, strata, and small business property insurance policies in northern Australia. The Government will expand the coverage to include small business marine property insurance policies from 1 July 2023.

The pool will cover claims from damage caused by a cyclone that commences during a declared cyclone event. This includes wind, rain, rainwater, rainwater run-off, storm surge, and riverine flood damage, where these hazards are covered under the policyholder's insurance policy. A cyclone event will be declared by the ARPC to commence when the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) advises a cyclone has formed and conclude 48 hours after the BoM advises the cyclone has ended.

The pool will generate savings by operating on a cost-neutral basis, leveraging the Commonwealth guarantee, and taking advantage of economies of scale. The pool is also expected to increase competition by encouraging greater insurer participation in cyclone-prone areas and support higher levels of insurance coverage by property owners.

The Bill makes it mandatory for insurers with eligible policies to participate in the pool, except for those insurers who write only a minimal amount of insurance outside of areas with nil or negligible cyclone risk. It provides an 18-month transition period for large insurers and an additional 12 months for small insurers. Mandatory participation will ensure the pool provides the greatest possible reduction in premiums.

In the first three years of operation, the pool will pay the entire eligible claim above the policyholder excess. This will support insurer transition and maximise premium reductions. The pool will then operate on a risk-sharing arrangement with insurers, with the level of risk retention set by Ministerial directions. The pool will continue to cover a significant proportion of eligible claims.

The Commonwealth guarantee will be called upon if the pool and ARPC's own resources are insufficient to pay eligible claims. If the \$10 billion Commonwealth guarantee is likely to be exceeded following a single cyclone event or a series of cyclone events within a single year, the Government will be required to increase the guarantee to support the pool to meet all its obligations.

The savings generated by the pool will be targeted to policyholders with medium to high exposure to cyclone risk to drive their premiums down as low as possible, while maintaining incentives to reduce and mitigate risk. Targeting savings ensures that the policyholders facing the largest insurance affordability pressures receive the greatest benefit.

The Bill contains a suite of mechanisms to ensure the pool is delivering for northern Australia. The ARPC must publish an annual Financial Outlook Report that informs Government about the current risks affecting the pool's liabilities and provides added scrutiny of premium adequacy and risk preparedness activities. A regular formal review will evaluate the performance of the pool, ensuring it is fit for purpose in improving insurance affordability in cyclone prone areas.

Finally, following a direction from the Government, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has begun work to monitor and collect data to ensure that savings are passed through to policyholders and the reinsurance pool is delivering on its intended outcomes.

Full details of the measure are contained in the Explanatory Memorandum.

Senator McALLISTER (New South Wales) (12:02): I rise to speak to the Treasury Laws Amendment (Cyclone and Flood Damage Reinsurance Pool) Bill 2022. At the outset I advise that Labor will be supporting this bill. Across Australia millions of people are struggling with the rising cost of living. Under Mr Morrison and Mr Joyce petrol prices and the costs of living generally are skyrocketing, and working families are falling behind. This has been something that has received very little attention from the government until just very recently, and—surprise, surprise—with an election in view this now appears to be a priority, with the government having done pretty much nothing about it for the last nine years. If the government actually cared—if they actually cared about the cost of living, if they cared about pressures on families—those opposite would not have spent a decade attacking wages, attacking job security and attacking Medicare. The reality is that everything—everything—is going up for Australians, except for their pay.

This bill is designed to address some of the very specific cost pressures that affect Australians that live in parts of the country that are especially exposed to natural disaster. Labor recognises there have been significant increases in the cost of insurance for households and small businesses in parts of Australia, particularly in northern Australia. Let's be clear about this: the increasing cost of insurance is directly related to the increased risk of damage to life and property from severe weather events associated with climate change. I recall the warnings that were assembled and put very, very clearly by insurance companies 15 years ago. I remember the work they did trying to convince the Howard government to do something about climate change, but that government was populated by climate deniers, just like this one. They did absolutely nothing to tackle climate change, and the problem is, as we are now seeing, that a warming world is expensive. Aside from the costs that it imposes to the economy generally, it puts very significant pressure on household and business budgets and it is leading to underinsurance in certain regions of Australia.

In recent years, there have been several reviews and inquiries into the availability and affordability of insurance in northern Australia. Despite all these reviews, despite all the recommendations, the Morrison government has failed to act until now, in what is likely to be the final week of the parliament. It is the final week of the parliament and they want people to think they care about the cost of living and underinsurance and the impacts of climate change on the community. Labor has been calling on the Morrison government to release the details of the reassurance pool and, in particular, the modelling upon which its claims of reductions in premiums are based. The Morrison government still refuses to release it.

And it's not only Labor that wants to see the workings, wants to see the numbers and doesn't believe what this group of incompetents and charlatans on the other side are telling us about their policies. Insurance bodies, key stakeholders, want to see it, too. Many of them haven't seen the modelling or the key assumptions that would allow them to provide information to their members about the impacts of this policy. In its submission to the Senate Economics Legislation Committee inquiry into this bill the RACQ said:

To date, RACQ cannot assess the impact the pool will have on our member's home insurance premiums, primarily because we have not received proposed pricing rates or associated modelling from the Australian Reinsurance Pool Corporation.

It's something the minister might want to consider addressing in replying and summing up. Why won't they show people the numbers? Why won't they provide the information that the sector is asking for?

This bill represents a belated engagement with emergency management and natural disaster. As I said, the truth is that climate change is making things worse. We actually need a government that recognises the threat posed by climate change and that accepts responsibility for both the long-term and short-term solutions to this problem. People on the North Coast and South-East Queensland have been devastated by recent floods. It might have prompted a competent government—a caring government, a responsive government, a government thinking about its people—into some kind of action. However, when the Prime Minister finally travelled to the Northern Rivers, what was it for? It was for a photo opportunity—not to meet with the flood victims, not to meet with the community members who so explicitly had wanted and sought an explanation for why his government had abandoned them at a time of desperate need. What is it about this guy, what is it about this Prime Minister, that makes him desperate for self-promotion but equally desperate to avoid meeting with people battling to get a hearing? Mr Morrison is so invested in avoiding responsibility that he no longer even notices the real people who suffer the consequences of his failures. This is the same Prime Minister who has presided over an inequitable distribution of assistance that has seen people receive different amounts of money depending on where they live and, in some cases, depending on who their local MP is. Shame.

I was born in a flood. I was born in the hospital in Murwillumbah in the flood in 1973. Those communities, whom I know so well, understand natural disaster and the collective community effort and solidarity that is necessary to respond. In the aftermath of the floods just a few weeks ago, I was actually stranded. I was visiting my mum and dad and I was at their place in the midst of the emergency. I should qualify that by saying they were in no danger—but plenty of people in that community were. A week later, I returned to Lismore to meet with some of the people I know there, some of the leaders and community organisations I know there, to assist them in cleaning up and talk with them about what they needed. It was a very big day with a lot of emotion. What was immediately evident, though, was the community spirit that I talked about. People were cheerfully supporting one another, staffing evacuation centres, donating food, helping one another clean up. Emergency services and frontline workers were working around the clock. Municipal workers were camping up at the dam, night after night after night, day after day after day, to make sure that the supply of potable water wasn't interrupted when so many other interruptions had occurred. Thank you to those workers. As one of their representatives in parliament, I cannot thank them enough for everything they have done.

But there were also plenty of tears on that trip, because the damage is enormous. Many of the people I met had lost their house and their place of work. I don't think you can understand the scale of destruction if you haven't been there. The people who are running community organisations are devastated. Their job—and they know it; they understand their responsibilities—is to support people in their most desperate times, people facing domestic and family violence, an area that's of importance to me, but the premises from which they provide those services have been completely destroyed. We know from experience that, tragically, in times of community trauma, the incidence of violence is likely to increase, but people have no services to turn to in a time of need because of the damage that's been done to the premises of those community organisations. I don't see any response to that from this government or any interest in responding to it. It's vitally important that, in addition to disaster payments provided to individuals, the government quickly assess what is required to ensure that the community of Lismore and the broader communities of the Northern Rivers, so many of whom have been affected by flood, are not left without vital community services.

As I said at the beginning of my contribution, Labor supports the establishment of a reinsurance pool for northern Australia. We've been willing to cooperate with the Morrison government on the establishment of this pool. However, the establishment of a reinsurance pool on its own will not be enough to significantly reduce insurance premiums in the north of Australia. This policy must be accompanied by others that reduce the risk of damage to property in the future. It should be linked to better planning rules, investment in mitigation infrastructure, retrofitting buildings and building for resilience into the future. Labor recognises this. My colleague Senator Watt has joined us in the chamber. I know that he is so proud of Labor's Disaster Ready Fund, which will allocate up to \$200 million per annum for disaster readiness and mitigation measures. It's in stark contrast to the actions of the Morrison government, which locked up the \$4.8 billion Emergency Response Fund for three years, only to start releasing funds on the eve of an election. That's no way to govern. It's not a responsible way to govern and it's not good enough. This fund could have built flood levees, drainage improvement, cyclone shelters and bushfire evacuation centres. It could have been used to keep people safe. Instead, it was used as a cash cow for Scott Morrison and his government. It earned them over \$830 million in interest in the period that it was just sitting there, and in three years it has not spent a cent on disaster recovery or even started building a single disaster mitigation project. Under Labor's policy, up to \$200 million per year will be invested in disaster readiness to protect lives and livelihoods.

An Albanese government will ensure that the establishment of a reinsurance pool is just one of a suite of measures to reduce the risk of loss of life and property associated with the increasing risk of severe weather. If we are elected to government, if we have that privilege, we will investigate adding flood coverage to the reinsurance pool as part of the 2025 statutory review of the operation of that pool. But I tell you what: Australians shouldn't have to wait until an election is imminent before their government decides to keep them safe.

Senator McKIM (Tasmania—Deputy Leader of the Australian Greens in the Senate and Australian Greens Whip) (12:14): I indicate at the outset that the Australian Greens will be supporting this legislation, the Treasury Laws Amendment (Cyclone and Flood Damage Reinsurance Pool) Bill 2022. But in saying that I want to say this is a pretty extraordinary piece of legislation that's currently before the Senate. The Assistant Treasurer—a member of the Liberal Party, supposedly a flag bearer for the free market—has introduced a bill that will nationalise reinsurance for cyclone and related flood damage to residential and business properties. We shouldn't beat around the bush here; we are proposing to nationalise a section of the reinsurance market in Australia—that is, the taxpayer takes on the financial burden of offering reinsurance in some circumstances in some parts of Australia. This is from a party that brands itself as the flag-bearer of the free market.

The reason the Liberal Party has had to introduce this legislation to nationalise reinsurance for cyclone related damage is tens of thousands of homeowners and businesses can no longer afford to insure their property. Why can't they any longer afford to insure their property? Because cyclones are becoming more intense and causing more damage. And why is this happening? It's happening because our climate is breaking down around us. And what is turbocharging climate change? That's right—the policies of the current Liberal government.

We're going to see a budget brought down in a few short hours. I will make a prediction—and I will put my house on this prediction coming true: there will be somewhere in the region of \$10 billion, in each and every year this budget covers, of subsidies to make burning fossil fuels in Australia cheaper. There will be public subsidies for fossil fuel combustion, turbocharging the climate crisis.

This bill is on the front line of the climate emergency. This bill may be extraordinary but what is anything but extraordinary is that this bill, of course, is half cooked. Instead of responding to the breakdown of our climate in an urgent and holistic way, this bill demonstrates how ad hoc, how hypocritical and how artificial this government is. Remember: this is a government—the Liberal-National coalition—that has spent eight years actively hastening the breakdown of our climate, turbocharging it by pumping public subsidies into encouraging people and corporations to burn fossil fuels. This is a government that has done nothing meaningful in that time to prepare our country for the inevitable impacts of climate change that scientists have been warning about for decades, whether they be floods, bushfires, rising sea levels, storm surge or any of the other eminently predictable and very comprehensively predicted impacts of climate change. This government has effectively done nothing to prepare us for those things because it is made up in part of people who deny that human-induced climate change is even a reality, and it is a government that relies on massive donations from fossil fuel corporations in order to run its upcoming re-election campaign.

You've got a situation where, in the face of skyrocketing insurance costs that are clearly the result of our climate breaking down, the government has introduced a bill to nationalise reinsurance, to remove reinsurers' profit margins from the cost to consumers—but only for a particular class of climate change driven disasters and only for a small group of climate change related disasters that are in a particular part of our country. Undoubtedly no-one has felt the impact of the breakdown of our climate on their insurance premiums more than residents and businesses in cyclone affected areas, but that doesn't mean that people who do not live in cyclone affected areas are not feeling

the impacts of climate change on their insurance costs. Climate change is not just impacting on insurance costs in flood-prone areas; in my home state of Tasmania, people are paying more on their insurance premiums because of increased bushfire risk. What is causing increased bushfire risk? That's right: climate change.

If this government were serious about addressing cost pressures on reinsurance, and therefore cost pressures on retail insurance, they would come into this place with a comprehensive plan to nationalise reinsurance in Australia for any so-called natural disasters that are happening, or are made worse, because of climate change. We know that climate change has impacted so tragically on so many people so recently in our country. In fact, right now as we debate this legislation, people in Lismore and the surrounding areas, who did it so tough just a few short weeks ago, are again being evacuated from their homes in some places because of the next round of climate change driven rains and floods.

I'll make the blindingly obvious point to members, because it needs to be said. None of these floods that are happening right now in Lismore and surrounding areas—or the floods that happened in the Northern Rivers area and the Brisbane area a few short weeks ago—are officially cyclone related. So this bill would not have provided relief from insurance premium pressures caused by these floods, because these floods are not the result of a declared cyclone by the Bureau of Meteorology. This shows the complete lack of understanding from this government about the real cost pressures facing Australian people right across so many parts of the country as a direct result of climate change.

This legislation is the front line of the climate emergency, and—surprise, surprise—a government that has failed at every hurdle in addressing the breakdown of our climate and preparing our country for the inevitable and predicted impacts has once again responded in a half-cooked way. This legislation is out of date before it's even been legislated. In fact, under this legislation, under the government's plan, people in Queensland and New South Wales who've just been hit by floods and, in some parts, are being hit by floods right now as we have this debate, will effectively be underwriting insurance for those living in cyclone-prone areas, along with the rest of the country. That's how half-cooked this legislation is.

Furthermore, this bill should be—but unsurprisingly is not—accompanied by a coherent strategy or serious investment of public funds to help Australia's communities better protect themselves against the impacts of climate change. Insurers, regulators and academics have been saying for years—and it was reiterated recently during the Senate inquiry into this bill—that this is of paramount importance. Only three per cent of government spending on climate disasters in Australia goes towards mitigation and prevention. This bill provides more of the cure, but where, we have to ask, is the prevention? As I said, a properly conceived government reinsurance pool would cover all climate related disasters across the entire country. That would be a holistic and equitable response.

All Australians should be able to enjoy the cost savings of a government scheme that removes the profit margin from the cost of reinsurance. But, more than just being fair, a fully national scheme would make the risks of climate disasters transparent to government, which would make it in the government's interest to invest in the public works that are so desperately needed to help keep insurance costs down. Full nationalisation of reinsurance against climate disasters would be a collective response to a collective problem, and that is what the Australian Greens believe should be happening.

To that end, we'll be seeking the Senate's support for a number of amendments that would make this bill more equitable and improve its effectiveness. Our amendments on sheet 1559 would immediately expand the scope of the bill to cover all flood damage so that, for example, people in Queensland and New South Wales, who have been so terribly impacted by current and recent floods, would be provided with immediate support. The amendments on sheet 1569 would include damage to motor vehicles from cyclones and floods, which is important given that a number of insurers package together home and car insurance. Our amendments on sheet 1570 would require the statutory review of the act to consider the expansion of the scope of the scheme to include any and all climate related disasters. Finally, our second reading amendment, on sheet 1581 revised, requires that the \$10 billion to establish and maintain the reinsurance pool be derived from taxation on entities extracting and combusting fossil fuels. I therefore move:

At the end of the motion, add ", but the Senate is of the opinion that the funds required to establish and maintain the reinsurance pool should be derived from taxation on entities extracting and combusting fossil fuels".

Let's be clear: this would require that the funding to establish and maintain a nationalised reinsurance pool, which is going to be allocated out of the public purse, would be derived by taxing companies that extract and burn fossil fuels. We have to be upfront: it is the extraction and burning of fossil fuels that is the primary driver, on a global scale, of the breakdown of our climate. Corporations have profited massively and obscenely from extracting and combusting fossil fuels for so many decades now, whilst, for many decades, we knew exactly what the impact of burning those fossil fuels would be.

Those who do profit, and have profited, from the burning of fossil fuels should be made to pay for the costs of the breakdown of our climate. That is why we believe that the \$10 billion that will establish and maintain the reinsurance pool created by this legislation should be derived by taxing the fossil fuel corporations. I can indicate that, regardless of the success or failure of any of our amendments, we will maintain our support for this legislation.

Senator McDONALD (Queensland) (12:29): I rise to speak to the Treasury Laws Amendment (Cyclone and Flood Damage Reinsurance Pool) Bill 2022. I will just take a moment to compose myself, having just listened to potentially the greatest amount of codswallop that's ever been spoken in this chamber. That's because most critics of the reinsurance pool don't live in the north. They don't reflect the lived experience of thousands of people in the north.

I have to acknowledge the strong advocacy over the last 10 years of Warren Entsch, the member for Leichhardt; George Christensen, the outgoing member for Dawson; Phil Thompson, the member for Herbert; Andrew Wilcox, mayor of Whitsunday and candidate for Dawson; Bryce Macdonald, chairman of Canegrowers Tully and LNP candidate for Kennedy; and Deputy Mayor Andrew Cripps and Nicole Tobin, both Senate candidates for the LNP. All of these people live, work, play and pay the increased costs of insurance and the associated costs of rentals in North Queensland.

Of all the senators in this place, 7.9 per cent live in northern Australia; 4.6 of House of Representatives members live in northern Australia. We have 51 per cent of the land mass of the country, 1.3 million people, three per cent of the population and we produce 11 per cent of the GDP, yet we have to listen to those from the south who refuse to give us the same advantages and level playing field we desperately need in the north.

In these critical times, it is important that Australia gets stronger—and gets stronger quickly. The way we do that is to invest in the places where we make our money, the places that generate the royalties and the income to ensure the highest standard of living that Australians enjoy compared to so many of our near neighbours. Roads and infrastructure for families and communities are investments in the north, but none of this is possible without affordable and accessible insurance.

In the north we pay more. We pay more for electricity. We pay more for building materials. In Cloncurry it costs \$700,000 to build the same house that costs \$400,000 in Brisbane. We pay more for flights to get in and out of our regions, and we pay more for insurance—and for a long time, longer than the rest of the country. Our premiums have been at least 2½ times what people in the south pay, and that's if you can get insurance at all. That is according to the ACCC's *Northern Australia insurance inquiry* report. That is data. This is especially grim for businesses. Many are forced to self-insure because no insurance companies will give them coverage and no bank will lend.

Those people who live in the north—work in the north, pay bills in the north—advocated to this government, which has come forward with this \$10 billion reinsurance pool. The reinsurance pool is predicted to reduce premiums for households, strata title properties and small to medium enterprises. The Townsville Chamber of Commerce has calculated that if just two-thirds of the projected savings was spent in the city annually there would be approximately \$222 million in economic output, a combination of \$118 million to gross regional product, over \$60 million in income and salaries for local workers, and approximately 949 additional ongoing full-time jobs created. These numbers do not include reductions in small business premiums, and if they did they would reflect even greater benefits. Importantly, mechanisms are in place to review this legislation within 12 months.

I want to specifically thank consumer advocate Margaret Shaw, Assistant Treasurer Michael Sukkar and all of our northern Queensland MPs, because without this understanding of the genuine and longstanding conditions in northern Australia this legislation would not have come to pass. As I listen to the senators in this place who are going to talk about tragic, devastating floods in other parts of the country, what about giving us a go in northern Australia? What about lifting your eyes up and looking at the disadvantage that's been in northern Australia for over 10 years, rather than reflect on the tragic and terrible circumstances of the most recent floods in southern Australia? The opposition want to talk about what the Queensland Labor government are going to do. Well, how about they talk to their mates in Queensland, who have been raping and pillaging \$65 million a year from North Queensland—

Senator McAllister: Madam Acting Deputy President, I raise a point of order. The standing orders really do prohibit reflections on other parliamentarians, and I think the language was unfortunate.

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator O'Neill): It would assist the chamber, Senator McDonald, if you could withdraw.

Senator McDONALD: I will certainly withdraw the words 'raping and pillaging by the Queensland government'—

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator McDonald, you have been here well and truly long enough to know that you can't really retract and then restate the words. So I ask you to retract and—

Senator McDONALD: I retract the words that I used, unconditionally.

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT: You have the thanks of the Senate.

Senator McDONALD: It is unfortunate that the state Labor government has been raking in \$65 million per year in stamp duties that has not been reinvested in resilience in North Queensland. If the opposition and the Greens were serious about wanting to focus on resilience expenditure in the north, perhaps they could turn their eyes to money that has already been swept out of North Queensland and straight into the coffers to be spent who knows where else—but I suspect it will be in southern Queensland.

The politicisation of disasters in this country is tragic and unfortunate. We just heard commentary from Senator McAllister on the disaster fund, which Labor voted for when it was introduced to the parliament recently. But now the opposition want to pretend that they not only—

Opposition senators interjecting—

Senator McDONALD: I'm sorry, but I can't hear myself—

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, senators!

Senator McDONALD: Not only did they vote for it; they continually failed to raise the point that the \$50 million that was budgeted to be spent annually has been spent. In fact, a third round has been announced. You cannot deny the reality that \$50 million a year from that fund has been spent and the reality that the \$150 million balance was only to be spent after the billions of dollars of categories C and D funding, which goes to the states, had been exhausted. It's unfortunate that the opposition don't understand the legislation and the focus of what they voted for and how they could have assisted change.

In the politicisation of disasters, they want to discuss what happened in Lismore. I just want to call out the member for Page, Kevin Hogan. The circumstances that his people have lived through are truly cataclysmic. It is one of the worst disasters in living memory, because these houses have been completely destroyed—10,000 people are without homes. Yet those opposite want to politicise that and discuss that, while the Prime Minister had COVID, he should have magically been able to be in Lismore. Meanwhile, the opposition leader had left the state to fly to Western Australia. It would be good for that reality to be in place.

Honourable senators interjecting—

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, senators!

Senator Ayres interjecting—

Senator McKenzie interjecting—

Senator Davey interjecting—

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, Senator Ayres, Senator McKenzie and Senator Davey! This is conduct unbecoming. The matter is of great interest and it is very important, but Senator McDonald has the right to be heard in silence.

Senator McDONALD: Getting back to the cyclone reinsurance pool, it is of course relevant for northern Australia and the people in that part of the country, who generate an enormous part of the wealth for this nation. Yet, once again, we will see the south not want to give us a go, if you listen to the opposition. If you listen to the Greens, they'd have us completely depopulated and wiped out because of their lack of understanding of the circumstances in the north. So, before you call for the pool to be rolled out nationally, give northern Australia an opportunity to rectify the terrible imbalance that has been in place.

Since Cyclone Yasi in 2011, insurance has more than trebled for many people. For strata titles, a premium for 25 units has gone from \$25,000 to at least \$100,000 today. This forces body corporate fees to be painfully high and is forcing retirees out of their forever homes that they'd bought to retire in. About 20 per cent of northern Australians are uninsured, and more are underinsured. The rest of Australia has not had to deal with this issue, and we deserve a chance for this to be rectified first. One Townsville resident was recently quoted \$14,000 to insure a \$335,000 home, despite having been with the insurer for more than 20 years. We have had so many insurers and underwriters withdraw from the north that the market is in terrible disarray.

During the Senate Economics Legislation Committee inquiry into the Treasury Laws Amendment (Cyclone and Flood Damage Reinsurance Pool) Bill, we had a terrific opportunity to do a deep dive into the issues in northern Australia—not in southern Australia or other places where people live but in northern Australia, where the market is truly in disarray. It was a great opportunity to hear from the people who live there and pay these insurance premiums, and I just want to quote Tyrone Shandiman from the Northern Australia Insurance Lobby, whose final words at the end of his testimony were simply, 'Pass the bill.'

I just want to refer to the opposition's support for this legislation. I want to thank them for their acknowledgement of the issues in northern Australia and the importance of this legislation, and I hope that they will stand by those words when it comes to the vote, because we obviously can't rely on the Greens party to do anything remotely practical to support northern Australia. They would instead try to move amendments that would ensure that this bill would never be passed and that we would never see a rectification of the true injustice of costs. Reflecting their truly communist background, they would be trying to socialise the costs of insurance right across this country.

I recommend this bill to the Senate. It is an incredibly important piece of legislation to pass to ensure that homes, communities and businesses continue to survive, because in the north we know how to manage variable climates and live through great seasonal events. We are experts at it, but what we need is a hand. We need a hand with our very small population, our 1.3 million people across all of the top half of the country. We need a hand to support us to continue reinvesting in the north and to allow us to prosper and, subsequently, Australia to prosper.

Senator AYRES (New South Wales) (12:43): We know from Senator McDonald's speech that not only does she want the opposition to support this legislation, the Treasury Laws Amendment (Cyclone and Flood Damage Reinsurance Pool) Bill 2022, which we've indicated ahead of time that we will; she wants the opposition to give the government a pat on the back as we debate this piece of legislation in the last possible sitting of parliament. The government's had years to deal with this issue, and, in typical Morrison government form, this legislation is brought here at two minutes to midnight.

As of 8.30 this morning, New South Wales emergency services had issued six evacuation orders in the Northern Rivers, including for the Lismore central business district. You might laugh, Senator McDonald, but the circumstances there are desperate. This is a part of the world that I know well. They're tight-knit communities, and they are facing up to this crisis again. It's not yet been tallied how much last month's floods cost.

What we do know is that people in Lismore could not afford to insure their homes and businesses before the last flood, let alone before the recent ones, and certainly not in the intervening period between these two incidents. The costs will almost certainly spiral in the wake of this difficult summer. Many households and businesses will face a difficult question about whether they can afford to rebuild in such a flood-prone area.

It's not limited to the Northern Rivers. The towns that are rebuilding from the Black Summer bushfires face a similarly difficult set of issues. It's clear that there will need to be government effort to reduce the cost of insurance in parts of the country that are vulnerable to natural disasters. And of course the people of North Queensland have been disproportionately hit by the rising cost of disaster insurance.

On that basis, Labor will support this bill, but the measures are clearly insufficient and they are clearly flawed. They reflect a government that is far too focused on its narrow political priorities at the expense of serious long-term planning. As Labor senators on the Economics Legislation Committee noted, there are limited details on how this reinsurance pool will actually deliver any savings at all to people in North Queensland. The Treasury modelling which underpins this legislation hasn't been released, despite calls not just from Labor but from the insurance industry and key stakeholders. As the Royal Automobile Club of Queensland said in their submission:

... RACQ cannot assess the impact the pool will have on our member's home insurance premiums, primarily because we have not received proposed pricing rates or associated modelling ...

Any public claims the Morrison government has made to the people of North Queensland—or will, undoubtedly, make ahead of the coming election—should be treated with the highest degree of scepticism.

When the scheme was launched, Minister Sukkar, who doesn't have a very good track record of following through on policy commitments, said it would provide savings of up to 10 per cent. When it made it to the House of Representatives, he claimed savings of 45 to 58 per cent, without releasing the modelling. It's utterly unreliable. Minister Sukkar has made all sorts of claims about this legislation—much like the bogus housing industry set of propositions that he was engaged in before, which promised a lot but delivered very little indeed.

There are also flaws in the government's decision to limit coverage to 48 hours after the declaration of a cyclone. That means much of the kind of damage from Queensland cyclones in the past few decades wouldn't be covered by this reinsurance, including the majority of the damage caused by Cyclone Debbie in 2017.

It's worth noting that the ACCC has argued against the creation of a reinsurance pool. The government ignored three core recommendations from the ACCC, including recommendations that would have made a substantial difference to the affordability of insurance. Instead, in the final hours of this squalid parliament, the Morrison government has produced last-minute, weak, half-baked legislation that is all about announcements in the lead-up to an election and has very little to do with actually delivering for the people of North Queensland.

Our insurance system more broadly is buckling under the weight of climate risk. It's clear that the impacts of climate change are driving up the cost of insurance premiums—not just in North Queensland but in the Northern Rivers of New South Wales, on the South Coast of New South Wales and in the north-western suburbs of Sydney.

It's why you can't buy home and contents insurance in Bourke. It's why caravan parks on the South Coast of New South Wales have struggled to reopen in the wake of the fires. I chaired the Senate inquiry into the 2019-20 bushfires, which included an entire chapter on the effects of the fires on the insurance industry. I heard from communities directly about what impact premium rises were having on an already devastated community. As the committee's final report said:

That premiums can increase by a magnitude of 300 to 400 per cent following a natural disaster – particularly for commercial enterprises upon which a community may rely – is unsustainable and cannot occur after each natural disaster.

The centre of this problem is of course a market failure and an utter failure of this Morrison government to grapple with its responsibilities. Someone is going to have to pay for the increasing costs and risks of climate change. Taxpayers, policyholders and shareholders are all going to bear this burden. Currently, those costs are almost exclusively being born by policyholders, but, as insurance becomes more unaffordable, more people will be underinsured and uninsured. Government backed reinsurance pools do have a role to play here, but making the Australian government the insurer of last resort is not a long-term plan for or a sustainable approach to this problem. The restructuring of our system only goes so far. It's like rearranging deckchairs on the *Titanic*. At some point we actually have to deal with the risk.

The committee report found:

... insurance market failure should be addressed through increased expenditure on mitigation and resilience infrastructure to better address the risks that climate change and natural disasters pose to the community.

No amount of empty promises from this government on the price of insurance, as unbelievable as they are, can distract from their failure to invest in mitigation and resilience infrastructure. They have been repeatedly warned, by both the opposition and the insurance industry, that their investments are insufficient. They actually need to spend the money that they'd supposedly allocated to disaster mitigation, as my colleague Senator Watt has repeatedly insisted. The government has barely even touched the \$4 billion fund that they established specifically for that purpose. They held that promise out to communities and then walked away from those communities. Instead, they've left the disaster recovery and resilience agency to their most blatantly political appointment yet, former CLP chief minister and Liberal Party president Shane Stone. We saw his performance on these issues in the wake of the Lismore floods. What did Mr Stone do? It's a pretty squalid week, really, for the government. Mr Stone blamed the victims, the victims themselves, the people who live in Lismore. The Prime Minister wouldn't get out of bed to do his job. They had to wait until he could present himself after his period of quarantine so that he could be there for the press conference to make the announcement. People waited for days and days and days for this government to do its job. Nothing says more about the priorities of this government than that.

Ultimately, though, the only way to reduce this risk over time is by taking meaningful action on climate change. For decades it has been obvious that we are facing more frequent and more severe natural disasters. Australia is the most vulnerable to climate change. Our regional communities are the most vulnerable in Australia. The insurance industry and insurance companies globally and here in Australia have produced extensive research and commentary on this issue. They've played a constructive role as a global stakeholder on these questions. As an example of the work, the IAG and the US National Center for Atmospheric Research produced a paper *Severe weather in a changing climate*. Its conclusions are clear and its impacts are diabolical for Australians, particularly Australians in the regions. Anyone who has read the report will be deeply saddened and disturbed by the scale of the floods in northern New South Wales and South-East Queensland, but they would not be surprised. The industry has been right to have been urging governments to spend more money on natural disaster mitigation and resilience infrastructure. They've been in the media recently, crowing about the success of their lobbying in this regard. But, let's face it, the biggest and most effective climate change mitigation measures available to us are to get our own climate and energy policies right. Instead we've been engaged in squalid climate wars and identity politics, on the government side, about this issue.

It is a little curious that the insurance industry in Australia has been so quiet on this question publicly. They have a very strong interest in limiting the rate and magnitude of these kinds of disasters and in public policy responses to do that. The industry should be right out there demanding rapid and deep action on these questions. So why haven't they been doing it? In the aftermath of the Black Summer bushfires, a senior executive of one of Australia's biggest general insurers, who I won't name, was asked why. She answered, quite frankly, that the insurers would be demanding stronger action from government on climate and energy policy but that it had been made clear to them by senior members of the Morrison government that any such demands by the industry would be met by regulatory retaliation from the government itself. They got the message from the Morrison government: 'Don't speak up; otherwise, we'll clean you up.'

It's disturbing on many levels. It's disturbing because there's still very little prospect of insurance consumers seeing anything other than escalating premiums for increasingly scarce insurance, including in North Queensland.

It's disturbing because the Morrison government wields the power of government to bully its opponents, to bully industry into acting against the interests of its shareholders and customers. And it's disturbing because an industry run by very fine people, who know what they're doing, shouldn't be stood over by this government.

So, whilst there is some bipartisanship in this place about the need to pass this piece of legislation through this parliament—as half-baked as it is, as imperfect as it is, as last-minute as it is, as token as it is, as it is about an announcement and allowing Mr Morrison, Mr Stone and, no doubt, Senator McKenzie and others to pose in front of a rainwater tank at the back of some property in North Queensland and crow about the supposed benefits they're going to deliver for North Queensland—it is an empty promise with no publicly released modelling to support it.

What Australia really needs, what people in the regions need, is a government that actually has a plan to deal with the issues of adaptation and mitigation, the infrastructure that needs to be built and the proposals that need to be discussed with communities to deal with one of the greatest threats regional Australia faces.

Senator FARUQI (New South Wales) (12:58): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Treasury Laws Amendment (Cyclone and Flood Damage Reinsurance Pool) Bill 2022 and I want to associate myself with the comments made by my colleague Senator McKim. As I speak, communities in many parts of Lismore in New South Wales have been ordered to evacuate again as heavy rains continue to batter the North Coast in my home state. Residents in Lismore and surrounds—North Lismore, South Lismore, low-lying parts of Kyogle, Tumbulgum and other low-lying areas—were given until 10 pm last night to leave their homes. My heart goes out to people who have had to leave their homes yet again, faced by yet more life-threatening flooding. Weary residents in parts of flood-ravaged Queensland are also on high alert again. So many of these people have already faced severe floods. They have lost their homes, their lifelong belongings and much more to these floods. And here they are faced with even more catastrophic weather, with dangerous and life-threatening flash floods lapping at their doorsteps yet again.

The floods in New South Wales and Queensland remind us that this is the everyday reality of climate change. This is what we have been warned about over and over for decades now—not a day or two, not a week or two, not a year or two, but decade upon decade. The climate crisis is here and now, and it is not just on people's doorsteps; it is in their homes and it is impacting every aspect of their lives. The damage and suffering caused by these floods reminds us of the continued and deliberate inaction of the Liberal-National government to address climate change. They have in fact fuelled climate change by subsidising fossil fuels and approving coalmine after coalmine.

It's not as if we didn't know, as I said earlier, about these impending disasters and the devastation they would cause. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's report, which said, 'Climate change is widespread, rapid, and intensifying, and some trends are now irreversible', sounded a code red for humanity but was completely disregarded by this government. The same report warned us that extreme weather events caused by climate change will increase in both intensity and frequency—and here we are, with a dire warning that is being played out in my home state of New South Wales and in Queensland right now. They have witnessed what a climate emergency looks like firsthand, and they are devastated. Yet the Morrison government have ignored all warnings. Yet they have failed to tackle the climate crisis. Yet they keep talking about 'variable climate'—we heard that this morning from a government senator—as if it has nothing to do with their actions. They're obviously being wilfully ignorant because they don't want to act on coal and gas, lest they offend their pals and donors—the fossil fuel billionaires.

Much has been said about the scale of these floods. They are massive. People who have lived through other floods in that area talk about never having seen anything like this. Warehouses were fully submerged underwater. And they are right. As my friend Lismore resident and soon-to-be member of the upper house of New South Wales Sue Higginson wrote in the *Guardian*, 'This is more than a flood; this is a catastrophe.' She goes on to say:

We need to look towards the future and decide what kind of future we want. Climate change has happened, it is going to get worse—the decision is how much worse do we want this to get. Strong action on climate change is not simply a flood plan or a fire plan, it means no new coal and gas, decarbonising our economy, making our planning system climate centred and keeping people safe.

That's why support for the Greens in that area particularly is growing. Our Greens MP for Ballina, Tamara Smith, has stood and supported the community, as has our federal candidate for Richmond, Mandy Nolan. They haven't been shy to call it as it is—a climate catastrophe, a climate emergency—and they are with the people who are suffering the most.

In addition to its failure to address climate change, the government is now picking and choosing who gets covered under the reinsurance plan proposed by this bill. The bill would require the public to maintain a \$10 billion fund to underwrite the contingent liability associated with nationalising reinsurance for cyclone and related flood damage. But that's where it ends. The bill does not include other climate disasters. We know that severe weather events caused by climate change are making insurance costs skyrocket in many parts of the country. Yet this bill as currently drafted will not cover insurance for the people of New South Wales and Queensland who have just

experienced and continue to experience devastating floods. There is no doubt that the damage caused by cyclones should be covered; of course it should be. But there is no reason that flooding for other reasons shouldn't be covered.

Despite the indisputable truth of climate change induced disasters, the government has not mentioned climate change in introducing this bill. The term is used in the explanatory memorandum but only when quoting references. And we know why that is the case. The Liberal and National parties are still full of climate-denying criminals. Their seats in parliament are funded by dollars from fossil fuel companies, so they have their heads deliberately buried in the sand.

The government is utterly failing to acknowledge the universal nature of the threat posed by the climate emergency by proposing, in this bill, to nationalise reinsurance for only a particular class of what have traditionally been called 'natural perils' but that are now, very clearly, anthropocentric climate disasters caused by the actions of humans, caused by the actions of the Liberal-National government.

To do this, the bill is drafted in a way that is both inequitable and short-sighted. The climate emergency is pushing up the cost of insurance all over the country. If a government's reinsurance pool is to be established, all Australians should be afforded the benefit. The bill is so limited in its scope, and my colleague Senator Nick McKim has circulated several very sensible amendments to address this problem and cover people who have experienced damage caused by flooding. The government's reinsurance scheme proposed by this bill should cover all climate disasters and people affected by them right across the country.

The Greens want a statutory review to consider fully nationalising reinsurance for all climate disaster related property damage. Fully nationalising reinsurance would directly expose the government to the costs of underinvestment in public works that are required to mitigate the impact of climate disasters, because they are here and now. We are exposed to these risks one way or another anyway. They should, at the very least, be transparent. This would hopefully create a direct incentive for the government to invest in climate adaptation works all across the country as well as better data collection, and better land use planning and coordination with state and local governments.

The Greens have another excellent amendment, that the money required to establish and maintain the \$10 billion reinsurance pool be backed by taxation on entities extracting and combusting fossil fuels. The logic here is pretty simple and straightforward. The burning of fossil fuels is what has created the climate emergency, so those who profit from the burning of fossil fuels should be made to pay for the cost of the climate emergency.

Finally, I want to speak about this government's response to climate disasters, particularly the one that is unfolding still in northern New South Wales. People in flood-stricken areas like northern New South Wales had to wait and wait and wait for the federal government to respond, for any help to arrive. They were desperate to save what they could and who they could. Local people had to take on the extreme risk of trying to save their neighbours from severe flooding. I'm so proud of that community because every time a disaster happens they work with each other. They put their lives at risk to help others. Community members stepped in and stepped up for each other, when the government was nowhere to be seen.

'That's not my job,' said Prime Minister Scott Morrison, who declared the floods in New South Wales and Queensland a national emergency a full nine days after Lismore was submerged, and the local anger was palpable. I was hoping this would be a wake-up call for Mr Morrison, but his arrogance and the arrogance of the Liberal-National government knows no bounds. Even the support payments announced initially were carved out by local government areas and refused to cover all the flood ravaged parts of northern New South Wales and refused to include many people who were hit by the floods—as if floods just recede at LGA boundaries and decide to not hit the homes of migrants, international students or seasonal workers who were also left out of the support. It was: 'What a shame.' How disgraceful.

The government that remembers to pinch pennies when helping people who have been hit by severe flooding but continues to subsidise fossil fuel corporations to the tune of billions of dollars is not a government that anyone wants. This dismal lack of support and preparedness on what climate disasters will look like, what climate emergencies will look like, is rooted in the climate denialism inherent to the coal-loving Liberals and Nationals. There is no climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience plan, and, sadly, we do not expect one from this government either.

The community is really tired of this fossil-fuel-loving government. This is why we have to turf them out at the election, which isn't very far away. I, for one, can't wait to do that. The Greens in the balance of power will push the next government to move further and faster to tackle the climate crisis, to end coal and gas, to do more on mitigation and resilience, and to protect people and the planet.

Senator BRAGG (New South Wales) (13:10): I rise to make some brief remarks on this bill. Before I do so, I'm not sure whether Senator Faruqi did refer to the Liberals and Nationals as 'criminals'. I'm not sure whether that was

what was said. If it was, I make the point that I understand that people have different opinions, and I think it's a clearing house of ideas, but I don't know that calling people 'criminals' is the appropriate approach.

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator O'Neill): Senator Bragg, it would have been helpful, if you thought that, if you had taken a point of order at the time.

Senator BRAGG: I wasn't sure whether or not that was what was said.

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT: If you would like, I will refer it to the President to review at a later point in time. I was treating it simply as a statement at the beginning of your speech, but, if you—

Senator BRAGG: Yes. Can you please get it checked?

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT: As a point of order?

Senator BRAGG: Yes, please.

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Yes, I will proceed in that way. And now I call you to make your contribution to the debate on the Treasury Laws Amendment (Cyclone and Flood Damage Reinsurance Pool) Bill 2022, Senator Bragg.

Senator BRAGG: I'll just make the point that, in terms of obtaining insurance, which is an important product in every community—and it is a product which is heavily regulated but which is a product provided by the market—we want to see all Australians being able to access it. When there is a regulatory failure or a market failure, there is a case for regulatory intervention. It has been asserted that this would lower the cost of insurance in this part of the world, and that is a laudable objective, but it is a significant intervention in the market, and we ought to be very careful in making interventions in the market. I would be concerned if the scope of the scheme were to be expanded in any way. The way that the legislation works is that, once the BOM declares that there's been a cyclone, the scheme can be triggered. Given the issue we're now facing with climate change, it is possible that, because of climate change, the scope could expand, and I think that gives us two implications to consider.

First, we should be working as hard as we can with other countries to reduce the impact of climate change throughout the world. Secondly, we need to get moving on the mitigation issues, such as the planning, the building codes and the council issues, because this should be a temporary solution. It should be a fix for a point in time when the mitigation approaches are not strong enough. We want to have resilient buildings. We want to have buildings that are insurable by the market. We don't want to have a government insurance company. This is an intervention that is required now, and I accept that. As I explained in my additional comments in the Senate report, I accept that it is a desirable measure to have right now, but we want to see it there whilst it's needed. So we need to get moving on mitigation, and we need to maintain our commitment to climate change. It is good that we are the country to sign up to net zero by 2050. There have been past governments that haven't agreed to all the international protocols, but this government has agreed at the Glasgow conference to commit Australia to net zero, which I think is an important economic measure.

Finally, it is an important precedent, and I don't want to see it expanded beyond its current bounds. I do think that the review that is to be conducted within 12 months and then every three years after gives us cause to ensure that this scheme is only there whilst it is needed. It is needed in the short term so that people in northern Australia can get access to insurance, and I accept that, but we don't want to set precedents where the government ends up running insurance companies or other things that the market should run. That is not saying that we should let the market rip. It is saying that there should be regulation where it's needed and where there is genuine market failure. So I look forward to us maintaining our commitment to climate change adaptation but also to adaptation on the ground, in terms of mitigation, against these sorts of floods.

Senator WATT (Queensland) (13:14): I'd like to make a contribution on what is a really important piece of legislation, particularly for people in North Queensland, who have suffered under astronomical insurance premiums over recent years and who have been waiting very patiently for nearly 10 years for this government to do anything about it.

Before I get into the substance of the Treasury Laws Amendment (Cyclone and Flood Damage Reinsurance Pool) Bill 2022, though, I do want to pick up on some of the comments that Senator Bragg just made. I was concerned to hear what he said, and I'd invite the minister to address this when she wraps up. What I think I heard Senator Bragg say was that the reinsurance pool should not be a permanent feature of the insurance system for North Queenslanders. I'm wondering whether Senator Bragg is suggesting that at some future point the government will remove the reinsurance pool. That is certainly not what people in North Queensland have been told by this government; they have been assured by this government that this reinsurance pool will be around for a long time to come and will save them money. To hear a Liberal senator now question whether this is something that should remain in place I think would be quite worrying to people in North Queensland, and it certainly goes against what

several ministers of this government have spent months telling people in North Queensland. So, as I said, I invite the minister, in her summing up, to comment on what Senator Bragg said and whether in fact this is just an election manoeuvre from the government and something that they will withdraw at a future date if they are re-elected.

I'll now turn to the bill itself and what it seeks to do. As I said, I do not need to be persuaded one little bit that insurance premiums and insurance availability are a genuine problem for people, particularly in North Queensland. It's increasingly a problem in other parts of the country as we face more frequent and more intense natural disasters which, as much as this government might not want to admit it, are a direct consequence of climate change. We know that if we're just prepared to listen to any reputable scientist they will tell us climate change will be driving more frequent and more intense natural disasters in the future. The fact that many people across the country, particularly in North Queensland, cannot afford insurance currently or obtain insurance currently is extremely worrying when we think that we're likely to see more natural disasters in the future.

I don't have the figures before me about the premium rises, but I know from having spoken to homeowners, businesses, community organisations and others across North Queensland that it is becoming increasingly difficult even to get insurance, as a result of the heightened risk of cyclones, floods and other natural disasters. For those people who are fortunate enough to be able to obtain insurance, the sums of money that they have to pay are, frankly, beyond most working families' budgets. And they're getting worse, with premiums increasing exponentially year after year.

As I said, this is something that the government has been promising to fix for at least 10 years. Warren Entsch, the member for Leichhardt, has been in this parliament for the best part of 25 years, and for the best part of 25 years he has been promising people in his electorate he'll do something about insurance premiums. For all the time that he has been here all that has happened is that the insurance situation in North Queensland has got worse. So in his nearly 25 years in parliament he has not delivered on his promises to do something about insurance premiums and availability. The same goes for the member for Herbert, Phil Thompson; the member for Dawson, George Christensen; and senators from North Queensland. They have spent so much time promising to do something about insurance premiums and availability in North Queensland and have done so little. Now, on the eve of an election, literally in the last couple of sitting days before an election, all of a sudden they rush some legislation into parliament to establish a reinsurance pool and they're making more promises to North Queenslanders that this is going to be the fix.

As I say, Labor is going to be supporting this bill. We absolutely recognise the problem that people in North Queensland are experiencing when it comes to insurance and we support anything this government is prepared to do to do something about it. We're pleased that finally the government is doing something which might offer some relief. As I say, it's just disappointing that it has taken nearly 10 years and an imminent election before we've seen any action from this government.

The government has had ample opportunity to do something about this. We have had inquiry after inquiry throughout this government's life, which have pointed to the problems in the insurance market in North Queensland and have put forward recommendations, but nothing has been done. Most recently, we saw another ACCC inquiry into the matter. It made dozens of recommendations about what could be done to improve insurance availability and price for North Queenslanders. You'll be shocked to know that this report is still sitting on the shelf, along with every other one that this government has commissioned—not acting on those recommendations.

It goes beyond taking legislative or other steps in relation to insurance that this government's failure to deal with this problem is truly evident. It also goes to the matter of disaster mitigation. If you talk to any of the insurers who cover the North Queensland market or those who have been chased out of the market because it's just not viable for them to insure people, if you talk to any local governments in North Queensland, if you talk to businesses in North Queensland, if you talk to home owners in North Queensland—if you bother to speak to anyone in North Queensland—what they tell you, as they have told me, is that the best thing this government can do to reduce the risk of damage to homes and businesses from natural disasters is to invest in disaster mitigation. The reason that matters is that, if you can bring down the risk of damage to homes, businesses and other things by investing in disaster mitigation, that reduces the risk for insurers, that reduces the premiums.

There are examples all across Queensland already that we can point to where investment in disaster mitigation has brought down premiums. I know Senator Chisholm has spent some time around Roma inspecting the flood levy there. I think he was there with the member for Kingsford Smith, Matt Thistlethwaite, a little while back looking at the flood levy there. Again, I can't remember the figures—Senator Chisholm might have them—but the fact that a flood levy was built in Roma has significantly reduced insurance premiums for people in that area, which tends to get floods on a regular basis, so investment in disaster mitigation works. It saves people's lives, it saves their properties, it saves taxpayers the billions of dollars in repair costs after natural disasters and it can actually put some controls around spiralling insurance premiums.

Yet, despite all of that—despite report after report, stakeholder after stakeholder, insurer after insurer, local government after local government saying that we need this government to invest in mitigation—instead what we've seen from this government is the world's biggest piggy bank, otherwise known as the Emergency Response Fund. It's a fund that was set-up by this government three years ago with, at the time, about \$4 billion in it. As is often said by the government, yes, Labor did vote with the government for that legislation. We did vote to create the Emergency Response Fund because we thought it was a good idea for the government to put money aside to invest in disaster mitigation and to have at hand for disaster recovery. But, as I think all of Australia has now learnt after the tragic floods in northern New South Wales, the Emergency Response Fund has now been going for three disaster seasons and this government has still not spent a cent from that fund on disaster recovery. They haven't even started building a single disaster mitigation project from that fund, let alone completed one.

The one thing they have done with that fund is earn themselves a tidy \$830 million in interest. That fund was established to assist Australians with disaster recovery and disaster mitigation. It could've been used to build the flood levies, the drainage improvements, the bushfire evacuation centres, the firebreaks, the telecommunications improvements—all the kinds of things that we know keep people safe in a disaster and can actually make a practical difference to insurance premiums. It could have been used for those purposes, but instead it just sat there, earning interest for the government and making their own bottom line look better.

Whether it be the ACCC report, the numerous other inquiries that have recommended changes to insurance to look after North Queenslanders or investing in disaster mitigation, this government has failed over and over again. They—led by Mr Entsch, the member for Leichhardt, but the others are just the same—make promise after promise after promise to do something about insurance, but when it comes to action it's failure after failure after failure. So now, two sitting days before an election, the government has finally decided to do something. Let's hope it works. Let's hope that this reinsurance pool works. Labor are backing it because we want to give it a chance to work. We're just so happy to see the government do anything at all that might make a difference to insurance premiums in North Queensland.

I have to say that this government's track record makes us very sceptical about what difference this will actually make in practice. That scepticism is only heightened when we see the way the government has behaved around the claims it has been making about the savings that will be generated from this reinsurance pool. Several weeks ago the government put out a press release claiming that it had modelling that showed that the reinsurance pool would deliver massive savings to people in North Queensland. That was what got reported in the media, but look at the press release that the minister put out at the time—and this was a few weeks ago. It always pays to look at the fine print when it comes to the Morrison government. The press release said that it was only 'homeowners in northern Australia with the most acute cost pressures' who would be expected to benefit from up to 46 per cent premium discounts.

We asked about this at estimates. I know Senator Chisholm asked about this at the Senate inquiry into this bill as well. We were trying to establish who we are talking about when we say 'homeowners in northern Australia with the most acute cost pressures'. Is that five people in northern Australia who might benefit from this? Is it 500? Is it 5,000? You're out there making the claim that this is going to save people a lot of money, but how many people are we actually talking about? We couldn't get answers from the government about that. I flag to the minister that we will be asking those questions again in this debate.

When we asked about this at estimates we asked to see this magic modelling that tells us that people are going to be saving up to 46 per cent. Minister Hume, who was there at the table, said: 'No. We can't release the modelling, because it's not in the public interest.' How arrogant of this government to say to North Queenslanders: 'We're going to save you all this money with this reinsurance pool, even though we've done nothing for 10 years. Vote for us again and you'll get some savings, but we won't show you how much and we won't show you any of the proof we've got that backs up our claims.' Do you know what was worse? Minister Hume said it was not in the public interest for North Queenslanders to see that modelling. How arrogant! North Queenslanders apparently can't be trusted by this government to see the modelling the government claims it has that backs up its claims about how much people will save.

I still want to know from this government how much the average homeowner in North Queensland will save from this reinsurance pool and how many people will actually save 46 per cent. Is this just more misleading tripe from a government that has spent 10 years doing absolutely nothing to fix the insurance crisis in North Queensland? I foreshadow that I will move a second reading amendment that seeks to obtain that modelling.

There are numerous other issues. In the very little time I've left I want to address the Greens amendment that seeks to extend this reinsurance pool to flooding in other regions. We think this is an idea worth considering, but the Greens have dropped this on the eve of this debate, with no information about what it will cost taxpayers and

what impact it will have on premiums. We think this should be considered as part of the review of this legislation going forward.

Senator CHISHOLM (Queensland) (13:29): It is my pleasure to follow Senator Watt, who raised significant issues with this Treasury Laws Amendment (Cyclone and Flood Damage Reinsurance Pool) Bill 2022—

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator O'Neill): Sorry to interrupt you, Senator Chisholm, but there is a hard marker in the program. I interrupt debate at 1.30 to take us to two-minute statements.

STATEMENTS

Swan Electorate

Senator PRATT (Western Australia) (13:30): Today I rise to wish Zaneta Mascarenhas all the best for the upcoming federal election in the federal seat of Swan. Zaneta will be a key part of bringing an Anthony Albanese Labor government to power in this nation, but we're taking nothing for granted. We're talking to voters in the federal electorate of Swan.

Zaneta is an engineer and has worked on mine sites right around Western Australia for 10 years. She is also the mum of two young children and she cares very much about both our natural environment and conservation and the jobs of today and tomorrow. Zaneta has been inspired to run at this election and to join the great Australian Labor Party based on the really important experiences of her family. Her parents lived in Kenya and they sought to migrate to Australia, but this was during the White Australia policy. Her father was a metalworker, a trade very much needed in Australia at that time—and indeed needed now today. They applied to come to Australia and were told, 'Yes, you've got the right skills but you're the wrong skin colour.'

When Gough Whitlam came to power, abolishing that policy, Zaneta's parents were able to come to Australia and start their new lives. That is why Zaneta is running; she is running because she wants people to be able to afford the freedom and fairness that her parents saw when they first migrated to Western Australia. *(Time expired)*

Ukraine

Senator VAN (Victoria) (13:32): I rise as the chair of the parliamentary friends of Ukraine, and I acknowledge you, Madam Acting Deputy President Bilyk, as the deputy chair. Russia's actions in Ukraine are illegal and criminal, and must be stopped. The sanctions are working, and I'm proud of the sanctions that this government has put on Russian oligarchs and leadership. As was announced by the generals on the weekend, they're losing the war. I pay homage to—and I'm so proud of—the heroes of Ukraine who are standing up for their country. They're fighting for their country and are pushing back the Russians.

But we all need to do more. There are 6.3 million displaced Ukrainians. The world needs to reflect back on its commitment to the Responsibility to Protect. These are war crimes; these are the sorts of crimes which the international community adopted to stand up against when it took on R2P. We need to stand up to those who threaten the rules based order because we see other autocratic countries, both in our region and in other parts of the world, watching what the world does with Putin in Russia. We cannot stand by and let this madman take over Ukraine or any part of it. If a settlement needs to be done, if there is a negotiated settlement, it should be done on terms that are agreeable to the Ukrainians and not just to the rest of the world.

I stand with Ukraine and I call on this parliament to stand with Ukraine: slava Ukraini!

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Bilyk): Thank you, Senator Van, and thank you for your comments associating me with you.

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Senator THORPE (Victoria) (13:34): The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the UNDRIP, was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 13 September 2007. One hundred and forty-four countries voted in favour of the UNDRIP. If you want to know what shame looks like, you need to know that Australia was one of the four countries that voted against the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Not long after the UNDRIP was adopted, Senator Payne stood in this chamber to say that something as important as the UNDRIP should not be rushed: That was in 2007. It's now 2022, and we're still waiting.

Later today I will be seeking leave to introduce a bill to end that waiting, because no-one here has prioritised Indigenous rights, so I will. I'm asking for the support of the Senate today to make sure that my bill can be introduced and, hopefully, passed. That will incorporate the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People into law, policy and practice. My bill would require the government to give us a fully funded national action plan to implement UNDRIP and audit existing laws and policies so they are compliant with UNDRIP. So let's get it done. What are we waiting for? It was 15 years ago that our colleague here in the Senate raised this as something that was important. If the government has failed us, I can guarantee you now that the Australian Greens won't.

Morrison Government

Senator CAROL BROWN (Tasmania) (13:36): In my two minutes today, I'd like to highlight the incompetence of this government and the millions of dollars wasted. They throw millions of dollars at lawyers, at consultants and at outsourcing, and their continued incompetence has led to cost blowouts in projects in Tasmania. The cost of these blowouts on projects the Prime Minister promised back in 2019 has almost reached a staggering \$250 million, ripping money away from health, from housing and from our state's most vulnerable. That's what the incompetence of this government has led to.

When asked why we are having these cost blowouts on projects that have not even started, even though many were promised in 2019, the Liberal member for Bass says the planning infrastructure sits with the state government. They blame the state Liberal government. The Liberal member for Braddon says the same thing: 'The federal government does not deliver projects.' These words could have come straight from the Prime Minister himself. Whenever Mr Morrison is called out on his failure, his response is the same: 'It is not my job.' No matter how much Liberal candidates try to distance themselves from Mr Morrison, a vote for the Liberal member for Bass or the Liberal member for Braddon is a vote for Mr Morrison and his wasteful ways—\$250 million of wasted money that could have gone to the Tasmanian health system, the housing system and, as I've already said, our state's most vulnerable, particularly those seeking emergency— *(Time expired)*

Australian Labor Party

Senator ROBERTS (Queensland) (13:38): How do everyday Australians know there's an election in the air? Well, it's simple: the leaders of the opposition and the government polish their public images. When John Howard gave himself a superficial makeover in 1998, a young Anthony Albanese called out the Prime Minister as indulging in 'same stuff, different bucket'. Mr Albanese needs to listen to his own advice. It's not the bucket that matters; it's the contents. Mr Albanese is now bearing a bucket filled with nothing but empty buzzwords, devoid of substance, leadership and most certainly independence. Anthony Albanese will toe the globalist line and deliver Australia to China and to international capital—the billionaires that run the world, as I say.

This is a Labor Party that sided with the Liberals against One Nation's attempts to protect bank deposits from being stolen by the banks in a bail-in. Labor had to be shamed by One Nation and their own ethnic Labor branches into opposing the cash ban bill. Labor will not support compensation for historical victims of criminal banking fraud. This is not a labour party; it's a party of the World Economic Forum and their 'life by subscription' model.

Only two weeks ago, at the Australian Banking Association conference, ALP shadow Treasurer Jim Chalmers spoke in support of a central bank digital currency, where cash, crypto, gold and silver are replaced by a programmable electronic currency. 'Programmable' means the currency expires if you don't spend it and the government gets to tell you what your money can be spent on. Central banks' digital currencies are designed to prevent savings that provide everyday Australians with independence through financial security. They make us dependent. Digital currencies will most certainly expire on the death of the holder, another form of death tax—there we go again from Labor.

This is the world offered by the Labor Party: complete control by unelected, unaccountable foreign powers. Anthony Albanese will not protect Australians— *(Time expired)*

McGovern Foundation

Motivation Foundation

Senator O'SULLIVAN (Western Australia) (13:40): Today I rise to speak about two foundations that are operating in Perth. The Motivation Foundation is an education and training organisation that trains young people in civil and infrastructure construction, offering various certificates. They also seek to improve the employability of their students, addressing life skills and acting as if they are their students' employer. One of the largest barriers to engagement in life is the lack of a drivers licence. Over 70 per cent of the wider population has a licence. This number drastically falls when you look to our lower socioeconomic communities. The McGovern Foundation is seeking to improve these figures by offering driving supervisors and vehicles. The beauty of their model is that, while they are undertaking the driver training, they are also mentoring and bonding with their students. The Motivation and McGovern foundations are working together and are getting extraordinary, amazing results. I thank them very much for the work that they do and also for hosting me at their facilities a few weeks ago.

Despite much good work being done to help disadvantaged Australians to access services such as drivers licences, the gap still remains, and I feel that the answer may lie in technology. I'm currently teaching my daughter how to drive. While my hair is getting greyer and thinner, scenarios requiring evasive action are rare. If we could allow students to accumulate in a driving simulator some of the hours that they're required to do, we could virtually create those scenarios while addressing the issue for kids that otherwise don't have access to a driver's licenced vehicle or

even someone who has a drivers licence to instruct them. If we can teach pilots, traidrivers and dump truck operators in a simulator, why can't we teach someone to drive a car? Almost every job requires a drivers licence to either perform the task or get to the job. It is a major barrier that needs to be addressed and it's one that— (*Time expired*)

Health Care

Senator GRIFF (South Australia) (13:42): Newborn blood spot screening, known as the heel prick test, has been a vital tool to protect the health of newborn Australians since the 1960s. Screening was first used for phenylketonuria, a condition with no clinical signs at birth. Time is of the essence; with early identification, the condition can be easily treated. Without it, a child may suffer from severe intellectual disabilities.

The advantages of the heel prick test were clear. Over the last 50 years, it became possible to identify more than 60 different conditions with just the one test. Many are conditions without clinical signs. Screening enables early intervention and better health outcomes for both babies and children, so you might assume the test is routinely used on Australian newborns to rule out all of those conditions. You might assume that, but that is wrong. A typical Australian family is lucky to get screening for even 25 conditions, and the actual number depends simply on where the baby is born. This is totally unacceptable, particularly since expanding the test to 50 conditions is estimated to cost just \$10 per baby. That is just \$10 to screen for conditions which might have devastating, lifelong consequences.

Last year, a committee recommended that screening be standardised across the country and expanded to include more conditions. Incredibly, the government has not even responded to that report. It has certainly not implemented the recommendation. I call on the government to act to show some leadership. This is a vital, cheap reform that will make a huge difference to the health of Australian babies. Do it today.

Solomon Islands

Senator AYRES (New South Wales) (13:44): We've seen reports over the last week that the government of Solomon Islands intends to sign a security agreement with the People's Republic of China that could foreshadow a permanent Chinese military and naval presence just 2,000 kilometres off the Queensland coast. The proposed arrangement undermines our national interest and undermines regional security. It's yet another indication of China's regional ambitions and the lengths that Beijing will go to to prosecute them. We've seen China militarise in the South China Sea, flagrantly violating the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. We've seen China expand its global footprint, which includes the establishment of its first overseas military base in East Africa and a rumoured new base on the west coast of Africa.

The Morrison government have been keen to amplify and, clumsily, weaponise these issues in a craven effort to seek political domestic support. They are full of cheap, nasty and empty slogans but they have failed to take a methodical and structured approach to protecting our national security. They are work-shy blowhards, all of them— all talk, no action. There have been clear warnings. The Morrison government was even warned about a defence pact last year by an opposition politician from the Solomons. But, besides crafting crude insults for question time, this Prime Minister hasn't lifted a finger. There's been wilful blindness to the issues facing us in the Pacific and undermining of the Pacific worker scheme by support for exploitation. There's been the so-called Pacific Step-up, but we've cut Australian aid to Solomon Islands by 21 per cent, and they've been met by a Prime Minister who thumbs his nose at legitimate demands for regional solidarity and a defence minister who jokes about water lapping at their doors. No wonder! (*Time expired*)

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Bilyk): Senator Lambie.

Tasmania: Transport Costs

Senator LAMBIE (Tasmania) (13:46): Thank you, Madam Acting Deputy President Bilyk. It's nice to see you here.

There's a lot to love about Bass Strait. We Tasmanians don't mind having a moat around us to keep you mainlanders at bay. There's one thing we don't love about it, though: how much it costs to send our products to other states. No-one else has to chuck their products on a boat to sell them across Australia, but we do, and the cost is breaking us. Between port fees, the cost of labour and the warehousing, we're paying way more to sell our stuff to the rest of the country than you mainlanders are.

Tasmanian businesses who make things in Tasmania are being taxed for choosing to makes things in our state, and that is so unfair. Our Tassie beer makers reckon that to ship a carton of beer made in our state they pay four bucks more than they would if it was made in Melbourne or Sydney. That is disgraceful.

The federal government is meant to make sure Bass Strait doesn't put Tasmanian businesses at a disadvantage. That's why we have the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme. The problem is that the government hasn't kept up with the shipping costs. You are miles behind. You've let it go wayside. Tasmanian businesses are now paying

45 per cent more than they did 10 years ago on their products going across the water. The difference means the government are paying them tens of millions of dollars less than they should be. They're ripping Tasmanians off. They've left it to Tassie businesses to cover the gap, and those businesses are going down the gurgler.

Everyone says we should be supporting Tasmanian manufacturing, but from the Liberals it's just talk, talk, talk. In truth, we're making it harder for people to set up shop and stay in their own state. That's why I've fought so hard to get an extra \$200 million for the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme. Now we need to go further. Tasmanian farmers and manufacturers should not be sent into a fight with one hand behind their back. If the Liberal and Labor politicians really gave a stuff about Tasmanian jobs, they'd get on board with this. I say to those opposite: you need to! It's not an option. Tasmanian businesses deserve to be on an equal footing with every other business around Australia. They don't deserve to be left behind. Put them in a fair fight for customers, because, believe me, they'll win. (*Time expired*)

Autism

Senator HUGHES (New South Wales) (13:48): I'm disappointed that Senator Griff has left the chamber. As many of you will remember, in my maiden speech—it's probably more memorable because most of it wasn't with me—I talked about autism, my son, and what I wanted to achieve in this place. Part of that was an inquiry into autism, and it was with the support of Senator Griff that we were able to establish the first-ever whole-of-life inquiry for autistic people and their families, and those who work around them. I would also like to acknowledge, though, Senator Lambie, who has been a fantastic supporter of this inquiry and always supported me in the work that it did, and Senator Brown, who stepped up as my deputy chair when Senator Griff stood down from the inquiry.

We tabled the report last week, on 25 March, and I have to say it really is a very proud moment for me. It's a 400-page report with 81 recommendations, of which the key one is the formation of a national autism strategy. People are going to ask why we're not just including it as part of the Disability Strategy. We now know that it's just not working for the autistic community. We have a suicide rate 10 times higher than that of the general population. Our unemployment rate for those with autism is significantly higher than in the general disability community. There are so many things we need to do better.

I just did a webinar with the Australian Autism Alliance, and I thank them for hosting and the 500 people who joined to have a Q&A session with Senator Brown and me. This is something that we will continue to work towards into the future. The inquiry and the report are one thing, but the real work is about to start. I'm very excited. I hope that all of you have the opportunity at some stage to even just flick through our recommendations—there are 81 of them. It is important that all of us get behind this community and support it in whatever way we can going forward into the future.

Commonwealth Integrity Commission

Senator PATRICK (South Australia) (13:50): The government have their budget to present. To judge by the calculated leaks to various media organisations, it'll include more efforts to buy votes by spraying taxpayers' dollars at marginal electorates. A noted French statesman once said of the decaying French monarchy, 'They have learned nothing, and they have forgotten nothing.' The same applies to this government. There's no vision—just blatant political corruption on display.

At the close of this parliament, it's again necessary to highlight one of the government's most conspicuous but self-interested failures: their broken promise to establish a federal integrity commission. It's been over 1,200 days since Scott Morrison promised a federal ICAC, and, despite a full parliamentary term, the government never introduced any legislation into either house of parliament. They voted against attempts by the member for Indi, Dr Helen Haines, and me to move ahead with our Australian Federal Integrity Commission Bill.

Whether it's sports rorts, car park rorts, dodgy water purchases, blind trusts, jobs for the boys or JobKeeper rorts, the government's track record on integrity is a disgrace, so enacting a federal ICAC will be the job of the next parliament. We urgently need an integrity commission with real teeth and with the investigative powers of a standing royal commission, able to root out corruption and misconduct at all levels of the Australian government.

There's a huge task ahead to clean up Australian politics. A federal ICAC, a strong parliamentary code of conduct, full disclosure of political donations and improved transparency across the board are all vital to restore the health of our democracy. There is much work to be done, and nothing can be taken for granted from either the coalition government or the Labor opposition. Independents are needed to press hard for these reforms to keep the bastards honest, whichever side wins the election—that's for sure.

Forestry Industry

Senator CICCONE (Victoria—Deputy Opposition Whip in the Senate) (13:52): Madam Acting Deputy President Bilyk, it's good to see you back in the chamber and in the chair. Last week, 21 March was the International

Day of Forests. Forests are one of our planet's greatest renewable resources. When managed sustainably, as we do in Australia, they provide essential materials for many industries, particularly construction. I've spoken about forestry at length in this place, and I do so because it is often unfairly criticised and attacked by many who wouldn't know the first thing about how the industry operates. These people do not stop to think about the impact of their misguided activism on the lives and livelihoods of the many workers, families and regional communities who rely on jobs in forestry.

But these people are not the only threat to forestry. There has also been a lack of support and direction from the coalition government. The Liberals and the Nationals have made a habit of announcing support for forestry prior to an election and not following through whilst in government. Despite the coalition's promise at the last election to plant one billion trees, under their watch Australia's plantation estate has shrunk by 500 million trees, down 10 per cent since they formed government. Now, right before an election, we have an announcement from the Prime Minister: to plant 150 million trees. But how can we trust him or his government? How can we believe anything that they say? We as a country should strive to be self-sufficient, rather than relying on imported materials like timber. We must invest in domestic manufacturing, create jobs and secure our supply chains. Australia cannot afford to lock in another timber shortage crisis, and we cannot afford another term of this Liberal-National government.

Climate Change: Gas Industry

Senator WHISH-WILSON (Tasmania) (13:54): If anything perfectly demonstrates the corrupted nature of this government, what they truly stand for and what their priorities are, it's this. Today we find out—in the last two days of this 46th Parliament—that the minister, Mr Angus Taylor, the so-called 'minister for emissions reductions', is bringing forward regulations before this parliament, before this Senate, to provide \$32 million in public funding to a small private enterprise to develop a commercial gas deposit in the offshore Gippsland Basin in Victoria, the so-called Golden Beach Gas Project. This, at the same time that the Barrier Reef is bleaching again—for the fourth time in six years. This, at the same time that our communities are being flooded by extreme weather events; people have died today. Yet what does this government do in their last dying days? They give more money to fossil-fuel companies. They seem to be proud of it. They seem to be rubbing it in our face. They seem to want a fight. Well, they're going to get one.

I'm proud today to single out a few legends who have been travelling in northern Tasmania and around the country trying to get people to understand the dangers posed by the oil and gas industry. In particular, I'd like to do a shout-out to the No Gas Across the Bass crew, Ally King, Ethan Turner, Annie Ford, Alex Wylie, Amelia Cromb, Talon Clemow and Finn Leary, and, from Surfrider Foundation, Damien Cole, Drew Macpherson and Stephany Curley. Thank you for your activism. Thank you for your work. The community have spoken about this right around the country: no more oil and gas drilling in our oceans.

Victorian Government: Roads

Senator MIRABELLA (Victoria) (13:57): I rise to speak on the Victorian government's ongoing disregard of the health and safety rights of the people of western Victoria, specifically those constituents who are in the new seat of Hawke, regarding the disposal of toxic soil out of Melbourne and into regional Victoria. The Andrews Labor government's West Gate Tunnel Project is transferring toxic soil to contractors despite community outcry and frustration, and an ongoing court proceeding. The residents of Bacchus Marsh and Sunbury have cried out against dumping of toxic soil next to aged-care facilities, schools, a residential estate and, alarmingly, an active creek system. How much longer do regional Victorians have to go on being ignored by their own state government? It seems that the Andrews government believes the project and its contractors are more important than the people the government is supposed to represent. There have been several spills of contaminated soil on the roads from the dig site to the site where the soil is stored. This only highlights the fears of the residents and, if anything, should reinforce the strange absence of consultation between the Victorian government and its contractors.

There's a further concern for the burden of transporting huge volumes of soil through regional roads. The heritage listed Bulla Road Bridge already has to accommodate nearly 400 trucks crossing it every day. The Bacchus Marsh Avenue of Honour is impacted by these trucks carrying their toxic cargo. The addition of these soil trucks without adequate traffic management will pose unacceptable risks to road safety. Regional Victoria must be not used as a rubbish tip for urban Melbourne. I call on the Victorian Labor government to do what is right by regional Victoria and the people of Bacchus Marsh, Sunbury and Bulla.

Afghanistan: Taliban

Senator WONG (South Australia—Leader of the Opposition in the Senate) (13:58): As the world grapples with the horrific events in Ukraine, we are reminded that not so long ago we were dealing with another crisis, the return of the Taliban—the return of the Taliban in control of Afghanistan. Thousands—men, women, children—fled for their lives, fearing the return of a regime with a history of violent oppression of women in all walks of life.

This week some of those fears have been realised, with the Taliban reversing its promise to allow girls to remain in secondary schools in Afghanistan. This decision represents an ugly decline into the darkest days of Taliban control, and it is precisely what so many have feared since the fall of Kabul last year. The women of Afghanistan warned the Taliban's word could not be trusted, and, sadly, they were right. The denial of this fundamental right based on gender is unacceptable, and we join the calls of the international community for the Taliban to reverse this decision. Yet again, we urge the Australian government to fulfil its promises to the people of Afghanistan who are desperately waiting for visas for loved ones. *(Time expired)*

MINISTRY

Temporary Arrangements

Senator PAYNE (New South Wales—Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Women) (14:00): by leave—I advise the Senate that Senator Birmingham will be absent from question time today, Tuesday 29 March 2022, for budget arrangements. In Senator Birmingham's absence, I will represent the Prime Minister; the Minister for Finance; the Treasurer; the Assistant Treasurer; and the Minister assisting the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Minister for the Public Service and Special Minister of State.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Solomon Islands

Senator WONG (South Australia—Leader of the Opposition in the Senate) (14:00): My question is to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Payne. I refer to the reports that the Solomon Islands Prime Minister, Mr Sogavare, has told his parliament a security agreement between the Solomon Islands and China has been finalised and 'the document is ready for signing'. When did the Australian government first become aware that China and the Solomon Islands were negotiating a security agreement, and what action did the Australian government take in response?

Senator PAYNE (New South Wales—Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Women) (14:01): I thank Senator Wong for her question. We have been aware of increasing interest with engagement with China in the Solomon Islands for some time, and we have absolutely and consistently demonstrated that Australia is always ready to support the Solomon Islands, together with members of the Pacific family, particularly in our work together.

The most recent demonstration of that is the strength of the response of Australian, New Zealand, Papua New Guinean and Fijian representatives as part of the Solomon Islands Assistance Force in November of last year, which deployed more than 200 AFP, Defence Force and DFAT personnel to assist in the restoration of law and order. About 50 members of the ADF, the AFP and DFAT remain deployed in those tasks in the Solomon Islands.

On 24 March, the Solomon Islands Prime Minister also announced that we will be extending our bilateral security treaty assistance to support and assist the Solomon Islands in preparing for the Pacific Games, which will be in December 2023 and that we will construct a second patrol boat outpost on the Solomon Islands' eastern border. That is in addition to the Western Border and Patrol Boat Outpost in the Shortland Islands. We'll also build an integrated police, health and disaster management radio network across the Solomon Islands. These are matters—particularly the latter, the radio network—which have been under discussion with Solomon Islands officials for a period of time. For example, Minister Andrews and I participated in a bilateral security meeting with Foreign Minister Manele and the police minister some months ago, in its regular rotation as part of that process. I would also say to the chamber that we've been clear—*(Time expired)*

The PRESIDENT: Senator Wong, a supplementary question?

Senator WONG (South Australia—Leader of the Opposition in the Senate) (14:03): Article 1 of the reported draft framework agreement states:

... the relevant forces of China can be used to protect the safety of Chinese personnel and major projects in the Solomon Islands. What do the minister and the government understand article 1 of the reported draft agreement to mean?

Senator PAYNE (New South Wales—Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Women) (14:03): I note, in respect of the articles themselves, that they're obviously not matters to which the Australian government is a party in their preparation or their progression. We've been clear and have regularly and respectfully raised our concerns with the Solomon Islands government about these matters of security engagement. It is particularly concerning to us that there may be associated with this any actions that undermine the stability and the security of our region, as I have said previously and repeated in public comments in recent days. We believe that the Pacific family, in the broad, is best placed to provide security assistance to the Solomon Islands, and we stand ready to assist further if that is needed. We have been explicitly and emphatically clear in relation to that—and, in fact, not just in words,

because that is what our deeds demonstrate in all of our actions in relation to engagement on these matters with Solomon Islands. *(Time expired)*

The PRESIDENT: Senator Wong, a second supplementary question?

Senator WONG (South Australia—Leader of the Opposition in the Senate) (14:05): Can the minister confirm that Australian bilateral Official Development Assistance to Solomon Islands has been cut by \$41.8 million, or 21 per cent, since budget 2018-19?

Senator PAYNE (New South Wales—Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Women) (14:05): Senator Seselja is right, but that is a misrepresentation. It does not incorporate consideration of Australia's construction of the Coral Sea cable from Honiara to Sydney, and also, of course, to Port Moresby. What the senator also completely ignores—

Honourable senators interjecting—

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Senator PAYNE: So I would say—

Honourable senators interjecting—

The PRESIDENT: Minister, resume your seat. Order in the chamber! Interjections are always disorderly. Please, let's hear the minister speak. Minister, you have the call.

Senator PAYNE: It is unlikely that some of the interjections from the other side that I can hear are audible more broadly, particularly on the broadcast. But those opposite have indicated in recent weeks their strong commitment to bipartisanship in matters of foreign policy. I fail to see that demonstrated here today.

Australian Floods

Senator DAVEY (New South Wales—Nationals Whip in the Senate) (14:06): My question is to the Minister for Emergency Management and National Recovery and Resilience, Senator McKenzie. Can the minister please update the Senate on how the Liberals and Nationals government is supporting New South Wales and Queensland communities that have been affected by the recent devastating and ongoing flood emergencies?

Senator Watt interjecting—

The PRESIDENT: Order! Senator Watt!

Senator DAVEY: Thank you, Senator Watt. I'd like to hear from the minister rather than from you.

Senator McKENZIE (Victoria—Minister for Emergency Management and National Recovery and Resilience, Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education and Leader of The Nationals in the Senate) (14:07): Thank you, Senator Davey, for the question. Firstly, I want to extend my, the government's and, I'm sure, this chamber's sincere condolences to the families and loved ones of the now 24 people who have lost their lives to the terrible flooding event that started in Queensland on 22 February and has spread throughout the east coast to encompass over 81 local government areas in Queensland and New South Wales. I also want to thank our amazing SES, RFS, emergency service volunteers and ADF and all those wonderful Australians who've done what we are best known for: helping out our neighbours and our communities when times are tough.

This isn't over. Just today the rains are continuing to fall, and right now we have six evacuation orders in place for these already traumatised communities. We will continue to work closely with both New South Wales and Queensland to ensure that support is available to those communities in need. I want to pay tribute to both my state Labor colleague in Queensland and my state Nationals colleague in New South Wales for working so collaboratively during this period.

Having visited Lismore, Gympie, Ballina, Brisbane and other communities, I know that, as former Governor-General Cosgrove said when he was on the ground in Lismore, it is like ground zero. This recovery effort isn't going to be a sprint; it's going to be a marathon. Our government has delivered the fastest rollout of both financial and non-financial assistance to these communities we've ever seen following a major disaster event. It is at a scale that is likely to surpass our response to the Black Summer bushfires.

In anticipation, we activated COMSDISPLAN on 25 February, and it remains active. Queensland made its first request on 26 February, and later that week we also had requests in for category A and B assistance from New South Wales. Since then, we've been able to support over 1.4 million Australians, in combination with our state government colleagues, to get through this disaster. *(Time expired)*

The PRESIDENT: A supplementary question, Senator Davey?

Senator DAVEY (New South Wales—Nationals Whip in the Senate) (14:09): We've heard a lot about the Emergency Response Fund which is available. Can you please explain how our government intends to use that fund to support Australians affected by these floods?

Senator McKENZIE (Victoria—Minister for Emergency Management and National Recovery and Resilience, Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education and Leader of The Nationals in the Senate) (14:09): The Emergency Response Fund—a future fund—was designed to grow over the next decade to \$6.6 billion. It's there for when all other avenues of funding have been exhausted, and its primary purpose is to ensure that we're prepared for future events for future generations. The legislation underpinning that fund is incredibly prescriptive about how it is used. The magnitude of the floods in this event and the extent of the damage that they've caused is exactly the type of scenario that the ERF was designed to deal with, and that is why we will draw down on the fund and use the \$150 million allowed for this financial year to fund the emergency response and recovery, with \$75 million each going to the Queensland state government and the New South Wales state government. We will use the \$150 million for the 2022-23 recovery specifically for Lismore after the catastrophic flood event there for them to use it for flood mitigation, following a study that the government will also fund.

The PRESIDENT: Senator Davey, a second supplementary question?

Senator DAVEY (New South Wales—Nationals Whip in the Senate) (14:10): Minister, what other resilience measures has the government put in place to reduce the impact of future natural disasters?

Senator McKENZIE (Victoria—Minister for Emergency Management and National Recovery and Resilience, Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education and Leader of The Nationals in the Senate) (14:10): As the first Australian government to establish a national resilience focused agency, I can absolutely confirm we are committed to building Australia's resilience to natural disasters. Our plan is more considered than simply rebranding a fund that already exists, as Labor is doing with its Disaster Ready Fund, under which it claims it will spend up to \$200 million—not a ringing endorsement for a funding program. Unlike Labor, we're actually getting on with the job of building resilience and giving communities hope for the future and support in the present in their efforts to get back on their feet—not politicising vulnerable communities who are struggling right now, whether they be bushfire traumatised communities or current flooded communities. Our \$600 million Preparing Australia Program will support communities to undertake disaster risk reduction and resilience initiatives to reduce the impact of future disasters because we know here in this country that this will not be the last flood and this will not be the last bushfire or cyclone that our people will have to deal with. (*Time expired*)

New South Wales: Floods

Senator McALLISTER (New South Wales) (14:12): My question is to the Minister for Emergency Management and National Recovery and Resilience, Senator McKenzie. New South Wales Liberal Catherine Cusack MLC has described Mr Morrison's politicisation of flood relief as 'probably the most unethical approach I have ever seen'. She has said she will resign. She said, 'I can't defend it, and I am outraged by it.' How can the Morrison government defend its own approach when even New South Wales state Liberals won't defend it?

Honourable senators interjecting—

The PRESIDENT: Order, Senator Watt! Senator Paterson and Senator Reynolds, you are not assisting. Minister.

Senator McKENZIE (Victoria—Minister for Emergency Management and National Recovery and Resilience, Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education and Leader of The Nationals in the Senate) (14:12): The rainfall and subsequent flooding event which occurred in late February and early March and which continues even today has caused devastation throughout these communities, particularly northern New South Wales and the seven local government areas of the Northern Rivers.

Opposition senators interjecting—

Senator McKENZIE: Many of those opposite are choosing to yell and scream about this devastating impact which has caused Australians to lose their lives, rather than actually hear about the things that we've done as a federal government in conjunction with the state government to support these communities. Right now at the peak of Operation Flood Assist 2022, there were 7,000 ADF personnel present across Queensland and New South Wales. Right now, there are around 4,000 ADF personnel in Lismore itself, and they're assisting that community with the very tough task of getting the piles of rubbish on the streets of Lismore—which I know you've seen, Senator Watt—off the streets and of heading out into smaller communities of Wardell, Coraki, Broadwater and beyond to assist with the very long task of the clean-up. They've been welcomed with open arms in these communities. I know it was quite hard for the ADF—

The PRESIDENT: Minister. A point of order, Senator McAllister?

Senator McAllister: The point of order is relevance. The question went to the comments by Ms Cusack and in particular her comments regarding the ethics of the Morrison government's approach to flood relief. The minister hasn't gone to that question at all.

The PRESIDENT: I have been listening carefully to the minister's answer. I cannot instruct the minister on how to answer a question. I believe she was being directly relevant to the question. Minister, you have 43 seconds.

Senator McKENZIE: As we know, disaster recovery funding arrangements that were set up in 2018 are jointly funded by Commonwealth and state governments. On the very day that these flooding events were occurring in New South Wales, these were activated by the New South Wales government, as is the appropriate governance arrangement for the disaster recovery funding arrangements. In the first days of the flood event we were rolling out temporary accommodation assistance with the New South Wales government. We were funding it; they are responsible for rolling it out. We were also assisting them with local council grants and the like for that immediate response. Now we've shifted to recovery— *(Time expired)*

The PRESIDENT: Senator McAllister, a supplementary question?

Senator McALLISTER (New South Wales) (14:15): New South Wales Nationals MP Geoff Provest has said: ... the federal government have really messed this up ... This is like a remake of the bushfires some two years ago.

How can the Morrison government defend its own approach when even New South Wales Nationals won't defend it?

Senator McKENZIE (Victoria—Minister for Emergency Management and National Recovery and Resilience, Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education and Leader of The Nationals in the Senate) (14:16): As I said in my previous answer, we've been able to get, at a Commonwealth level, non-financial aid, being the ADF boots on the ground and the Taipan helicopters rescuing people off roofs in Lismore itself within hours, because we did preposture ahead of that request from the New South Wales government. We have, even now, 4,000 ADF on the ground. So non-financial support rolled out in record time, and financial support rolled out in record time through Services Australia and our own disaster payment and disaster recovery allowance.

It might not suit the Labor Party's narrative; they want to politicise natural disasters. But what Australians in need want to hear from their political leaders—

Senator Wong interjecting—

The PRESIDENT: Senator Wong, you're not assisting.

Senator McKENZIE: irrespective of whether they're federal or state and irrespective of whether they are Labor or Liberal, is actually working together to get the response where it's needed and when it's needed. *(Time expired)*

Honourable senators interjecting—

The PRESIDENT: It is becoming increasingly difficult to hear the minister's answers. Senator McAllister, a second supplementary question?

Senator McALLISTER (New South Wales) (14:17): Mr Provest also declared that he was 'disgusted' by Mr Morrison and said, 'I'd struggle to vote for him.' When even members of the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals can't defend Mr Morrison, can't stomach voting for him and are disgusted with him, does the minister really expect Australians to feel differently?

Senator McKENZIE (Victoria—Minister for Emergency Management and National Recovery and Resilience, Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education and Leader of The Nationals in the Senate) (14:17): As I was saying, Australians in need are quite offended by cheap political pointscoring by those in the privileged positions that we hold. They want us to get on with the job of assisting them in their time of need, including in the immediate response phase in the immediate days when people are actually—thousands of people are homeless here—getting temporary accommodation sorted and making sure they have cash in their accounts to purchase petrol and clothes. That's exactly what the Palaszczuk government partnered with us to do, as the Perrottet state government did with the Commonwealth.

Once we move into the recovery phase, which we are now in—and this is going to last a long time—we are rolling out additional measures, depending on what the state governments decide. So the Palaszczuk government wanted to give, in the category D response, \$20,000 to community groups. The Perrottet government— *(Time expired)*

Great Barrier Reef

Senator WHISH-WILSON (Tasmania) (14:18): My question is to Senator Hume, representing the Minister for the Environment. Senator Hume, could you please update the chamber on Minister Sussan Ley's comments, or her

updates, on the devastating and very concerning news that the Great Barrier Reef is experiencing its fourth mass coral bleaching in the last six years?

Senator HUME (Victoria—Minister for Superannuation, Financial Services and the Digital Economy and Minister for Women's Economic Security) (14:19): I thank Senator Whish-Wilson for his question. The Commonwealth government, the Morrison government, is deeply committed to protecting the world heritage listed Great Barrier Reef. The tourism industry, traditional owners, Reef communities rely on the Morrison government's commitment to the Reef and we will not let them down. Before COVID closed the world's borders, economic activity stemming from the Reef was worth an estimated \$6.4 billion annually and 64,000 jobs.

The Morrison government's enduring commitment to the protection of the Reef was demonstrated just last Friday with the announcement of an additional \$1 billion in new funding. This additional funding takes the total funding by the Australian and Queensland governments to more than \$4 billion by 2030. More than \$3 billion of this is from the Australian government. Benchmarked against global standards Australia's management of the Reef is recognised as a leading example and is considered by many—

The PRESIDENT: Minister, please resume your seat. Senator Whish-Wilson, on a point of order.

Senator Whish-Wilson: A point of order on relevance. I asked a very quick question. I asked the minister to update us on Minister Ley's comments regarding the devastating news from last week. We don't need talking points. I would actually like her to address my question.

The PRESIDENT: I have heard your point of order. I have been listening to the minister's answer. The minister was being directly relevant to the question. I cannot direct a minister how to answer a question. The minister was being relevant to the question. I have been listening. Minister, you have the call.

Senator HUME: Benchmarked against global standards, Australia's management of the Reef is recognised as a leading example and is considered by many to be the gold standard for large-scale marine protected area management according to the UNESCO report. This \$1 billion package will enhance Australia's world-leading management of the Reef in four separate ways—

The PRESIDENT: Minister, resume your seat. Senator McKim.

Senator McKim: The point of order is on the same matter that Senator Whish-Wilson raised as a point of order—that is, relevance. The question specifically and only related to the current mass bleaching event on the Great Barrier Reef. The minister has not mentioned the mass bleaching event two-thirds of the way through the time allocated for the answer. I simply ask you, President, if you would remind the minister of the question, please.

The PRESIDENT: You have had a chance to remind the minister of the question. I've been listening to the minister's answer. The minister was being relevant to the question. Minister, you have the call with 40 seconds remaining.

Senator HUME: I am happy to mention mass bleaching—now it is mentioned—because mass bleaching is one issue that affects the Great Barrier Reef. Other issues that affect the Great Barrier Reef are changes in climate. Other issues that affect the Great Barrier Reef are crown-of-thorns starfish. This additional \$1 billion investment, that takes the Commonwealth's funding up to \$3 billion, is just one of the ways that we can address all of the issues that're facing the Great Barrier Reef, for which we are known as the gold standard in response to large-scale marine protected area management according to UNESCO itself. There are four ways that— (*Time expired*)

The PRESIDENT: Senator Whish-Wilson, a supplementary question?

Senator WHISH-WILSON (Tasmania) (14:23): My supplementary question is to ask the same question a different way, so perhaps the minister can respond this time. What has the federal environment minister said about the fourth mass coral bleaching in the last six years on the Great Barrier Reef?

Senator HUME (Victoria—Minister for Superannuation, Financial Services and the Digital Economy and Minister for Women's Economic Security) (14:23): I thank Senator Whish-Wilson for saying it louder, because quite clearly I didn't hear it properly the first time! I will happily say that this additional \$1 billion package that will enhance Australia's world-leading management of the Reef will do so in four ways. First and foremost, it will accelerate progress towards water quality targets. We are extending efforts to improve Reef water quality and meet our agreed targets under—

The PRESIDENT: Senator Whish-Wilson, on a point of order.

Senator Whish-Wilson: A point of order on relevance. This is an international crisis and the minister is refusing to answer the question. It is a disgrace. It is a bloody disgrace—

The PRESIDENT: Senator Whish-Wilson, resume your seat. This is not a debating time. There is no point of order.

Senator Whish-Wilson interjecting—

Honourable senators interjecting—

The PRESIDENT: Senator Whish-Wilson, I am not aware what people are asking you to withdraw, and I do not wish you to repeat it, however, if you said something that you should withdraw, please withdraw it.

Senator Whish-Wilson interjecting—

The PRESIDENT: I will review the transcript following question time. Minister, you have the call.

Senator HUME: This new \$1 billion investment, which is in addition to the existing \$4 billion investment between the Commonwealth and the Queensland governments, will accelerate progress towards water quality targets. In addition to that it will continue our world-leading reef management and conservation partnerships.

The PRESIDENT: Minister, resume your seat. Senator Whish-Wilson?

Senator Whish-Wilson: The question was: what has the environment minister said about the mass coral bleaching? What has she said?

The PRESIDENT: This is not a debating time, Senator Whish-Wilson. As I've said already on a number of occasions today, I cannot direct the minister how to answer a question. You have brought the minister back to the question that you asked; however, I have been listening to the minister's answer and I believe she was relevant to the question. Minister, you have the call and you have 21 seconds remaining.

Senator HUME: The third thing that that money will do is support climate adaptation science research and development. The fourth—

The PRESIDENT: Minister, resume your seat. Senator McKim?

Senator McKim: President, I have a point of order. The point of order is direct relevance. I simply ask you, please—later or now, as you wish, Mr President—to rule on whether a question that is seeking specifically a response as to what the minister said about an issue can be responded to in a relevant way by simply talking about the issue. I think that is the matter that would assist the Senate. Could you rule on that? I am very happy for you to take it away and come back at your leisure, President. I do think it's an important matter to have clarified for the Senate.

The PRESIDENT: I will come back to the chamber tomorrow with a fulsome explanation; however, I believe that the minister was being directly relevant to the question in answering the way she has. I will explain my position tomorrow. Minister, you have the call for 14 seconds.

Senator HUME: Finally, the fourth element of that funding will fund on-the-ground community and traditional owner led projects. I understand that Labor and the Greens tend to seek to politicise the reef, but the coalition will continue its long legacy of protecting it. *(Time expired)*

The PRESIDENT: A second supplementary question, Senator Whish-Wilson?

Senator WHISH-WILSON (Tasmania) (14:27): Two UNESCO scientists have been in Australia in the last week visiting the Great Barrier Reef at this government's invitation to assess whether climate change is impacting the World Heritage values of the Great Barrier Reef and its UNESCO listing. Can you confirm that those scientists visited reefs that have bleached? If so, which reefs did they visit?

Senator HUME (Victoria—Minister for Superannuation, Financial Services and the Digital Economy and Minister for Women's Economic Security) (14:27): I can confirm that scientists were here in association with the reef authority. Reef authority staff have been working with those research partners from the Australian Institute of Marine Science to conduct aerial surveys across the reef. Those surveys concluded on Wednesday 23 March, but the results are still being analysed. The minister is aware that these surveys have detected widespread coral bleaching over a large area of the reef. These surveys indicate variable levels of bleaching between different regions—

The PRESIDENT: Minister, please resume your seat. Senator Whish-Wilson, a point of order?

Senator Whish-Wilson: I have a point of order on relevance, President.

The PRESIDENT: I'm happy to rule straightaway. The minister was being directly relevant, Senator Whish-Wilson. She could not have been more relevant.

Senator Whish-Wilson: No. These surveys have nothing to do with the UNESCO visit.

The PRESIDENT: Senator Whish-Wilson, points of order are not an opportunity to debate.

Senator Whish-Wilson: Having a minister who actually knows what she's talking about—

The PRESIDENT: Senator Whish-Wilson, resume your seat! Question time is not a debating forum. Senator Whish-Wilson, there was no point of order.

Senator Whish-Wilson interjecting—

The PRESIDENT: Senator Whish-Wilson! Minister, you have the call and you have 35 seconds remaining.

Senator HUME: These surveys indicated variable levels of bleaching between different regions and between different reefs. Some reefs are unaffected; others are experiencing minor paling; and some, where the heat stress is greatest, are severely impacted—that is correct. It's important to note that corals can in fact survive bleaching events, some corals will be mildly or moderately affected and some will recover when favourable conditions return. The bleaching follows a summer of very hot weather and record-breaking temperatures across the reef. The reef authority will continue to brief the minister on reef conditions as the data becomes increasingly available.

Health Care

Senator GRIFF (South Australia) (14:29): My question is to Senator Colbeck, the Minister representing the Minister for Health and Aged Care, and it relates to the cost of health care in Australia. Minister, when the Medical Costs Finder website was launched two years ago, it was found that, for some procedures, patients in some states were paying out-of-pocket costs which were up to 40 times more than those paid by patients in other states. Fee transparency was supposed to alleviate this problem. Can you tell me whether the Medical Costs Finder website has helped a single patient by reducing their out-of-pocket costs?

Senator COLBECK (Tasmania—Minister for Sport and Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care Services) (14:30): I thank Senator Griff for the question and for some notice of the general topic of the question. The government continues to invest in Australia's world-leading health system to ensure that Australians have access to high-quality health services at reasonable cost. The current situation with respect to bulk billing, for example, sees the bulk-billing rate at a record high of 83.5 per cent, which is 6½ per cent higher than when we came to government in 2013. GP bulk-billing records remained at record highs over the 2021 calendar year. Over that calendar year, the bulk-billing rate was 88.7 per cent—6.9 per cent higher than in 2012.

Senator Griff is correct: the purpose of the Medical Costs Finder website is to provide some visibility and transparency to support Australians in understanding what their medical costs might be so that they can make appropriate decisions with respect to where they might access those costs. I don't have with me any specific data in relation to the outcomes of those elements from the initial build—noting that the Medical Costs Finder website is still in its initial stages, as it's being developed, and that there are further stages to be considered. I understand that Minister Hunt has indicated a willingness to work with you, as we have done on previous sites that have provided visibility, to continue to improve the information that's to be made available to Australians across the board. But what we continue to do is to invest into Australia's world-leading health system, and whether that's into the MBS system for— *(Time expired)*

The PRESIDENT: Senator Griff, a supplementary question?

Senator GRIFF (South Australia) (14:32): Minister, you haven't actually answered my question. I would have thought that you would have been able to say that at least a single patient might have benefited in some way. Can you tell me whether there has actually been a reduction in how much individuals spend overall on health care over this term of government?

Senator COLBECK (Tasmania—Minister for Sport and Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care Services) (14:32): I actually don't have any data on individual spends, but I do have information, which I was just going through, about the amount of funding that the government continues to put into Australia's world-leading health system to support Australians to access their care at a reasonable cost. If you look at, for example, Australian government funding to public hospitals, that's grown from \$13.3 billion in 2012-13 to \$25.5 billion in 2021, or by 90 per cent over that period of time.

The PRESIDENT: Minister, resume your seat. Senator Griff, on a point of order?

Senator Griff: It's on relevance. My question was not how much government spends on health care but how much individuals spend on health care and whether, as a result of this particular site, there has been a reduction in how much they spend.

The PRESIDENT: The minister did respond to that question. However, I will remind the minister that, when a question is narrowly framed, it is important to remain within the bounds of the question. Minister, you have the call, if you have anything you wish to add, for 20 seconds.

Senator COLBECK: I did specifically address that point, and I indicated that I didn't have any specific data on that with me. But what I did do was indicate the continued expansion of funding into the health system to Australians to ensure that they can access a high-quality health system. *(Time expired)*

The PRESIDENT: Senator Griff, a second supplementary question?

Senator GRIFF (South Australia) (14:34): Minister, Australia has been reported as having the third-highest reliance in the world on individual death-care contributions. It's massive. If re-elected, what will the government do to lower the cost for individual Australians? This is not government cost but the actual cost to patients, to the public.

Senator COLBECK (Tasmania—Minister for Sport and Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care Services) (14:35): I don't accept the premise of the question, because government spending on health actually does contribute to the cost that would otherwise be on Australians with regard to the health system. That's why we continue to invest in world-leading drugs: to make sure that Australians can access them at cheaper prices. That's why we do that. We continue to list drugs, taking older ones off and putting new ones on, so Australians have access to the best possible drugs at a reduced price so that they don't have to pay so much for their health. That's why we continue to invest so heavily in the public health system. If they can't have access to private health services, they can access it publicly through the public health system. That's why we continue to invest. That's why the Australian government's investment in the public health system is so important for them. It does contribute to lowering costs for Australians in accessing Australia's world's best health system.

Australian Floods

Senator SHELDON (New South Wales) (14:36): My question is to the Minister representing the Prime Minister, Senator Cash. Today, residents of South-East Queensland and northern New South Wales face more flooding. Evacuation orders were issued in a number of Northern Rivers towns. Residents are still cleaning up from last month's devastating floods, in which they were abandoned by this Prime Minister. What will Mr Morrison do to make sure these flood victims are not abandoned by his government yet again?

Senator CASH (Western Australia—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate) (14:36): I thank Senator Sheldon for the question. In relation to the question, Senator Sheldon, I completely reject what you have just said. This government has not forgotten the people in the floods. In fact, what I would say is that the floods that occurred in late February and early March have caused devastation throughout northern New South Wales and the southern Queensland area on a scale that has not been seen, as we all know, since 2011. In response to this devastating flood, the Australian government is providing over \$2.5 billion in financial support.

To ensure Senator Sheldon does understand that the Australian government is working with both the New South Wales and Queensland governments: in relation to the provision of our financial support, as at 28 March—only yesterday—\$1.3 billion has been paid to over 1.4 million Australians. That is through the Australian government disaster recovery payment, the special supplement and the disaster recovery allowance. There has been \$291 million of 100 per cent Commonwealth funded direct support for those affected by the floods in New South Wales and Queensland. You would be aware that this is in addition to targeted support announced for each state. I could go on, but, Senator Sheldon, this government is working with New South Wales and Queensland to ensure that we respond appropriately. *(Time expired)*

The PRESIDENT: Senator Sheldon, a supplementary question?

Senator SHELDON (New South Wales) (14:38): When Lismore flooded a month ago, residents had to use their own boats and crowdfund private helicopters to rescue each other, and they were left to clean up on their own. As a Lismore community worker said in the aftermath, 'Where is the government?' Why does Scott Morrison always abandon Australians when they need him?

Senator CASH (Western Australia—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate) (14:39): Again I completely reject the premise of the question. I have outlined for you the significant financial support that the government is providing to those that have been affected by the devastation caused by the floods. That type of flooding has not been seen since 2011.

But the Australian government has taken significant action, as we often hear Senator McKenzie outline in this chamber. In particular, Senator Sheldon, the following actions have been taken—and this is in addition to the \$2.5 billion that we are providing in financial support in response to the devastating flood. The COMDISPLAN was activated, as you know, on 25 February. We activated the national emergency declaration on 11 March 2022. *(Time expired)*

The PRESIDENT: Senator Sheldon, a final supplementary question?

Senator SHELDON (New South Wales) (14:40): The Prime Minister fled to Hawaii during the Black Summer. He didn't order vaccines. He didn't order RATs. He didn't show up for floods last month. Why does Scott Morrison always leave Australians to fend for themselves when people most need help?

Senator CASH (Western Australia—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate) (14:40): Again, Mr President, this is what you get from Labor: nothing more and

nothing less than actually politicising events in which this government is working on the ground with the New South Wales government and the Queensland government. This government will stand by Australians every step of the way.

Senator Sheldon, if I took you through on a portfolio-by-portfolio basis, I could assure you that this is a government that does back Australians every single step of the way. This is a government that believes in the resilience of the Australian people. This is a government that, faced with a global pandemic, has ensured that we took those decisions that would protect both Australia and Australians, whether it was JobSeeker, JobKeeper or the health response. When it comes to the devastating floods, we are again working with the affected people on the ground to ensure that they get the support they require.

Employment

Senator MIRABELLA (Victoria) (14:42): My question is to the Minister representing the Prime Minister, Senator Cash. Senator, how does the Liberal-National government's plan for our economic recovery ensure job security for all Australians not only now but into the future?

Senator CASH (Western Australia—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate) (14:42): I thank Senator Mirabella for the question and I understand that it is your first question in this place. How fitting, Senator Mirabella, that you ask a question in which the Australian people are actively interested. That is of course Australia's economic recovery and how the policies of the Morrison government have in particular got more people back into work.

We know that on this side of the chamber governments themselves do not create jobs. That is for the businesses out there, the employers out there. Governments put in place policies under which businesses are able to prosper, grow and create more jobs for Australians.

Colleagues, you will recall that in 2020, Labor's Jim Chalmers said that the single biggest test of the government management of the pandemic is what happens to unemployment and jobs. Well, on Jim Chalmers' own analysis, this is a government that has delivered for the Australian people. What the budget tonight will show is that the unemployment rate will drop, colleagues, to 3¾ per cent later this year. If you compare that to what the unemployment rate was in September 2013, it was 5.7 per cent under Labor, and, as former Senator Cormann always used to say, 'and rising', because that's their track record.

Currently, under the coalition government, under the Morrison government, it is four per cent, and what you will see in the budget tonight is 3¾ per cent later this year. Jobs are important to the Australian people. Work is important to the Australian people. Tonight you will see the lowest rate in half a century. This is a government that believes in policies to ensure businesses are able to employ more Australians.

The PRESIDENT: Senator Mirabella, a supplementary question.

Senator MIRABELLA (Victoria) (14:44): Senator Cash, how is the government's economic plan helping Australian families have the opportunity to achieve the Australian dream of owning their own home?

Senator CASH (Western Australia—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate) (14:44): We, the government, understand that homeownership is so important to the Australian people. What we are doing is making homeownership a reality for thousands more Australians. As part of our government's plan for a stronger future, we are supporting even more aspiring homeowners to get into the market, and the way we're going to do that—and we'll have more to say about that tonight—is to build on the remarkable success of our government's home guarantee scheme. We will more than double the program to 50,000 places a year. This means that this program, which does get people into their homes, will continue to help more single parents to buy a home with a deposit of as low as two per cent and help more first home buyers with a deposit of as low as five per cent. You'll hear more about that great Australian dream of homeownership tonight.

The PRESIDENT: Senator Mirabella, a second supplementary question?

Senator MIRABELLA (Victoria) (14:46): Looking to the future, what are the risks to Australia's economic recovery as we continue to live with COVID-19 and the rising security challenges that face our region?

Senator Watt interjecting—

Senator CASH (Western Australia—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate) (14:46): Senator Watt was screaming out across the chamber: 'What are the risks to the Australian people?' Senator Watt, I would say it's an Albanese government, because what does an Albanese government stand for? Over the last 30 years Labor has delivered higher unemployment, higher interest rates, higher electricity prices. And, colleagues, let us not forget that they have not delivered a single balanced budget. Contrast that with Prime Minister Morrison, who is ensuring that this government puts in place policies that enable businesses to prosper, grow and create more jobs for Australians. This government now has more Australians in work than we

had prior to COVID-19. This government understands that Australians deserve more of what they earn, and that's why we believe in lowering taxes. *(Time expired)*

Ukraine

Senator LAMBIE (Tasmania) (14:47): My question is for the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Minister, you and I both know that Russia is going after civilians and children in Ukraine. Three hundred people died in Mariupol when a Russian plane bombed the drama theatre where they were taking shelter. Russia is attacking schools, hospitals and evacuation routes, and little kids are dying at a phenomenal rate. It is brutal and it is shocking. You've previously said that the intentional targeting of civilians is a war crime. Is Vladimir Putin a war criminal?

Senator PAYNE (New South Wales—Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Women) (14:48): I thank Senator Lambie for her question. The issues that she raises are deeply serious in terms of the actions that are being taken by Russia in Ukraine. A number of acts have been identified, and Senator Lambie has referred to those. The catastrophic humanitarian toll is growing, as we know. There has been a reference to the International Criminal Court, which Australia supported, and that international court will make its assessment. There has also been a decision by the International Court of Justice which enables investigations of these matters to begin now, and my understanding is that work will be underway as a result of that International Court of Justice question.

But, to be clear—as Senator Lambie, indeed, has been—the bombing of a school where it is known that hundreds of civilians are sheltering; the forced deportation of Ukraine residents, particularly from Mariupol to Russia; an air strike on a theatre where it is known that civilians are sheltering; the bombing of a maternity hospital in Mariupol; and the damaging of over 460 schools and over 40 health facilities in Ukraine indicate that these are matters of criminal behaviour in wartime. That is the reference which will be considered. That is the reference that Australia supported and supports, and I will continue to do that on behalf of all members of this Senate.

The PRESIDENT: Senator Lambie, a supplementary question?

Senator LAMBIE (Tasmania) (14:49): Minister, article 8 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court states that it is a war crime to intentionally direct:

... attacks against the civilian population as such or against individual civilians not taking direct part in hostilities; ...

Putin's men are killing kids. I don't doubt they're doing it on his orders and I don't doubt you do either, so I'm asking you: are you going to have the courage to come out and call him what he is? Putin is a war criminal. When is Australia's foreign minister going to call him what he is? He is a war criminal. Call it!

Senator PAYNE (New South Wales—Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Women) (14:50): Senator Lambie, with the greatest of respect, I believe I responded to the questions that you raised in my first answer.

The PRESIDENT: Senator Lambie, a second supplementary question.

Senator LAMBIE (Tasmania) (14:50): President Biden says that Putin is a butcher who is bent on violence. He can't see how Putin can possibly remain in power after everything he's done. Do you at least back President Biden's statements?

Senator PAYNE (New South Wales—Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Women) (14:51): The Australian government is working as closely as possible with a range of international partners, and that most certainly includes the United States, the United Kingdom, members of the European Union and non-EU countries in Europe, as well as our counterparts in Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Singapore and others in the region. The Australian government has taken the strongest possible approach to our sanctions listings, including listing over 500 individuals and entities. That list of course includes President Putin himself and President Putin's most senior advisers; the members of the Duma, who I and Australia regard as the political facilitators of this egregious invasion; senior members of the Belarussian system as well, including President Lukashenko and his immediate family—

The PRESIDENT: Senator Lambie, on a point of order?

Senator Lambie: I simply want to know if, when President Biden says that Putin is a butcher, she agrees?

The PRESIDENT: Senator Lambie, you have reminded the minister of your question. However, the minister was being directly relevant. Minister, you have the call for 11 seconds.

Senator PAYNE: Let me conclude by saying that the strongest possible costs need to be imposed upon Russia. Australia is a very strong participant in the sanctions process, having imposed the sanctions I outlined earlier and others.

New South Wales: Floods

Senator WATT (Queensland) (14:52): My question is to the Minister for Emergency Management and National Recovery and Resilience, Senator McKenzie. In her train-wreck interview with the *Today* show, the minister was

asked five times what the threshold was for declaring a national emergency after the floods. Five times she was unable to answer. Can the minister now explain the threshold for declaring a national emergency?

Senator McKENZIE (Victoria—Minister for Emergency Management and National Recovery and Resilience, Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education and Leader of The Nationals in the Senate) (14:53): As Senator Watt rightly highlights, on 11 March, the Governor-General enacted the National Emergency (2022 New South Wales Floods) Declaration. The Prime Minister formally recommended a national emergency declaration following advice from the Director-General of Emergency Management Australia, Joe Buffone, who on 10 March also briefed Senator Watt as part of my own efforts to make sure we're as bipartisan as possible in dealing with this crisis. This advice was provided in consultation with a range of Commonwealth agencies, based on the best possible information available at that point in time.

The Prime Minister must be satisfied that the scale and impact of the floods meet the legal threshold to declare a national emergency. The making of a national emergency declaration enlivens a range of powers to make it easier for affected communities to access Commonwealth assistance, including empowering ministers to suspend, vary or substitute red-tape requirements—for example, to make it easy for affected individuals to supply identification when they may have to apply for certain disaster relief funding. It allows the Prime Minister to access information from Commonwealth entities or stockpiles—

The PRESIDENT: Minister, resume your seat. Senator Watt, on a point of order?

Senator Watt: On relevance, Mr President. The minister referred to a threshold in her answer, but my question was what the threshold was. Could we get an answer on that, please?

The PRESIDENT: You've reminded the minister of the question, Senator Watt. I am listening and, so far, I believe the minister has been relevant to the question.

Honourable senators interjecting—

The PRESIDENT: I will also point out, seeing as those opposite are interjecting in my ruling, that the question began with a highly political preamble. A narrowly framed question cannot start with a highly political preamble—

Honourable senators interjecting—

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Senator Watt interjecting—

The PRESIDENT: Order! Senator Watt, you are wasting the Senate's time now. Senator McKenzie, you have the call for 38 seconds.

Senator McKENZIE: The Prime Minister has to be satisfied, as I said, that the scale and impact of the floods meet that threshold to declare it. Now, with this particular event, there was not one single event within the natural disaster as it occurred; rather, it was the cumulative effect of the weather pattern as it rolled from Gympie right down the east coast, dumping—as the Bureau of Meteorology has said—a one-in-500-year-event catastrophe on Lismore. And, based on the cumulative impact of that event over time, the Prime Minister— (*Time expired*)

The PRESIDENT: Senator Watt, a supplementary question?

Senator WATT (Queensland) (14:56): It's probably best that I just re-ask: does the minister know what the threshold is that her department uses when advising to declare a national emergency? What is the threshold?

Senator McKENZIE (Victoria—Minister for Emergency Management and National Recovery and Resilience, Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education and Leader of The Nationals in the Senate) (14:56): As I said, the Prime Minister himself must be satisfied that the event actually meets the threshold—

Honourable senators interjecting—

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Senator McKENZIE: He bases that on a range of data and advice. And, as I outlined—

The PRESIDENT: Senator Watt, on a point of order?

Senator Watt: On a point of order on relevance: what is the threshold?

Honourable senators interjecting—

The PRESIDENT: Order! Senator McKenzie on the point of order?

Senator McKENZIE: Sorry, I didn't think we were able to restate questions in points of order, so I was wondering whether that was the second supplementary, the first supplementary or, indeed, just restating the first question?

The PRESIDENT: Senator McKenzie, that is a debating point. Senator Wong, on the point of order?

Senator Wong: On the point of order, which is a point of order around direct relevance. In the first supplementary question there was no political preamble. It was a very clear question to this minister about what the threshold is. Mr President, I would ask you to remind this minister of the question.

The PRESIDENT: I was listening to the minister's answer and I believe she was being relevant, so I am not going to remind her of the question. You have reminded her of the question, Senator Wong. I do not believe there was anything in the minister's answer so far that was not relevant to the question—

Honourable senators interjecting—

The PRESIDENT: Order! Minister you have the call for 44 seconds.

Senator McKENZIE: The Australian Disaster Preparedness Framework defines a severe and catastrophic disaster as an event that:

... is beyond our current arrangements, thinking, experience and imagination (... has overwhelmed our technical, non-technical and social systems and resources, and has degraded or disabled governance structures and strategic and operational decision-making functions).

So, in developing the advice to consider a declaration, the agencies have provided information on the following criteria—listen up—'historical analysis and recurrence; the concurrence and compounding effects and scale of the events'—as I outlined in my first answer—'demographics; weather impacts'— (*Time expired*)

The PRESIDENT: Senator Watt, a second supplementary question?

Senator WATT (Queensland) (14:59): When asked why it took the Prime Minister so long to declare a national emergency following the recent floods, this minister replied that the Prime Minister must consult with state and territory premiers. But the relevant legislation clearly states the Prime Minister does not need to consult premiers if 'it is not practicable to do so'. Why did the minister mislead flood victims when trying to explain the Prime Minister's delay in declaring a national emergency?

Senator McKENZIE (Victoria—Minister for Emergency Management and National Recovery and Resilience, Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education and Leader of The Nationals in the Senate) (14:59): Given Senator Watt's issue around the threshold, I can answer both if I finish on the thresholds, because there are quite a lot of thresholds: the weather impacts; the economic impacts; the flood extent, as I said, going down the east coast; vulnerability of disadvantaged populations' information; essential services and impact duration.

The PRESIDENT: Minister—

Senator McKENZIE: Now, Mr President, going to Senator Watt's substantive—

Senator Watt interjecting—

The PRESIDENT: Minister! On a point of order, Senator Watt?

Senator Watt: A point of order, Mr President: I asked two questions asking for the thresholds, and now I've asked a different question, and I'm getting an answer to that question!

The PRESIDENT: Senator Watt—

Senator Watt: Do I need to restate this question?

The PRESIDENT: I don't believe you do. I think the minister is very well aware of the question. I heard the minister getting to the question. Minister, you have the call; 46 seconds remain.

Senator McKENZIE: I am seeking to be helpful. The fact of the matter is that the Prime Minister was not unable to consult with Premier Perrottet and Premier Palaszczuk, because he was actually able to consult with both of them. He doesn't need them both to agree to declare a national emergency, but he does need to have the conversation and then he can choose to declare it or not, unilaterally, or not. So the Prime Minister contacted both Premier Palaszczuk and Premier Perrottet to actually consult them—the first time we've ever actually used this particular emergency power.

The PRESIDENT: Minister, please resume your seat. Senator Cash.

Senator Cash: I ask that further questions be now placed on notice.

DOCUMENTS**Animal Welfare****Order for the Production of Documents**

Senator FARUQI (New South Wales) (15:01): Pursuant to standing order 1643, I ask the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture and Northern Australia, Senator McKenzie, for an explanation as to why an order for the production of documents agreed to on 9 February 2022, concerning animal welfare incident reports, has not been complied with?

Senator McKENZIE (Victoria—Minister for Emergency Management and National Recovery and Resilience, Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education and Leader of The Nationals in the Senate) (15:02): Thank you, Senator Faruqi. In the bedlam—

Honourable senators interjecting—

Senator McKENZIE: Could I have a few moments to respond to you appropriately? I am prepared to do that.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Faruqi, that is a response, so you can seek the call if you wish.

Senator FARUQI (New South Wales) (15:02): Madam President, are we going to give Senator McKenzie a few moments?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Well, she has responded, so really it's up to you.

Senator FARUQI: Okay; great. I move:

That the Senate take note of the minister's failure to provide an answer or an explanation.

Earlier this year, I moved an order for the production of documents regarding animal welfare incident reports held by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment. That motion was agreed to unanimously by this chamber on 9 February. The agreed motion allowed more than one week for the collection of the relevant documents, setting a deadline of 17 February. On that date, 17 February, Minister McKenzie wrote to the President stating that the agriculture minister had advised that, due to the large number of documents being sought, he was unable to comply with the time frame. Critically—

Senator McKenzie interjecting—

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I beg your pardon. Sorry, Senator McKenzie. A point of order?

Senator McKenzie: My apologies to the Senate and to Senator Faruqi. Consistent—

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator McKenzie—

Senator McKenzie: I would seek leave to respond to Senator Faruqi's request earlier.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Is leave granted?

Honourable senators interjecting—

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I don't think leave has been granted. Senator Faruqi, continue your point, and, Senator McKenzie, obviously you can respond then.

Senator FARUQI: As I was saying: on that date, 17 February, Minister McKenzie wrote to the President stating that the agriculture minister had advised that, due to the large number of documents being sought, he was unable to comply with the time frame. Critically, the letter also says that the minister intends to respond to the order at the earliest possible opportunity. It's now 29 March and almost six weeks have passed since this letter was provided, so where on earth are these documents? This is a really frustrating situation. The government has promised the chamber certain materials and promised to provide them at the earliest possible opportunity, and we are left hanging until this very last sitting week to try and get even an explanation for why they have not been tabled.

We know that this government will avoid transparency and accountability at every turn. It is absolutely critical that these documents are tabled and that this vital information about animal welfare is presented to the chamber. My motion in February followed an investigation, published in the *Age* newspaper, into horrific animal cruelty in export abattoirs. Documents obtained by Richard Baker of the *Age* related to incident reports covering just two months in 2019. The *Age* reported that, according to these reports, some cattle and sheep arriving at Victorian export abattoirs were unable to bear their own weight and a small number were so debilitated that they died during transportation or had to be put down on arrival. This is simply disgusting, cruel stuff, and there must be a light shone on the extent to which these sorts of incidents are taking place in Australian abattoirs. That's why I moved the motion for this order, and I was very pleased to have it receive the unanimous support of the Senate.

When I asked about welfare in our export abattoirs during Senate estimates on 15 February, following this order having been made the week before, the First Assistant Secretary of the Exports and Veterinary Services Division, Ms Nicola Hinder, stated:

I'm happy to be able to provide you with details for the number of animal welfare incident reports that were lodged in 2020 and 2021 and talk about those in the construct of what they are on a proportionate basis.

Those details came through just a few days ago. The department reports that, across export establishments with an on-plant vet, there was an average of 316 incident reports raised annually across 2020 and 2021—presumably, over 600 reports. So where are these reports? The government clearly has them to hand. The department has reviewed them. Either the government wants to release the details of these reports and wants to show its commitment to transparency and accountability or it doesn't. What is it about these documents that you're trying to hide? Could it be that there are incidents detailed in these documents that reveal more horrifying incidents of animal cruelty in our abattoirs? It seems likely, but we won't actually know until they are tabled.

Sadly, this is part and parcel of this government's hostility to any form of transparency in animal welfare, no matter what animal or industry is involved. We know what's happening in live export ships. We know that, in 2019, this parliament passed draconian ag-gag, antiprotest laws that targeted activists who have bravely sought to uncover evidence of vicious animal cruelty at agriculture facilities and on farms. Those laws were designed to protect big agribusinesses from scrutiny and transparency. They were an absolute shame. More recently, we have seen the removal of independent observers from the live export ships. There hasn't been an observer on a ship since June 2020. The government blames COVID, but we know that animal welfare is never a priority for them. In fact, their mates in the live export industry have been pushing for the program to be rolled back.

We know, Minister, that you lot really don't care about animals. You don't see them as sentient beings; you see them just as commodities from which to make a profit. That's why the Greens have been pushing for some time now for an independent office of animal welfare to take it out of agriculture, where there is a massive conflict of interest in that that department supposedly have a remit to protect animals and look after their welfare but then are also making megabucks off them. We know what wins out every time: making profit at the expense of animals wins out every single time.

Now we have this big, inexplicable, shameful delay in the tabling of these critical documents relating to animal welfare in abattoirs, so I do call on the government to urgently provide the documents for the sake of transparency, for the sake of respecting the order of the Senate and, above all, for the sake of the poor animals who have suffered and whose suffering must not be kept a secret.

Senator McKENZIE (Victoria—Minister for Emergency Management and National Recovery and Resilience, Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education and Leader of The Nationals in the Senate) (15:09): Again, I apologise to Senator Faruqi and to the Senate. My advice is that, consistent with the response that was tabled on 17 February 2022, documents within the scope of the order are still being assessed by the Minister for Agriculture and Northern Australia.

Question agreed to.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE: TAKE NOTE OF ANSWERS

New South Wales: Floods

Australian Floods

Senator WATT (Queensland) (15:10): I move:

That the Senate take note of the answers given by the Minister for Emergency Management and National Recovery and Resilience and Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education (Senator McKenzie) and the Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations (Senator Cash) to questions without notice asked by Senators Sheldon, McAllister and Watt today.

I begin by acknowledging that the people of northern New South Wales and South-East Queensland again today face a very dire flooding situation. I think all of us are shaking our heads at the fact that, particularly in northern New South Wales, the very same communities that were badly affected by floods only a month ago are facing evacuation orders again because of the flooding that is occurring there right now. We have seen over the last few weeks some extremely unusual weather systems and highly unusual levels of rain, and it is tragic that people are being put through this situation yet again when they are still in the process of cleaning up from the last floods, let alone beginning the job of rebuilding. I'm sure I speak for everyone here today when I pass on our very best wishes and solidarity, particularly to the people of northern New South Wales but also to the people of South-East Queensland, as these floods progress. We do hope that people remain safe and listen to all of the warnings that are issued by authorities.

Today in question time we asked a series of questions to Ministers Cash and McKenzie about the way the government handled last month's floods. As I look back on it, it's very sad that throughout those floods and in the weeks afterwards we saw all the worst qualities of the Morrison government and this Prime Minister on display. We saw people being abandoned in their hour of need by their federal government. The government and the Prime Minister were completely missing in action as the flood waters rose, as they receded and as the clean-up began. And, true to form, we saw the politicisation of grant payments by a government during a natural disaster. We've become used to this government rorting every possible funding program it can get its hands on, whether it be car parks or sports rorts—every kind of rort under the sun—but to see a government politicise the allocation of grant funding in a natural disaster by basing it on colour coded spreadsheets is a new low even for this government.

I know we've heard members of the government object to Labor describing this as politicisation. I can hear Senator McDonald doing it now. Well, if Senator McDonald and her colleagues don't like listening to Labor politicians describe this government's behaviour as politicisation, perhaps they'd care to listen to some of the people from their own side of politics, such as New South Wales upper house member Catherine Cusack, who announced that after a distinguished career in the New South Wales parliament she was going to resign because of what she called the Prime Minister's 'unethical approach' to distributing flood funding. What she was referring to was the fact that the communities in the Nationals-held electorate of Page—which did suffer extremely bad flood damage—were receiving higher levels of disaster assistance than the communities who were equally affected a little bit further up the road in the Labor-held electorate of Richmond. A New South Wales Liberal MP described the Prime Minister's approach as unethical, and that was backed in by the National Party state member for the seat of Tweed, Mr Geoff Provest, who labelled the Prime Minister's behaviour 'disgusting' and 'deplorable'. He went on to say that he 'would struggle to vote for' the Prime Minister.

Park to one side whatever anyone from Labor might be saying about the way this government has handled these floods. Let's just listen to some of the local members, who are actually from the coalition. More importantly, let's listen to people who are on the ground. I can tell you, having been in Lismore through the floods—and I know Senator McDonald didn't think I should be there—and in Queensland floods for over a week, that people in Lismore did feel abandoned. The question that I was asked most often by people who were suffering from the floods in Lismore was simple. It was: 'Where is the government?' During the floods, in the immediate aftermath of the floods and in the clean-up from the floods, there has barely been a member of this government or an official of this government present lending a hand to people who had suffered terrible damage or had lost loved ones. They were exhausted, yet they were left there on their own to clean up by this government. Of course, we've seen this before.

Senator McCarthy interjecting—

Senator WATT: It is a disgrace, Senator McCarthy. We've seen this before. This is a Prime Minister who went missing in action after the bushfires, who didn't bother ordering vaccines or rapid antigen tests and who is only discovering that cost of living is a problem in the run-up to an election. *(Time expired)*

Senator McDONALD (Queensland) (15:15): Senator Watt will be amazed to hear me in agreement with him on the terrible catastrophe that has been the flooding in southern Queensland and northern New South Wales. You will find no argument from anybody in this place about what has happened, particularly in Lismore, which has been described as being as if a tsunami had been through there. There are townships where there is still no power and where businesses are boarded up because it will not be possible to repair them for months. Who knows how long that process will take as business owners decide what situation they're in and what position they will take? There are still thousands of people displaced from their homes. As the rain falls now, what a worrying situation that is for them. However, to say that the government has been absent and to try and link this to other political agendas is devastating. On top of the natural disaster, to then have their issues politicised in this way is incredibly unfortunate. I have seen so many of our ministers and other government members show their support, both physically and in any other way that they can.

I applaud Senator Watt's decision to go to Lismore, because that is the sort of help that Australians give to each other and the community. As the floodwaters rose, there was no way for government officials, the NBN or anybody else to enter that region, because the roads were cut and the weather was so heavy. LifeFlight from Queensland had the only helicopter with suitable infrared detection to be able to detect people in roof spaces and pluck people off roofs. This is the sort of equipment that was required in that time, and my sincere thanks go to the members of LifeFlight who had to oversee that particular mission. Members of the community—people who had jet-skis and kayaks or other boats—turned to help their neighbours, as Australians do in the immediate aftermath or during a disaster. I think we should be acknowledging that community help and what happened in the days afterwards.

I know government services who spent days in motels just trying to be able to get physical access to some of these regions. The Army, who were on the ground, didn't have the benefit of some of the organisation they might have had from, say, the Brisbane City Council, which was able to mobilise hundreds of workers to get out, take

photos and document the places where the Army needed to be. Remember that in Lismore the council workers had lost their homes. There was not a connection of resources and support as there was in Brisbane, where a portion of the town had been flooded. All of Lismore had been flooded, and to say that the government's response was not adequate absolutely does not understand that. The Prime Minister, in the weeks following, had COVID. The opposition leader had gone to Western Australia. But the community kept going and government services poured in. As part of that flood response and recovery, there has been hundreds of millions of dollars in support, including financial support and support from the Army. Nearly a billion dollars in services has gone into that region in clean-ups and pick-ups.

This is a one-in-500-year disaster. The local member, Kevin Hogan, the member for Page, has lived through the trauma of his family and friends as well as the people who live in his community being without a home and without a business, yet those on the other side seek to make this a political issue rather than do what Australians do best: pull together, support those people and drive additional resources as they are identified. We should be thinking more about the people who are in such desperate circumstances and how we can assist, rather than seeking to criticise.

Senator McALLISTER (New South Wales) (15:20): The people of northern New South Wales and South-East Queensland have been devastated by extreme flooding and rainfall over recent months, and this disaster is continuing. As we meet here today, people in Coraki, Lismore, Tumbulgum, Billinudgel, Mullumbimby, Kyogle, Murwillumbah and Condong are all subject to evacuation orders and warnings. These floods have caused the destruction of property and, tragically, the loss of life. Tens of thousands of people have been forced to flee their homes, and the damage caused to these communities is actually difficult to adequately describe. These communities cannot be left on their own.

I do know these communities well. I was born in Murwillumbah, in the hospital, and I was born there in a flood. Yes, flooding is a fact of life for people in the Northern Rivers—there's something in the name that gives you a clue there might be a bit of water about—but these natural disasters are becoming more severe, and we should be better prepared for them. This is not what the Morrison government has delivered.

The floods that struck the region last month had a very personal impact. First, I was stranded there with my mum and dad in the midst of that emergency, although fortunately in a safe location. Sadly, so many others in my communities were not so lucky. A week later I returned to assist with the clean-up, and I met with locals. Many people have commented on this, but it was evident in Lismore that the community spirit was overwhelming. Volunteers had set up community centres. They were incredibly well organised. Young people were fronting up with brooms, gloves and mops. People were preparing food. Emergency services and frontline workers were working around the clock. I can't thank all those people enough for everything that they were doing then and everything that they continue to do.

But on that visit there were plenty of tears. The damage is enormous. I think it's difficult to imagine what it means to lose your home and lose your place of work. There is nowhere to go. This community is resilient, it is caring, but it is a community that has been through a lot. People have lost everything. They should not have to beg for support, and that support should not depend on whether they are in a National Party seat or a Labor Party seat. Locals are hurting. Our candidate in Page is a man called Patrick Deegan, and he said this:

I've seen the pain and desperation in people's eyes. I've heard the stories of loss, shock and helplessness. The people of the Northern Rivers need to know that the Government has their back, that there is a plan, that they are not on their own.

I hear people in this chamber say we shouldn't be discussing it in these terms; that it's not proper to point out where government has let people down. But when an announcement is made for support for some communities, in a National Party electorate, but not for other communities then we actually have a problem with the way that support is being administered. The truth is that on the ground people are saying they feel abandoned. Flood victims across Queensland and New South Wales say this. They feel that they've been left to fend for themselves in the immediate response to the flood and now in the recovery as well. It was made worse by the fact that when the Prime Minister finally travelled to Lismore it was for a photo opportunity and not to meet with the flood victims, who wanted to know why his government had abandoned them at a time of desperate need.

My friend, Janelle Saffin, the local member, lost her home. She was forced to swim for her life through Lismore's floods, and she has continued to work tirelessly for her community. She has continued to show up every single day. This is Janelle Saffin: this is her putting her community first. And there are so many more like Janelle who have been doing what they can to support their communities. This is what leadership looks like: it means taking responsibility when things are tough. These communities are in desperate need of government support, and the Prime Minister could learn a lot from representatives like Janelle.

Senator HENDERSON (Victoria) (15:25): I would like to start my contribution by expressing my deep concern and sympathy to all those communities in northern New South Wales and South-East Queensland who have suffered

and who are continuing to suffer from the disastrous floods. Lives have been lost, and I express my sincere condolences to the families and friends of those who have tragically died.

I also put out my hand of support to Senator McAllister and her family, who are among many families from the Northern Rivers who are directly impacted and who are suffering from these floods. I have at the moment a very good friend who is living with me because she was caught in the floods. She didn't lose her house, but everything else has basically been wiped out. She lived in a very small community called Crabbes Creek, north-west of Byron Bay. When she sent me the video of the way that Crabbes Creek had erupted into an horrendous flood it was absolutely frightening. So, while I am a senator for Victoria and I haven't yet been up to the Northern Rivers and South-East Queensland, I have seen and experienced firsthand the trauma that this has and is continuing to cause.

I do want to reflect on Senator McAllister's words when she said that some people would say that it's not proper for us to make these political points in relation to flood disaster relief. I would simply say, 'Yes, Senator McAllister, it is not proper.' That's because, first of all, in the distribution of some \$1.33 billion which Services Australia has paid out in Australian government disaster recovery payments and disaster recovery allowance to over 1.4 million people in urgent need in Queensland and New South Wales, I want to put on the record very strongly that there's no differentiation as to where someone lives—whether they live in a National Party seat or whether they live in a Labor Party seat. Every single person who has suffered and who meets the criteria is entitled to that payment.

I really reflect on the experience that I had when I was supporting my local constituents in Wye River and Separation Creek after those communities were wiped out by bushfire in 2015. Despite the terrible trauma they suffered—116 homes were lost; miraculously, no-one died—and while I have been a continuing critic of the Victorian government, led by our Premier, Daniel Andrews, I did not see the politicisation of that natural disaster that I see now from those opposite. I say to Labor: it is so regrettable that you have stooped to such a low, to so politicise a natural disaster. I would say, 'Please: yes, there are people who are hurting; yes, there are people who are angry but, for goodness sake, let us work together to support Australians in their hour of need.' Senator McAllister is quoting the Labor candidate, which is clearly all about politics, at a time when all of us need to be focused on those residents who are living in these areas and thinking: 'Where am I going to live? How am I going to earn a living? Where's my next night's accommodation?'

We understand how absolutely devastating this is, but Australians don't need to be confronted with this low-level politicisation of a natural disaster like we have never seen before. I have lived through, as we all have, many natural disasters and seen them firsthand, whether it's Ash Wednesday, Black Saturday, Black Summer or the Wye River bushfires. I just say to Labor senators opposite and to the Labor Party: please, you can do better than this.

To characterise the Prime Minister's visit as a photo opportunity is just so revoltingly offensive. He met with many families behind closed doors. I say to Labor: please, at this time, let us work together to support those who need our help and just keep the politics out of this.

Senator CHISHOLM (Queensland) (15:30): My thoughts are also with those people impacted by floods at the moment, particularly those who are facing it for the second time in a short period. Through my work as a senator for Queensland, I visited Gympie a couple of weeks ago which had suffered its second flood this year. The flood that they suffered just recently was actually their worst flood since 1890 in a town that unfortunately does flood regularly. I got a sense of how traumatic that experience is for those people who have gone through it a second time in such a short period from my visit to Gympie. So, I hope those communities are getting the support that they need.

I want to respond to this claim of politicisation, because I think it is important. When you've got nothing else to say and when your response is incompetent, all you have to rely on is claims of politicisation. That's actually what they've come into this chamber and tried to defend today. But it's because of their lack of response, and the tragedy for the Australian people with this government is they actually are incapable of learning a lesson. And it wasn't us saying it; it was actually the National Party member for Tweed. It was actually a Liberal member of the upper house. So they're the politicians, not us, and all Senator McAllister, Senator Watt and the excellent member for Richmond are doing is their job of voicing the concerns of local residents. That's actually what they were doing, and if it wasn't for the work that they were doing, adding a voice to those people who were impacted, the government response would have been more lacking than what it was. That's how disgraceful their efforts have been.

The Liberal upper house member Ms Cusack called it unethical. The member for Tweed Geoff Provest said:
... the federal government has really messed this up ...

... ..

This is like a remake of the bushfires some two years ago.

So exactly the point that I am making was made by the National Party member for Tweed who said that this government haven't learnt their lesson from more than two years ago when it comes to bushfires. And, unfortunately, Australians are having to put up with more of these natural disasters. We've seen it in Queensland. We've seen it in

other parts of the country as well. The problem with this government is that they're not actually learning any lessons. They are not actually getting better in their response, and then when they do respond it's actually more political. As we've seen today, people in Gympie are getting \$1,000 compared to people in Lismore who are getting \$3,000 as part of the response. There are people living in tents in Gympie, as they are in other parts, months after this has happened, and the government are doing nothing for those people as well.

So, it is unfortunate that we've got to speak out on these people's behalf because the government don't listen. They're incompetent. They don't actually respond and fix these problems, and all too often their response is political. They get out the spreadsheet. They decide where they give additional support, because that's how this government operates. That's how they've always operated and, unfortunately, the only way things are going to improve is if this government are voted out. That's the only way we're actually going to see some change, and an example of why they don't deserve to be re-elected is their incompetent response to the floods. It also flows on from two years after their incompetent response to bushfires. It is evident for the Australian people now that when it comes to disasters the Prime Minister doesn't hold a hose, he doesn't respond and the government have learnt no lessons on how to respond to that in government.

We also know that when it comes to the crisis of ordering vaccines the government, again, were too slow to act, despite saying we would be at the front of the queue. Over summer and in recent months when the country so desperately needed rapid antigen testing, again, the government was missing in action. It is actually an incompetent government. There are so many ways that that is highlighted, and all they can do is try and claim politicisation of issues. That's because they can't actually defend themselves. They are incompetent. The only way this will be improved—because they have shown, over almost 10 years now, that they don't learn any lessons—is if we vote them out. That is the only option left to the Australian people. (*Time expired*)

Question agreed to.

Great Barrier Reef

Senator WHISH-WILSON (Tasmania) (15:35): I move:

That the Senate take note of the answer given by the Minister for Superannuation, Financial Services and the Digital Economy (Senator Hume) to a question I asked today on the bleaching of the Great Barrier Reef.

I've been here for nearly 10 years. I've consistently asked questions about the changes we have seen in our oceans as the Greens' ocean portfolio holder. I have chaired multiple Senate inquiries in the Environment and Communications References Committee into warming oceans, into the grant to the Great Barrier Reef Foundation. I've consistently asked questions in estimates not just to changes we're seeing in the Great Barrier Reef but to changes off my coastline in Tasmania—indeed, all around the country. Ten years ago I wouldn't have believed it if you'd sat me down and said, 'Senator, you're going to witness these changes.' I wouldn't have believed you, even as someone who cared deeply about the oceans and someone who followed climate change so closely.

I've asked questions at Senate question time for 10 years now. I have been laughed at when I have raised the issue that our oceans are dying. I was told I need to get a hanky by the head of government business when I raised the very first results of the 2016 mass coral bleaching on the Great Barrier Reef. I tell you, Deputy President, that it is hard today not to be filled with rage and despair at the response that I got from this minister to the fourth mass coral bleaching on the greatest natural wonder of this planet in the last six years. This bleaching is in a La Nina year. God help us if the reef is bleaching in a La Nina year.

We know, from the IPCC science, that on a business as usual scenario—our current trajectory—we are witnessing the terminal decline not just of the Great Barrier Reef but of many of our ocean ecosystems. This is a fact. The IPCC says that even on a two-degree warming scenario, which is the current Kyoto protocol, we are still going to see a 99 per cent decline in the coral cover in the Great Barrier Reef. That's on a two per cent scenario. We have already seen radical changes on one degree of warming—one degree above pre-industrial levels—so imagine a doubling of that, and that's somehow a good result?

All I want from this government is truth—no more denial. I would like to see them come out and say that climate change is the biggest threat to the Great Barrier Reef and we know that climate change is warming our oceans, and what is causing that is predominantly the burning of fossil fuels. Why aren't we talking about this in here all day, every day? Why isn't it on the news? Why has it barely been reported? Why are we so distracted with other things when our planet is changing before our eyes and we can act? We'll only act if people understand what's at stake. It's the only thing. They will only vote for change if they know how serious this is. It might be a simple question: why aren't we talking about this every day? Why isn't it on the news every night? Why do Labor and the Liberals not talk about this issue? Well, the answer must be simple too. It is because they are complicit in the changes we are seeing on the Great Barrier Reef and in this ocean.

We know we need to cut emissions by 2030 by 75 per cent to have any chance of even meeting 1.5 degree of warming. There will be 50 per cent more heat stored in the ocean than we already have, and that's with a 75 per cent emissions reduction by 2030. But what do we get? We get laughable targets from the two major parties, which are worried about their own political fortunes. They're worried about annoying the hell out of their fossil fuel donors.

It is not good enough, and I urge Australians to vote for the Barrier Reef, to vote for our oceans. Send the strongest possible message this federal election that whoever forms government needs to act. The strongest possible message you can send is to vote green.

Question agreed to.

NOTICES

Presentation

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS (New South Wales) (15:41): On behalf of the Senate Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Delegated Legislation, I give notice of my intention, at the giving of notices on the next day of sitting, to withdraw business of the Senate notices of motion Nos 1 and 5 for 13 sitting days after today, proposing the disallowance of the Australian Citizenship (special residence requirement) Instrument 2021 and the Therapeutic Goods (Standard for Human Cell and Tissue Products—Donor Screening Requirements) Order 2021.

Presentation

Senator Whish-Wilson to move on the next day of sitting:

That—

(1) There be laid on the table by the Minister representing the Minister for the Environment, by no later than 4 April 2022, the following documents:

(a) the itinerary for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the International Union for Conservation of Nature reactive monitoring mission delegation ('the delegation') for their scheduled visit to assess the Great Barrier Reef between 20 March 2022 and their last day in Australia;

(b) any documentation provided by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment to the delegation in relation to the reactive monitoring mission;

(c) details for attendees at any meetings with the delegation; and

(d) any documentation provided from the delegation to the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment in relation to the reactive monitoring mission.

(2) If the Senate is not sitting when the documents are ready for presentation, the documents are to be presented to the President under standing order 166.

Senator Whish-Wilson to move on the next day of sitting:

That—

(1) There be laid on the table by the Minister representing the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development, by no later than 30 April 2022, the following documents:

(a) the application made by West Tamar Council in respect of the Community Development Grant programme award GA154256 ('Gravelly Beach Structure Plan');

(b) the assessments of the grant applications for GA154256, including any independent viability assessment;

(c) the grant agreement in respect of grant award GA154256;

(d) the payment schedule for the grant award GA154256;

(e) any progress reports, ad-hoc reports and completion report submitted in respect of grant award GA154256;

(f) any financial declaration and audited financial acquittal report submitted in respect of grant award GA154256;

(g) any grant agreement variation submitted in respect of grant award GA154256;

(h) any record of compliance visits in respect of grant award GA154256; and

(i) the evaluation/s completed in respect of grant award GA154256.

(2) If the Senate is not sitting when the documents are ready for presentation, the documents are to be presented to the President under standing order 166.

Senator Cash to move on the next day of sitting:

That the following bill be introduced: A Bill for an Act to amend the law in relation to privacy, and for related purposes. *Privacy Legislation Amendment (Enhancing Online Privacy and Other Measures) Bill 2022.*

Senator McKenzie to move on the next day of sitting:

That the following bill be introduced: A Bill for an Act to amend the *Road Vehicle Standards (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Act 2018*, and for related purposes. ***Road Vehicle Standards (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Amendment Bill 2022***.

Senator Bilyk to move on the next day of sitting:

That the Senate—

- (a) expresses its support for Ukraine's sovereignty, national integrity and national security, and its right to conduct its affairs as an independent, democratic, sovereign nation without foreign interference;
- (b) condemns Russia's unjustified and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine and calls on Russia to immediately halt the invasion, withdraw its troops and military assets from Ukraine and desist from further hostility against Ukraine;
- (c) calls on the Australian Government to:
 - (i) continue its efforts to join with other nations in applying diplomatic and economic pressure on Russia, including economic sanctions, until Russia halts its invasion and occupation of Ukrainian territory, and
 - (ii) continue providing lethal and non-lethal aid to Ukraine;
- (d) calls on all nations to join in the global effort to support Ukraine and to pressure Russia to immediately withdraw its military from Ukraine;
- (e) acknowledges the courage and resilience of the people of Ukraine in the face of Russia's unprovoked hostility;
- (f) stands in solidarity with the people of Ukraine and the Ukrainian diaspora in Australia; and
- (g) acknowledges the bravery of those Russian citizens who have, under the threat of arrest and detention, publicly opposed the invasion of Ukraine.

Senator Bilyk to move on the next day of sitting:

That the Senate—

- (a) expresses its support for the initiation of legal proceedings against the Russian Federation in the International Civil Aviation Organization, over the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17;
- (b) recognises that these proceedings are an important step toward:
 - (i) assuring air travellers throughout the world that they can travel safely on international flights, and
 - (ii) exploring all possible avenues to deliver justice and accountability for the 298 passengers and crew, including 38 Australians, who were murdered in this attack, and their families;
- (c) expresses its deepest sympathy to the victims of this tragedy, including the families and loved ones of those who were murdered;
- (d) reiterates its call, expressed in the Senate's resolution of 24 July 2019, for:
 - (i) Russia to do everything in its power to apprehend the four men charged with this crime and allow them to stand trial in the Netherlands; and
 - (ii) authorities in Australia, Ukraine, Malaysia, Belgium and the Netherlands to continue their efforts to bring those responsible for this horrendous crime to justice.

Senator Thorpe to move 15 sitting days after today:

That the Industry Research and Development (Golden Beach Gas Storage Acceleration Program) Instrument 2022, made under the *Industry Research and Development Act 1986*, be disallowed.

Senator Hanson-Young to move on the next day of sitting:

That—

- (a) the Senate notes:
 - (i) the repeated refusal, on multiple occasions, of the Minister for Industry, Energy and Emissions Reduction, the Honourable Angus Taylor to provide information and documents requested by the Environment and Communications References Committee in a written question on notice, dated 31 August 2021, 22 October 2021 and 8 March 2022, as part of its inquiry into gas production in the Beetaloo Basin,
 - (ii) the repeated refusal, on multiple occasions, of the Minister for Resources and Water, the Honourable Keith Pitt, to provide documents requested by the Environment and Communications References Committee in a written question on notice, dated 31 August 2021, 22 October 2021 and 8 March 2022, as part of its inquiry into gas production in the Beetaloo Basin,
 - (iii) the failure of the Ministers to comply with the order of the Senate of 1 December 2021 requiring the unredacted documents to be provided, and
 - (iv) that the Ministers have not made a proper claim of public interest immunity in relation to the unredacted version of the documents;
- (b) the Senate is of the opinion that the provision of identical copies of redacted documents publicly released under Freedom of Information in response to previous orders does not constitute compliance with the orders of the committee or the Senate;

(c) there be laid on the table and provided to the committee by the Minister representing the Minister for Industry, Energy and Emissions Reduction, by no later than 1 April 2022, the following documents:

(i) unredacted document 4 of FOI Disclosure Log 21/013/68011M relating to email correspondence, dated 14 January 2021, between Empire Energy and the office of the Minister for Industry, Energy and Emissions Reduction, and

(ii) unredacted document 5 of FOI Disclosure Log 21/013/68011M relating to email correspondence, dated 25 February 2021, between Empire Energy and the office of the Minister for Industry, Energy and Emissions Reduction;

(d) there be laid on the table and provided to the committee by the Minister representing the Minister for Resources and Water, by no later than 1 April 2022, unredacted FOI Disclosure Document 68003 relating to correspondence between Empire Energy and the office of the Minister for Resources and Water;

(e) the names and contact details of private individuals may be redacted from the ordered documents;

(f) if the Senate is not sitting when the documents are ready for presentation, the documents are to be presented to the President under standing order 166; and

(g) if the Ministers continue to obstruct the committee and the Senate through their failure to comply with this order, the Senate will consider pursuing this matter through procedural remedies or as a possible contempt in the 47th Parliament.

BUSINESS

Leave of Absence

Senator DEAN SMITH (Western Australia—Government Whip in the Senate) (15:42): by leave—I move:

That leave of absence be granted to:

(a) Senators Canavan and Duniam, from 28 to 30 March 2022, for COVID-19 medical and quarantine reasons;

(b) Senator Molan, for today, for personal reasons; and

(c) Senators Antic and Rennick, for 28 March 2022, for personal reasons.

Question agreed to.

Leave of Absence

Senator URQUHART (Tasmania—Opposition Whip in the Senate) (15:42): by leave—I move:

That leave of absence be granted to the following senators: Senators Sterle, Polley and Carr for 29 and 30 March for personal reasons; and Senator Green from 28 March to 18 August for personal reasons.

Question agreed to.

Leave of Absence

Senator McKIM (Tasmania—Deputy Leader of the Australian Greens in the Senate and Australian Greens Whip) (15:43): by leave—I move:

That leave of absence be granted to Senator Waters for 28 to 30 March for COVID-19 related reasons.

Question agreed to.

NOTICES

Withdrawal

Senator WHISH-WILSON (Tasmania) (15:43): by leave—I withdraw motions under my name and the name of Senator Rice with reference to the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee and Mr Julian Assange.

Postponement

The Clerk: Postponement notifications have been lodged in respect of the following:

General business notice of motion no. 1317 standing in the name of Senator Watt for today, proposing an order for the production of documents by the Minister representing the Assistant Treasurer, postponed till 30 March 2022.

General business notice of motion no. 1319 standing in the name of the Leader of the Australian Greens in the Senate (Senator Waters) for today, proposing the introduction of the Electoral Legislation Amendment (Fairer Contracts and Grants) Bill 2022, postponed till 9 May 2022.

COMMITTEES

Reporting Date

The Clerk: Committees have lodged extension notifications in respect of the following:

Environment and Communications Legislation Committee—

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Climate Trigger) Bill 2020—from 16 February to 16 May 2022.

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Save the Koala) Bill 2021—from 16 February to 16 May 2022.

Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee—Australia's engagement in Afghanistan—from 16 March to 5 April 2022.

Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee—Constitution Alteration (Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Press) 2019—from 31 March to 30 June 2022.

Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee—Australia's administrative review system—from 31 March to 30 June 2022.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee—Fisheries quota system—from 17 March to 20 October 2022.

The PRESIDENT (15:44): I remind senators that the question may be put on any proposal at the request of any senator. There being none, we will move on.

CONDOLENCES

Beahan, Hon. Michael Eamon, AM

Senator CASH (Western Australia—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate) (15:44): by leave—On behalf of Senator Birmingham, I move:

That the Senate expresses its regret at the death on 30 January 2022 of the Hon. Michael Eamon Beahan AM, former President of the Senate and former senator for Western Australia; places on record its gratitude for his service to the parliament and the nation; and tenders its sympathy to his family in their bereavement.

We pause today to commemorate the life of the Hon. Michael Beahan AM, former President of the Senate and senator for Western Australia. Michael was a proud Western Australian, an intelligent and accomplished parliamentarian and a true Labor statesman committed to the finest traditions of the Senate and to public service.

Michael Eamon Beahan was born in London in 1937 to his father, Francis, and mother, Grace. He won a scholarship to the Salesian College in Battersea, where he completed his schooling and worked briefly as an insurance clerk before migrating with his family to Australia at the age of 17. That was in 1954. Michael soon commenced work as a process worker at the Australian Electrical Company in Perth. After completing an apprenticeship as an electrical fitter, Michael went on to work as an electrician for some 10 years, including for his own small business as a contractor. During this time Michael also undertook three months of compulsory military service, serving with the 13th Field Squadron of the Royal Australian Engineers.

It was not long before Michael returned to further his education, undertaking study at the Leederville Technical College and subsequently at the Claremont Teachers College and the University of Western Australia. He obtained a Bachelor of Arts, a Bachelor of Education and a Diploma of Education. His education served him well and he went on to teach and lecture across economics, psychology and education, but not before marrying Jenny Aitken, with whom he had two children.

Michael became active in the teachers union and joined the ALP in 1968, becoming president of the Bunbury branch of the party from 1969 to 1972. A move to Melbourne in 1974 saw Michael engaged as part of a three-person team to set up the Trade Union Training Authority. Michael served as the authority's WA director, which in turn would provide him with exposure to the Labor Party at a national level during his six years at the helm. Michael won the ballot for the position of WA State Secretary of the ALP, becoming a member of the national executive of the party from 1981 until 1992. He also became a national vice-president of the party from 1986 to 1989, as well as serving as a regular national conference delegate for Western Australia throughout the 1980s and the 1990s. Those familiar with this period of history in Western Australia would recognise that Michael Beahan played a pivotal role in the 1986 state election as well as the federal Labor election campaigns of 1983, 1984 and 1987, when of course Michael himself entered the Senate to serve under Prime Ministers Bob Hawke and Paul Keating.

Upon his election to the parliament, Michael brought with him 50 years of lived experience, traversing trade, education, civic service and party leadership. This was all complemented of course by the perspective of having been a first-generation immigrant to this great nation, Michael having spent the first 17 years of his life in England before embarking, like so many postwar migrants of his generation, in search of a better life in Australia. It was perhaps this broad and extensive life experience that helped Michael perfect his craft in this place. He brought enthusiasm with him to the Senate, undertaking to advance the ideals for which he proudly stood.

In the Senate, it was clear that Michael did not wish to be a representative who spoke simply to fill the silence, but he opted to speak if his words added to the debate. As a backbench senator, Michael delivered powerful contributions on industrial relations as well as speaking on education issues, the economy and electoral matters. On the latter, Michael served diligently on the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters from 1987 to 1994. On

1 February 1994, Michael was elected unopposed as President of the Senate, a position he would hold until his departure from the parliament in 1996.

During his time in the Senate, Michael thought deeply not only upon the political ephemera of the day but also upon the enduring role of the institution of the Senate in Australia's democracy. In his final address to this chamber, Michael reflected on how his views of the importance and purpose of this place had transformed throughout his parliamentary career. As Michael described it, he had initially held a fairly sceptical and dismissive view of this place when he was first elected in 1987, describing himself as 'no enthusiastic supporter' of the very chamber over which he would eventually preside as President. This scepticism, however, stands in some contrast to the reflections that Michael delivered in his valedictory remarks nine years later, in which he said:

I do have a greater respect for it as an increasingly effective and necessary check on the power of the executive—any executive. I believe the Senate is developing and refining its role as a house of review and that, while petty politics frequently distract it from an effective use of its powers, much useful work is done in scrutinising and critically appraising the decisions and activities of government.

It is a rare but worthwhile exercise for senators to routinely challenge ourselves on what the Senate means to each of us.

During his time as President, Michael also led a number of delegations overseas and effectually used the position to provide Australian officials with access to high levels of government overseas. Michael was a deep-thinking man who polished his craft as a parliamentarian and deftly performed his duties as President to raise the decorum of this place and the standing of Australian governments on the world stage.

Following his departure from the Senate in 1996, Michael married Margaret—quite literally the day after he left the Senate. He went on to be elected as director of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, representing the interests of independent community pharmacists to government and other community and private organisations. In this role, Michael advocated for the expansion of pharmacy businesses to encompass the provision of health advice and health related services. He continued to serve his community as a member of the board of a local community centre, as chairman of a research and advocacy group, and as chairman of an advisory committee managed by Monash University.

In 2011, Michael was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for his service to the Parliament of Australia, particularly as a senator for Western Australia, and for his service to the promotion of international bipartisan political debate, to the pharmacy profession and to the community. We can all draw strength and encouragement from Michael's diverse and significant contributions to public life and his posture towards the challenges of our time. On behalf of the government and the Australian Senate, I extend our sincerest condolences to Michael's family.

Senator KENEALLY (New South Wales—Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate) (15:54): I rise on behalf of the opposition to express our condolences following the passing, at age 85, of a Labor comrade, the Hon. Michael Eamon Beahan AM, former President of the Senate.

As I begin, I wish to convey the opposition's condolences to his family and friends, and I'd also like to acknowledge the Acting Leader of the Government in the Senate, Senator Cash, for her contributions today. I thank the Beahan family; the Hon. Gary Gray AO, Australian Ambassador to Ireland and personal friend of Michael; and members of the Western Australian branch of the Australian Labor Party, particularly John Cowdell and Marcelle Anderson, for their thoughtful consideration, advice and anecdotes about former Senator Beahan.

Eleven years ago, the Australian people recognised the contribution of Michael Beahan by admitting him as a Member of the Order of Australia, 'for service to the Parliament of Australia, particularly as a senator for Western Australia, to the promotion of international bipartisan political debate, to the pharmacy profession and to the community'. At his funeral in Melbourne on Tuesday 7 February 2022, former Senator Beahan was described as a genuinely good and kind man. For a kid who played and swam at Colliemore Harbour and attended Loreto Abbey school at Dalkey, he would rise to great heights. His career was varied. He was an electrician, a teacher, a union leader and a secretary of the Australian Labor Party in the state of Western Australia. In 1987, he became a senator for that state. That culminated in his role as President of this chamber, until he left politics in 1996. Former Senator Beahan was a true Labor man and a great Irish Western Australian. Through all of this, he remained good, gentle and kind.

Michael Beahan was born in London in 1937, and his early years were not easy. The impact of the Great Depression was still being felt; then the Second World War came, with constant bombings, including of his family home. As a consequence, the family decided to move to Ireland. Former Senator Beahan often spoke of his teenage years as a time of joy. He immersed himself in Irish culture and became a true lover of his father's native country, especially of Yeats's poetry and Joyce's prose. In his adult life, he returned to Ireland often.

When the Beahan family decided to migrate from Ireland to Australia, former Senator Beahan was 17 years old, and it was time for him to think of the future. In 1954, after disembarking a migrant ship at Fremantle, he found work at the Australian Electrical Company in Perth, manufacturing electrical equipment. Following his apprenticeship as an electrician and his introduction to trade unionism, he became increasingly interested in and concerned about workers' rights and workplace safety and was determined to do something about them. In his 20s, he decided to return to formal education. He attained arts and education degrees from the University of Western Australia and became a secondary school teacher in the regional town of Bunbury in Western Australia.

It was this combination of factory floor background, trade qualification, union membership and teaching that led to Mr Beahan becoming the first-ever education officer of the Trades and Labour Council of Western Australia. This initiative underpinned the establishment, in 1975, of the Australian Trade Union Training Authority, known as TUTA, funded by the Whitlam government to provide education and training programs for union officials. TUTA was a project of Labor minister Clyde Cameron, and former Senator Beahan was a devotee of its mission. It not only sought to educate union officials on the basics of organising and representing workers but also greatly improved the training of officials by including courses on governance and running a business. In addition, its emphasis on extending professionalism extended to appearance, style and language. It was the importance of image and presentation that former Senator Beahan carried into his later role as a party official preparing candidates for election.

Former Senator Beahan was instrumental in guiding the establishment of TUTA as a statutory authority in every state and territory, and he became its first director in Western Australia. It was through TUTA that he also learned the importance of training and organisation to keeping unions relevant in an ever-changing world. He was also attuned to the need for political action to ensure that the rights and wellbeing of working men and women were protected.

Michael Beahan's move to the political wing of the labour movement occurred in 1981, when he became the general secretary of the Western Australian branch of the ALP. This was a significant time, as Senator Cash notes, to be involved as a party official, as success occurred at a state and federal level. Former Senator Beahan led Labor's successful election campaign to win government at the state level in February 1983. A few weeks later, Labor won the March 1983 federal election, installing Bob Hawke as prime minister. Former Senator Beahan would go on to oversee Labor's successful state re-election campaign in WA in 1986 as well as the local contribution to further federal success in 1984 and 1987. These elections saw Labor in Western Australia address the lack of women in state and federal parliaments, with a record number of women from Western Australia elected at both the state and federal levels. I'd like to think that Mr Beahan would be a little bit delighted that two female senators were leading his condolence motion today. While Michael Beahan was a champion of women being elected to parliament—and his record reflects this—he was not a supporter of affirmative action or quotas, an issue in which he was at odds with his party.

Michael's enduring political legacy during his time as party secretary was the modernisation of Labor's political campaigning infrastructure, practice and culture in Western Australia. He brought a greater professionalism to campaigns, seeing the value of modernising local and regional organisational structures and of training campaign workers. His vision was to ensure that those who followed him would be best placed to steward his party forward. He adopted new ideas and technology from overseas, and he created a culture of campaign innovation, which deployed political imagery and themes communicated with new tactics and methods. In the 1980s these ideas were novel, and those who worked alongside him at the time became used to his organisational motto of 'crisp, concise and contemporary'. This became the campaigning hallmark of New Labour under Tony Blair in Britain, but its origin was very much in former Senator Beahan's thinking 40 years ago. He further introduced wage equality for political workers and party staff, becoming the first to champion pension payments and equality of reward and opportunity for female staff. The party adopted his approach to campaigning and organisation nationally, and by 1993 Beahan was the chairman of the Australian Labor Party's national campaign committee. In that year, under Paul Keating, Labor won a federal election victory many had dismissed as impossible—the 'victory for the true believers'.

Michael Beahan won election to the Senate as a senator for Western Australia in the simultaneous dissolution of 1987 and was re-elected in 1990. His principal participation in parliamentary proceedings focused on those areas with which he had the deepest affinity: industrial relations, working conditions, education, the economy and electoral matters. His contribution to committees was significant. Perhaps unusually for a senator, this included pivotal roles on two joint committees. These committees were often maligned by believers in the Senate's institutional independence. By contrast, he saw them as beneficial as a result of their breadth of representation and broad perspective.

He served on the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters from 1987 to 1994, bringing his expertise as a party official to the fore. He argued in support of measures such as the total ban on broadcasting of paid political party advertisements, and he saw the full disclosure of political donations as 'vital to the integrity of the political process'.

He also served as the founding chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Corporations and Securities from 1991 to 1994. This committee had significant oversight of the Australian Securities Commission, the predecessor of ASIC, but it also operated in a vastly different corporate law environment compared to what we know today. It's easy to forget that the 1990s were a highly significant time in the evolution of this area of law in Australia, and Michael Beahan was one who pushed for a thorough redrafting of corporations law. The states and the Commonwealth had been attempting to find ways to create uniform corporations law since the Second World War. They were rebuffed by practical limitations, technical defects and the High Court, which found the Constitution limited the capacity of the Commonwealth to legislate, and so the law remained the domain of the states. Finally, the impetus for reform reached a stage where the input and hard work of many—including parliamentarians like former Senator Beahan—gave birth to the Corporations Act 2001, which remains the overarching law governing companies in our nation today.

Former Senator Beahan was also adept at internal Labor politics. He helped to found the Centre faction, which focused on neither Right nor Left politics but on policy, genuinely looking to balance the party. The Centre faction played a critical role in the success and stability of the Hawke and Keating governments and their reforms, which started 30 years of continuous economic growth.

Michael Beahan, having been a leader in the federal parliamentary Labor Party, became the 19th President of the Australian Senate on 1 February 1994, succeeding Kerry Sibbraa. As the Senate's Presiding Officer, he improved the actual working of the chamber, and his reforms continue today. It was during his presidency that changes to the committee system that sought to make committee membership and chairing arrangements more closely reflect the party representation in the Senate came into effect. This was the beginning of the legislative and general purpose standing committee system, incorporating the examination of estimates, that we recognise as having been in operation almost continuously since that time.

Michael Beahan might be described as something of a convert. Like many of his generation, he was sceptical of the role of the Senate due to its role in precipitating the 1975 constitutional crisis, but he came to recognise its essential role, as he said, as a 'check on the power of the executive—any executive'. He particularly enjoyed the challenge of administering the parliamentary departments and working with the parliament's highly skilled and varied staff.

Former Senator Beahan was acknowledged by Gareth Evans, a fellow Labor senator and one of Australia's most significant foreign ministers, for his personal warmth and charm and as an outstanding character who contributed to the opportunity, wealth and humanity of Australia. The role of President of the Senate enabled him to become a global ambassador for Australia, something he had not previously contemplated despite his active work as a member of both the Senate and joint standing committees on foreign affairs, defence and trade, with a particular interest in trade and human rights.

He became the Australian Labor Party's international secretary too, and that allowed him to train campaign workers for social democratic parties all over the world, including in Malta, South Africa, Vietnam and Fiji. In Malta, he campaigned for the election of George Vella. It was clearly a successful campaign: Vella went on to become Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and, in 2019, President of Malta. It's worth noting that in recent days the Labour Party in Malta won its third consecutive term in office. As here in Australia, Michael Beahan's legacy lives on in Malta. In South Africa, he campaigned during the first post-apartheid elections, supporting the election of President Nelson Mandela.

This role also provided some unusual opportunities. In 1995, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam visited Australia to coincide with the accession of Vietnam as the seventh member of ASEAN. This was the highest-ranking Vietnamese figure to visit Australia to date. Prime Minister Paul Keating hosted a reception at the Lodge, and the general secretary from Vietnam expressed a desire to meet his counterpart in the Australian Labor Party. The then National Secretary of the ALP was 37-year-old Gary Gray. He was concerned that he might not fit the profile of what the general secretary from Vietnam might expect in his counterpart, so Gary sent Michael Beahan in his place. It's understood that Michael was well received, and Australia-Vietnam relations today remain strong.

Michael Beahan's parliamentary career was cut short when he did not win re-election in the March 1996 campaign. However, the constitutional architecture that governs the Senate placed him in the unusual position of continuing to serve as the President of the Senate even after his term ended on 30 June 1996. He remained in office

until the Senate met that August to choose Margaret Reid, the Senate's first and, to date, only female president, as his successor.

Following the conclusion of his political career, former Senator Beahan settled in Melbourne and devoted much of his time to the community. His endeavours included fighting for housing projects, for democracy and for an Australian republic. I know from our colleague in the other place the member for Wills, Mr Peter Khalil—who was former Senator Beahan's local member—just how valued he was in the community. He also acted as a government relations and strategic policy consultant for the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, and the Rudd Labor government asked him to chair a review of political governance aid between 2008 and 2009. As in all his life, he dedicated his energies to good causes, even writing a letter to the editor of the *Age* newspaper in Melbourne just a few weeks before his death in January, making arguments for republican presidential models.

Michael Beahan lived a real labour life, committed to community and committed to causes. He was the epitome of politeness, a popular identity in the Senate and someone who always worked in support of the team. From London to Dalkey to Perth, and eventually to our national capital, he remained a good, gentle, kind and decent man. He was also someone you could trust. He would straight-up tell you if he was not going to back you and would not hold it against you if you were not going to back him. He will be greatly missed.

Michael is survived by his wife, Margaret; his brothers, Terry, Peter and Frank; his first wife, Jenny; and his children, Daniel and Kate. The opposition again express our condolences following the passing of Michael Beahan and we again convey our sympathies to his family and friends.

Senator LINES (Western Australia—Deputy President and Chair of Committees) (16:10): I rise on behalf of the WA branch to put on the record my contributions to the condolence motion to former senator and President of the Senate Michael Beahan and I wish to associate my comments with those of Senator Keneally and Senator Cash. I knew Michael, really, as a party member and as someone who was active in the party. I knew, obviously, that he was a senator, but most of my association was in working with him as a member of the party and as an active member of the WA administrative committee and the national administrative committee.

Michael joined the party, as we've heard, in 1968 and was active in the Bunbury branch. He took that branch from a fairly moribund branch to an active branch. He really worked to increase the membership and revitalise the sorts of activities members got involved in, and I'm pleased to say that that activism of the Bunbury branch continues today under the stewardship of Don Punch, the local Labor member down there. I've certainly met with the branch on many occasions and they are still an active branch, and I think they would be pleased to know that the history of that branch is of it being revitalised by Michael Beahan.

Michael, as we heard, had retrained as a teacher. He became an educator, and he first worked with the WA Trades and Labour Council, now known as UnionsWA, as a trainer. He was part of a three-person committee that established the Trade Union Training Authority, which was an amazing establishment, and I'm sure Senator Urquhart, like me, as a union official, attended courses at TUTA in Albury-Wodonga. Certainly, Michael Beahan was part of the small group that established the Trade Union Training Authority, and I'm sure there are other people apart from Senator Urquhart and me in this place and in the other place who also attended TUTA. It was a very sad occasion when it was defunded and became lost to the trade union movement.

In about 1981, as we've heard, Michael became the secretary of the WA Labor Party, and it was in this role and in his role on the national executive that I certainly got to know him more closely. Michael was pivotal in Labor winning the state elections in 1983 and 1986. It was probably in 1986 that I got to know Michael. Of course, that followed the federal campaigns that we won from WA in '83, '84 and '87.

As history shows and as, I believe, Senator Cash and Senator Keneally have remarked upon, but I lived through these times, these were heady days for the Australian Labor Party—very heady days indeed—some that those opposite are like to refer back to and try still to tarnish us with in this modern day of politics. They were heady days for the Australian Labor Party, and I have to say that, in all of the time that I knew Michael, he was very gentle. I cannot recall a time when I ever saw him raise his voice or, indeed, lose his temper. He was a very calm influence and a very good secretary to have at the helm of the Labor Party during those years.

As we've heard, in 1987 Michael was elected to the Senate, and during his time in the Senate he continued to pursue his passions on industrial relations reform, working conditions, education, the economy and electoral matters. Michael was also passionate about peace—something that he and I shared, although we were from different arms of the party. We certainly had peace activism and nuclear disarmament as something that we shared together. Of course, he was also passionate about native title.

In 1994 Michael was elected President of the Senate, and I must say that it is with great pride, as I walk backwards and forwards to my office each day, that I often look at that portrait of Michael. It is the Michael Beahan I remember and recall. He doesn't look any different in that to the Michael Beahan who I recall. He continued in that role and,

as we've heard, he made great reforms to the Senate in the role of President—indeed, even though he was somewhat cynical when he was first elected to the Senate, he became a great supporter, as we all do in this place; we are all fiercely proud of the roles that we play as senators in this place.

The WA party, through its current secretary, Tim Picton, and the assistant secretary, Ellie Whiteaker, wanted me to put their remarks on the Senate record as well. They extend their deepest sympathy to the family and, indeed, to the friends of Michael Beahan: 'Michael, as we know, was a stalwart of the Labor Party, whose ongoing contributions continue to mean so much to us all. And WA Labor extends its condolences and sincere appreciation for the impact that Michael Beahan made to our party and to Australia.' Vale, Michael Beahan.

The PRESIDENT (16:16): I will just add a few short remarks. I also wish to give my sincere condolences to the family of Michael Beahan. Michael Beahan was the fourth Western Australian President of the Senate but the first at that point for 50 years, and so it was a long time between innings.

His career as an electrician, I understand, was cut short by an industrial accident in which he lost a finger. He actually began his pathway to the education system and then, obviously, to this place due to one of those acts of fate that affect our lives, seemingly in a terrible way, but which in actual fact delivered to Australia a wonderful servant of this place.

He was comfortably elected to the Senate from the fifth position on the ALP Senate team for the 1987 double dissolution election. His views on the Senate changed over time; as Senator Keneally noted, he said that the role of the Senate was increasingly important and was an increasingly effective and necessary check on the power of the executive—any executive. This perhaps can be contrasted with an earlier view that he had when he was a much more junior senator, when he said about the Senate:

... people speaking in empty chambers, people running around to bells like Pavlovian dogs; the constant repetition of quorum calls or divisions ...

So his views did evolve over time, as I think all of our views evolve over time about this place. In becoming President of the Senate, obviously, he played a significant role in lifting the work of this chamber and enshrining the committee system, which we all know and value so highly.

He was defeated in the 1996 federal election, contesting the third position—only the third incumbent Senate President to be defeated at the polls. He relinquished the role in August 1996 when the new parliament met. One of his perhaps lesser known but key contributions post his Senate career was saving the bluestone lanes around his house where he lived in Brunswick, Victoria. Obviously, that is something which all Victorians now cherish. In 2011 he was appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia for services to the Parliament of Australia, to the promotion of international bipartisan political debate, to the pharmacy profession and to the community. I cannot think of a higher honour.

Michael Beahan AM was a conscientious servant of the Senate and his chosen political party who made a varied and constructive contribution to public life in Australia before, during and after his time in this place. I would ask senators to join me in a moment's silence signifying assent to the motion.

Question agreed to, honourable senators joining in a moment of silence.

DOCUMENTS

Aquaculture Industry

Order for the Production of Documents

Senator WHISH-WILSON (Tasmania) (16:21): I move:

(1) That there be laid on the table by the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture and Northern Australia, by no later than 5 April 2022, the final report (or any reasonable equivalent to such an outcome report) for the 'Understanding and mapping the Tasmanian public perception to Atlantic Salmon farming' (project number 2018-217) as reported on the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation website.

(2) If the Senate is not sitting when the documents are ready for presentation, the documents are to be presented to the President under standing order 166.

Senator RUSTON (South Australia—Minister for Families and Social Services, Minister for Women's Safety and Manager of Government Business in the Senate) (16:21): I seek leave to make a short statement.

The PRESIDENT: Leave is granted for one minute.

Senator RUSTON: While the government will not oppose this motion, we note that this project contains commercial-in-confidence information. The government will endeavour to comply with the request, but the documents requested will require assessment and redaction to ensure the sensitive information is not disclosed.

Question agreed to.

Aquaculture Industry
Order for the Production of Documents

Senator WHISH-WILSON (Tasmania) (16:21): I move:

That—

(1) There be laid on the table by the Minister representing the Minister for Industry, Energy and Emission Reduction, by no later than 28 April 2022, the following documents:

- (a) the application made by Ridley Agriproducts Pty Ltd in respect of the Cooperative Research Centres Programme grant award GA72953 ('Future-proofing the salmon farming industry in the face of climate change');
- (b) the assessments of the grant applications for GA72953, including any independent viability assessment;
- (c) the grant agreement in respect of grant award GA72953;
- (d) the payment schedule for the grant award GA72953;
- (e) any progress reports, ad-hoc reports and completion report submitted in respect of grant award GA72953;
- (f) any financial declaration and audited financial acquittal report submitted in respect of grant award GA72953;
- (g) any grant agreement variation submitted in respect of grant award GA72953;
- (h) any record of compliance visits in respect of grant award GA72953; and
- (i) the evaluation/s completed in respect of grant award GA72953.

(2) If the Senate is not sitting when the documents are ready for presentation, the documents are to be presented to the President under standing order 166.

Senator RUSTON (South Australia—Minister for Families and Social Services, Minister for Women's Safety and Manager of Government Business in the Senate) (16:21): I seek leave to make a short statement.

The PRESIDENT: Leave is granted for one minute.

Senator RUSTON: The government will endeavour to meet the tabling of the documents sought by the time specified—28 April 2022. However, due to the range of documents, the complexity of the information sought and the need to protect commercial-in-confidence interests, it may not be possible to produce all of those materials.

Question agreed to.

BILLS

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Bill 2022

First Reading

Senator THORPE (Victoria) (16:22): I move:

That the following bill be introduced: A Bill for an Act relating to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and for related purposes.

Question agreed to.

Senator THORPE: I present the bill and move:

That this bill may proceed without formalities and be now read a first time.

Question agreed to.

Second Reading

Senator THORPE (Victoria) (16:23): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I seek leave to table an explanatory memorandum relating to the bill.

Leave granted.

Senator THORPE: I table an explanatory memorandum and seek leave to have the second reading speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The speech read as follows—

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, known as the UNDRIP, was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on Thursday, 13 September 2007.

The UNDRIP is historic, it is the most comprehensive international instrument on the rights of Indigenous peoples around the world, and not just First Nations people of this continent we now call Australia.

The UNDRIP establishes a universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of First Nations people, and also expands on existing human rights and freedoms as they apply to Indigenous peoples worldwide and to First Nations people of this continent.

The UNDRIP is particularly significant because First Nations people of this continent, Elders, academics and activists, were involved in its drafting.

Despite this country endorsing the UNDRIP in 2009, and committing at international forums to take actions to implement the UNDRIP and promote the equal enjoyment of all rights for our people, we have seen no meaningful action.

The Australian Government has failed to implement the UNDRIP into law, policy and practice across all levels of government.

The Australian Government has failed to negotiate with First Nations people on a fully funded, timely National Action Plan to implement the UNDRIP into Australian law.

The Australian Government has failed to audit existing laws, policies and practice for compliance with the UNDRIP.

The Australian Government has failed to ensure that when new legislation is introduced to this place, it must have a statement of compatibility with human rights including UNDRIP - currently this does not happen.

The Australian Government has identified the Closing the Gap Strategy as its key policy platform to give effect to the Declaration. However, most of the measures under the Strategy are woefully lacking in ambition and despite this, most are not on track to be met at all.

Our people have waited enough. All we have received are broken promises, lip service, and straight up lies.

We are not willing to wait anymore, we are dying at the hands of a racist system.

We are strong and capable. We are strong despite this racist system and the injustices it pushes us to.

First Nations people and land were stolen.

Aggressive policing of our children, control on what we can spend our pensions on, and discrimination when applying for jobs.

Enough.

We demand that the Australian Government provide to us a timeline on fully implementing the UNDRIP into the laws, policies, procedures, and practices of this continent.

We need your solidarity, we are calling on the people of this country to back us.

We've got this - but back us - we've waited long enough.

I expect to see an action plan on implementing UNDRIP from the Prime Minister in accordance with the provisions of my Bill.

Senator THORPE: I seek leave to continue my remarks later.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

COMMITTEES

Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee

Reference

Senator THORPE (Victoria) (16:24): I, and also on behalf of Senator Cox, move:

That the following matter be referred to the Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee for inquiry and report by 15 September 2022:

The application of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in Australia, with particular reference to:

- (a) the history of Australia's support for and application of the UNDRIP;
- (b) the potential to enact the UNDRIP in Australia;
- (c) international experiences of enacting and enforcing the UNDRIP;
- (d) legal issues relevant to ensure compliance with the UNDRIP, with or without enacting it;
- (e) key Australian legislation affected by adherence to the principles of the UNDRIP;
- (f) Australian federal and state governments' adherence to the principles of the UNDRIP;
- (g) the track record of Australian Government efforts to improve adherence to the principles of UNDRIP;
- (h) community and stakeholder efforts to ensure the application of UNDRIP principles in Australia;
- (i) the current and historical systemic and other aspects to take into consideration regarding the rights of First Nations people in Australia; and
- (j) any other related matters.

Senator RUSTON (South Australia—Minister for Families and Social Services, Minister for Women's Safety and Manager of Government Business in the Senate) (16:24): I seek leave to make a short statement.

The PRESIDENT: Is leave granted? Leave is granted for one minute.

Senator RUSTON: The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is a non-legally-binding resolution of the UN General Assembly. It sets out the rights of Indigenous peoples and the application of states' human rights obligations to Indigenous peoples. Australia supports the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and gives practical effect to the declaration through programs and policies. Australia and many other states have expressed reservations due to the lack of clarity on the meaning and application of 'self-determination' and 'free, prior and informed consent'.

The PRESIDENT: The question is that the motion moved by Senator Thorpe be agreed to. We are dealing with business of the Senate motion No. 6.

The Senate divided. [16:29]

(The President—Senator Brockman)

Ayes.....40
Noes.....2
Majority.....38

AYES

Abetz, E.	Askew, W.	Ayres, T.
Bragg, A. J.	Brockman, W. E.	Chandler, C.
Colbeck, R. M.	Cox, D.	Davey, P. M. (Teller)
Dodson, P.	Faruqi, M.	Fawcett, D. J.
Griff, S.	Hanson-Young, S. C.	Henderson, S. M.
Hughes, H. A.	Lambie, J.	McCarthy, M.
McDonald, S. E.	McKim, N. J.	McLachlan, A. L.
McMahon, S. J.	Mirabella, G.	O'Sullivan, M. A.
Patrick, R. L.	Pratt, L. C.	Reynolds, L. K.
Rice, J. E.	Ruston, A.	Scarr, P. M.
Seselja, Z. M.	Small, B. J.	Smith, D. A.
Steele-John, J. A.	Stoker, A. J.	Thorpe, L. A.
Urquhart, A. E.	Van, D. A.	Watt, M. P.
Whish-Wilson, P. S.		

NOES

Hanson, P. L.	Roberts, M. I. (Teller)
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Question agreed to.

COMMITTEES

Environment and Communications Legislation Committee

Reference

Senator HANSON-YOUNG (South Australia) (16:32): I move:

That the provisions of the Agriculture Biodiversity Stewardship Market Bill 2022 be referred to the Environment and Communications Legislation Committee for inquiry and report by 6 June 2022.

Senator RUSTON (South Australia—Minister for Families and Social Services, Minister for Women's Safety and Manager of Government Business in the Senate) (16:32): I seek leave to make a short statement.

The PRESIDENT: Leave is granted for one minute.

Senator RUSTON: The government has been developing the biosecurity stewardship market since 2019, which has included the world-first development of a mechanism to measure biodiversity. Following introduction of the Agriculture Biodiversity Stewardship Market Bill 2022, the government looked to refer this legislation to the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee, which the Greens did not support. This is a cynical last-minute attempt by the Greens to become relevant in this debate. The government remains supportive of an inquiry

into the legislation by the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee in the next term of the parliament.

The PRESIDENT: The question is that business of the Senate notice of motion No. 7 be agreed to.

The Senate divided. [16:35]

(The President—Senator Brockman)

Ayes.....13
Noes.....26
Majority.....13

AYES

Cox, D.
Hanson, P. L.
McKim, N. J. (Teller)
Roberts, M. I.
Whish-Wilson, P. S.

Faruqi, M.
Hanson-Young, S. C.
Patrick, R. L.
Steele-John, J. A.

Griff, S.
Lambie, J.
Rice, J. E.
Thorpe, L. A.

NOES

Abetz, E.
Brockman, W. E.
Davey, P. M.
Hughes, H. A.
McMahon, S. J.
Pratt, L. C.
Scarr, P. M.
Smith, D. A.
Van, D. A.

Askew, W.
Chandler, C.
Fawcett, D. J.
McDonald, S. E.
Mirabella, G.
Reynolds, L. K.
Seselja, Z. M.
Stoker, A. J.
Watt, M. P.

Bragg, A. J.
Colbeck, R. M.
Henderson, S. M.
McLachlan, A. L.
O'Sullivan, M. A.
Ruston, A.
Small, B. J.
Urquhart, A. E. (Teller)

Question negatived.

BUSINESS

Withdrawal

Senator McKIM (Tasmania—Deputy Leader of the Australian Greens in the Senate and Australian Greens Whip) (16:37): I move:

That the government business order of the day relating to the National Consumer Credit Protection Amendment (Supporting Economic Recovery) Bill 2020 be discharged from the *Notice Paper*.

The PRESIDENT: The question is that general business notice of motion No. 1303 be agreed to.

The Senate divided. [16:42]

(The President—Senator Brockman)

Ayes.....25
Noes.....27
Majority.....2

AYES

Ayres, T.
Cox, D.
Faruqi, M.
Hanson-Young, S. C.
McKim, N. J.
Pratt, L. C.
Smith, M. F.
Urquhart, A. E. (Teller)
Whish-Wilson, P. S.

Chisholm, A.
Dodson, P.
Griff, S.
Lines, S.
O'Neill, D. M.
Rice, J. E.
Steele-John, J. A.
Walsh, J. C.

Ciccione, R.
Farrell, D. E.
Grogan, K.
McAllister, J. R.
Patrick, R. L.
Sheldon, A. V.
Thorpe, L. A.
Watt, M. P.

NOES

Abetz, E.	Askew, W.	Bragg, A. J.
Brockman, W. E.	Cash, M. C.	Chandler, C.
Colbeck, R. M.	Davey, P. M. (Teller)	Fawcett, D. J.
Hanson, P. L.	Henderson, S. M.	Hughes, H. A.
Lambie, J.	McDonald, S. E.	McGrath, J.
McKenzie, B.	McMahon, S. J.	Mirabella, G.
O'Sullivan, M. A.	Reynolds, L. K.	Roberts, M. I.
Ruston, A.	Seselja, Z. M.	Small, B. J.
Smith, D. A.	Stoker, A. J.	Van, D. A.

PAIRS

Bilyk, C. L.	Fierravanti-Wells, C. A.
Brown, C. L.	Payne, M. A.
Carr, K. J.	Antic, A.
Gallagher, K. R.	Hume, J.
Green, N. L.	Canavan, M. J.
Keneally, K. K.	Paterson, J. W.
McCarthy, M.	Scarr, P. M.
Polley, H.	McLachlan, A. L.
Sterle, G.	Duniam, J. R.
Vacancy	Molan, A.J.
Waters, L. J.	Rennick, G.
Wong, P.	Birmingham, S. J.

Question negatived.

DOCUMENTS

Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment

Order for the Production of Documents

Senator WHISH-WILSON (Tasmania) (16:43): I move:

That—

(1) There be laid on the table by the Minister representing the Minister for the Environment, by no later than 28 April 2022, the submissions made in respect of the public consultation on the proposed changes to conservation planning decisions, as advertised on the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment website, which were open from 17 September to 2 November 2021, relating to the following flora and fauna:

- (a) the Tasmanian devil (*Sarcophilus harrisii*);
- (b) Giant Kelp Marine Forests of south east Australia;
- (c) Whale shark (*Shincodon typus*);
- (d) Lowland Native Grasslands of Tasmanian; and
- (e) Subtropical and Temperate Coastal Saltmarsh.

(2) If the Senate is not sitting when the documents are ready for presentation, the documents are to be presented to the President under standing order 166.

Senator RUSTON (South Australia—Minister for Families and Social Services, Minister for Women's Safety and Manager of Government Business in the Senate) (16:44): I seek leave to make a short statement.

The PRESIDENT: Leave is granted for one minute.

Senator RUSTON: Hundreds of submissions were received during the public consultation process on these matters and without an unacceptable deviation of a departmental resource, the department does not have the capacity to contact all of them to seek their permission to release their submissions publicly.

The PRESIDENT: The question is this motion be agreed to.

The Senate divided. [16:48]

(The President—Senator Brockman)

Ayes.....27
Noes.....24

Majority3

AYES

Ayres, T.	Chisholm, A.	Cicccone, R.
Cox, D.	Dodson, P.	Farrell, D. E.
Faruqi, M.	Griff, S.	Grogan, K.
Hanson, P. L.	Hanson-Young, S. C.	Lines, S.
McAllister, J. R.	McKim, N. J.	O'Neill, D. M.
Patrick, R. L.	Pratt, L. C.	Rice, J. E.
Roberts, M. I.	Sheldon, A. V.	Smith, M. F.
Steele-John, J. A.	Thorpe, L. A.	Urquhart, A. E. (Teller)
Walsh, J. C.	Watt, M. P.	Whish-Wilson, P. S.

NOES

Abetz, E.	Askew, W.	Bragg, A. J.
Brockman, W. E.	Cash, M. C.	Chandler, C.
Colbeck, R. M.	Davey, P. M. (Teller)	Fawcett, D. J.
Henderson, S. M.	Hughes, H. A.	McDonald, S. E.
McGrath, J.	McKenzie, B.	McMahon, S. J.
Mirabella, G.	O'Sullivan, M. A.	Reynolds, L. K.
Ruston, A.	Seselja, Z. M.	Small, B. J.
Smith, D. A.	Stoker, A. J.	Van, D. A.

PAIRS

Bilyk, C. L.	Fierravanti-Wells, C. A.
Brown, C. L.	Payne, M. A.
Carr, K. J.	Antic, A.
Gallagher, K. R.	Hume, J.
Green, N. L.	Canavan, M. J.
Keneally, K. K.	Paterson, J. W.
McCarthy, M.	Scarr, P. M.
Polley, H.	McLachlan, A. L.
Sterle, G.	Duniam, J. R.
Vacancy	Molan, A.J.
Waters, L. J.	Rennick, G.
Wong, P.	Birmingham, S. J.

Question agreed to.

COVID-19: Vaccination

Order for the Production of Documents

Senator HANSON (Queensland—Leader of Pauline Hanson's One Nation) (16:50): I move:

(1) That there be laid on the table by the Minister representing the Minister for Health and Aged Care, by no later than 1 April 2022, all correspondence relating to the use of behavioural psychologists in respect of developing the strategy for the COVID-19 vaccine rollout, specifically aimed at developing an effective tool to induce acceptance of lockdowns and other restrictions.

(2) If the Senate is not sitting when the documents are ready for presentation, the documents are to be presented to the President under standing order 166.

Senator RUSTON (South Australia—Minister for Families and Social Services, Minister for Women's Safety and Manager of Government Business in the Senate) (16:50): I seek leave to make a short statement.

The PRESIDENT: Leave is granted for one minute.

Senator RUSTON: The Minister for Health and Aged Care advises that he is not aware of the existence of any such correspondence.

The PRESIDENT: The question is that the motion moved by Senator Hanson be agreed to.

The Senate divided. [16:52]

(The President—Senator Brockman)

Ayes.....3
 Noes.....34
 Majority.....31

AYES

Hanson, P. L. Patrick, R. L. Roberts, M. I. (Teller)

NOES

Abetz, E.	Askew, W.	Ayres, T.
Bragg, A. J.	Brockman, W. E.	Chandler, C.
Colbeck, R. M.	Cox, D.	Davey, P. M.
Faruqi, M.	Fawcett, D. J.	Griff, S.
Hanson-Young, S. C.	Henderson, S. M.	Hughes, H. A.
Lambie, J.	McDonald, S. E.	McKim, N. J.
McLachlan, A. L.	Mirabella, G.	O'Sullivan, M. A.
Pratt, L. C.	Rice, J. E.	Ruston, A.
Scarr, P. M.	Small, B. J.	Smith, D. A.
Steele-John, J. A.	Stoker, A. J.	Thorpe, L. A.
Urquhart, A. E. (Teller)	Van, D. A.	Watt, M. P.
Whish-Wilson, P. S.		

Question negatived.

COMMITTEES

COVID-19 Select Committee

Reference

Senator ROBERTS (Queensland) (16:54): I move:

That the following matter be referred to the Select Committee on COVID-19 for inquiry and report by 30 October 2022:

The provisional approval of COVID-19 vaccines, including Pfizer, AstraZeneca, Moderna and Novavax ("the vaccines") by the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation, noting the requirement in section 22D of the *Therapeutic Goods Act 1989* for the Secretary of the Department of Health ("the Secretary") to ensure the quality, safety and efficacy of the vaccines were satisfactorily established for each cohort the vaccine is being approved, with particular reference to:

- (a) was the decision by the Secretary to not obtain patient-level data from the clinical trials of the vaccines or to independently investigate the vaccines a breach of the legislation;
- (b) the failure of the Australian Bureau of Statistics to ensure that statistical reporting of COVID-19 policy metrics including mortality by age/cause and live births were provided in a timely manner;
- (c) the process by which the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) assessed reports of vaccine harm and deaths, including failure to conduct autopsies of vaccine deaths as reported by physicians;
- (d) the use by the TGA of an internal version of the Database of Adverse Event Notifications, including any variance between public and internal vaccine harm data;
- (e) the potential for gene-based vaccine generated spike proteins to migrate into human cell nuclei to disrupt DNA repair mechanisms, and the ability of vaccine-derived RNA to be reverse transcribed into human genome;
- (f) failure to follow-up on animal trials of the vaccines that indicated substantial reproductive damage in lab rats, and any further work that may have been done on ensuring these vaccines have no negative effect on fertility; and
- (g) the suppression of alternative treatments and non-pharmaceutical health advice.

Senator RUSTON (South Australia—Minister for Families and Social Services, Minister for Women's Safety and Manager of Government Business in the Senate) (16:54): I seek leave to make a short statement.

The PRESIDENT: Leave is granted for one minute.

Senator RUSTON: We strongly reaffirm the safety of all COVID vaccines that have been tested, considered and approved for use in Australia. The TGA's robust processes make it one of the best medical regulators in the world. All COVID-19 vaccines have been vigorously tested and found to be safe and effective. Further, Australia has one of the highest vaccination rates and one of the lowest loss-of-life rates in the world.

Senator PATRICK (South Australia) (16:54): I seek leave to make a short statement.

The PRESIDENT: Leave is granted for one minute.

Senator PATRICK: My experience in relation to the COVID committee and Senator Gallagher is that if you simply ask her to put something on the agenda, she will do so. It seems to me that this motion is irregular for that reason. I'm sure that if you contacted the chair, she would assist in having issues that you wish to have considered by the committee brought to the fore.

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

The Senate divided. [16:56]

(The President—Senator Brockman)

Ayes.....5
Noes.....34
Majority.....29

AYES

Abetz, E.	Antic, A.	Hanson, P. L.
Rennick, G.	Roberts, M. I. (Teller)	

NOES

Askew, W.	Ayres, T.	Bragg, A. J.
Brockman, W. E.	Chandler, C.	Colbeck, R. M.
Cox, D.	Davey, P. M.	Faruqi, M.
Fawcett, D. J.	Griff, S.	Hanson-Young, S. C.
Henderson, S. M.	Hughes, H. A.	Lambie, J.
McDonald, S. E.	McKim, N. J.	McLachlan, A. L.
Mirabella, G.	O'Sullivan, M. A.	Patrick, R. L.
Pratt, L. C.	Rice, J. E.	Ruston, A.
Scarr, P. M.	Small, B. J.	Smith, D. A.
Steele-John, J. A.	Stoker, A. J.	Thorpe, L. A.
Urquhart, A. E. (Teller)	Van, D. A.	Watt, M. P.
Whish-Wilson, P. S.		

Question negatived

MATTERS OF URGENCY

Climate Change

The PRESIDENT (16:59): I inform the Senate that at 8.30 am today, 25 proposals were received. In accordance with standing order 75, the question of which proposal would be submitted to the Senate was determined by lot. As a result, I inform the Senate that the letter from Senator Rice proposing a matter of urgency be chosen:

That, in the opinion of the Senate, the following is a matter of urgency:

The mining and burning of coal, oil and gas is the primary cause of global heating and is causing more frequent and more intense floods, heatwaves, fires; and that to protect lives and livelihoods, no new coal, oil and gas projects should be started in Australia.

Is the proposal supported?

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

The PRESIDENT: I understand that informal arrangements have been made to allocate specific times to each of the speakers in today's debate. With the concurrence of the Senate, I shall ask the clerks to set the clock accordingly.

Senator WHISH-WILSON (Tasmania) (16:59): At the request of Senator Rice, I move

That, in the opinion of the Senate, the following is a matter of urgency:

The mining and burning of coal, oil and gas is the primary cause of global heating and is causing more frequent and more intense floods, heatwaves, fires; and that to protect lives and livelihoods, no new coal, oil and gas projects should be started in Australia.

Don't take my word for this. This is what the science tells us. This is what the IPCC—the panel of climate change experts which comprises a couple of hundred of the world's most eminent climate scientists—tells us. It tells us that,

on our current trajectory with our current 'business as usual' scenarios, this planet is on a three- to four-degree warming trajectory this century. Entire parts of our earth—our home—will be uninhabitable at a three- to four-degree warming scenario, not just because of drought, a lack of rainfall, pests and diseases but also because of extreme weather events. We think not only of the extreme weather events like the bushfires this country witnessed just two years ago or the unprecedented floods we've seen on the eastern seaboard in recent weeks but also of the unprecedented heatwaves we are seeing in the ocean that are destroying our beautiful and globally significant coral reefs, our seagrass beds right around the country and our giant kelp forests. These changes in the ocean have profound impacts on Australian communities right around this country. We think of the farming community and their livelihoods; we all rely on the food that they grow. No-one is more vulnerable than they are as an industry to our changing climate and to global warming.

The sole thing we can do—which is also the most important thing we can do to reduce our emissions targets and our 2030 emissions targets in particular—is to stop all new oil and gas production and all new fossil fuel production in this country. But, once again, don't take my word for that. Listen to the International Energy Agency, which said that 2021 was the year that we needed to leave all new fossil fuels in the ground and transition as rapidly as possible to 100 per cent renewables. But what do we do? What do we get from this government? Just today we found that Mr Angus Taylor, the so-called minister for emissions reduction, is bringing before the parliament regulations to give more public money to a fossil fuel project. They've given hundreds of millions of dollars in grants for fossil fuel projects at a time when we know we've got to be transitioning away from fossil fuels.

Every time I talk to people about climate change and every time this issue is raised with me as a senator—and whether it's by Greens supporters, Labor supporters or Liberal supporters doesn't matter—I highlight to every person I speak to the simple fact that climate change is not first and foremost an environmental problem, nor is it an economic problem, even though it's caused by unregulated externalities from business activities. It is first and foremost a political problem. Only politics can solve this. People can change their behaviour, and that makes a difference, but it is a systemic issue that this parliament can help to solve.

We have more reasons than most to show global leadership in taking the climate action necessary to limit emissions and warming to 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels. But what do we do? We do the exact opposite. We are a global embarrassment. We have been called out by the UN, by UNESCO and by countries all around the world—including our friends and allies, like the United States—as being a global embarrassment on climate change. We are not only a laggard; we are also deliberately undermining climate action because of the politics of climate change in this place. The Labor and Liberal parties are captured by fossil fuel interests. That's the problem. Until we clean up politics, we'll never fix it. This issue has to be first and foremost in the minds of Australians when they go into their polling booths. They need to vote for climate action. They need to vote Greens.

Senator McMAHON (Northern Territory) (17:05): I rise to speak on this matter of urgency from the Greens. As always, the Greens overexaggerate on climate change for their selfish political purposes. It is disgraceful, absolutely disgraceful, to politicise recent natural disasters and tragedies, trying to score political points on the back of human misery and suffering. Shame on you. Shame on you for doing that. That is just terrible.

Let's look at some of the claims that the Greens are trying to push. They're claiming that climate change has caused the flooding that we have seen recently in eastern Australia. These claims simply do not stack up. The CSIRO, in their *Climate change in Australia* report, showed that rainfall extremes in northern New South Wales have been only slightly above average, and in South-East Queensland they have been average. We have other rainfall records to back this up. The Brisbane River, for example, experienced a major flood last month, but there have been 10 floods that have been greater over the past 150 years. In fact, dangerous floods have occurred in every Australian state over the last 150 years. We can name some of them: in 1852, Gundagai in New South Wales; in 1916, Clermont in Queensland; in 1934, Melbourne; in 1893, Ipswich, Queensland; and, in 1927, Brisbane, Cairns, and Townsville in Queensland. That 1927 flood caused 47 deaths, destroyed 16 homes and caused an estimated 300,000 pounds in damages. This was at a time when our population and the value of property destroyed were far lower than they are today. Can you imagine the effects of that flood today? These floods go back over 100 years. These are not a new phenomenon, as the Greens would have you believe, Madam Acting Deputy President.

Let's talk about bushfires. The CSIRO admit that there is no evidence linking climate change with bushfires at this stage. As they state in their *Climate change in Australia* report:

... no studies explicitly attributing the Australian increase in fire weather to climate change have been performed at this time.

Yet the Greens, shockingly, try to blame government policies for the deaths and destruction of property in fires.

All these events are tragedies. It's a tragedy for someone to lose their life, their home, their livestock or their pets in a flood or a fire, and we shouldn't be politicising and trying to score cheap points on the back of these tragedies. But not all tragedies have an actual human cause—someone you can point the finger at and say, 'You did this.' The

Greens try to. They point to the Prime Minister and say, 'You did this.' That is just absolutely ridiculous. These are natural weather events. We've been having floods, fires, tsunamis, hurricanes and cyclones for as long as we've got records, and we can even point to these events happening back before we had records.

Even if the Greens' outrageous claims were true—they're absolutely not true, but let's pretend for a second that they're true—their attempts to pin the blame on Australia for these outcomes would be completely ridiculous and absurd. Let's have a look at what Australia does produce. We produce six per cent of the world's coal, 3.7 per cent of the world's gas and 0.6 per cent of the world's oil. Even if Australia were to shut down all our coal, oil and gas tomorrow, it would make no difference to the temperature of the globe or to any of the natural disasters that the Greens are trying to pin on it.

If we look at carbon dioxide emissions by country, China accounts for 29 per cent; the USA, 14 per cent; India, seven per cent; Russia, 4.5 per cent; Japan, 3.4 per cent; Germany, two per cent; and Australia, 1.1 per cent. In 2020, China emitted greenhouse gases equivalent to 13.8 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide. By comparison, Australia emitted the equivalent of 512 megatonnes. That's roughly one twenty-seventh of China's emissions. In 2021, China was running 1,058 coal-fired power plants. That is more than half the world's capacity. China's emissions have more than tripled over the previous three decades. They emit more greenhouse gas than the entire developed world combined. Yet the Greens want us to wreck our economy and our way of life for the massive 1.1 per cent that we contribute.

I'm not saying that we shouldn't do our bit in reducing all types of pollution, and I'm not just concerned about global warming and climate change. We've got a lot of other things to worry about, such as plastics in our ocean. Maybe the Greens could show a little bit of care for our oceans instead of banging on about what Australia does to the world's climate. I can tell you that our little millifluff of a percentage of emissions is not going to do a damn thing—even if we cut it to zero—to the effects of greenhouse gases on the world's climate.

As we can see from what's happening in Europe today, if Australia were to stop mining coal, oil and gas then we would only strengthen countries like Russia that threaten to bully, and are invading and killing, their neighbours. Europe is currently paying Russia more than \$1 billion a day for coal, oil and gas. Europe has reduced its own gas production by 30 per cent over the past decade, while its consumption has decreased by less than 13 per cent. Europe has more gas reserves than Australia, so its extra reliance on Russian gas is completely self-inflicted. This is why, when Ukraine asked us for help to fight Putin, they asked us to send coal, not solar panels.

Europe's dependence on Russian gas is partly because it has allowed Russian funding of anti-fossil-fuel campaigns to remain unchecked. We have a lot of evidence that Russian oligarchs are funding some of the anti-fossil-fuel campaigners and the activist groups that are campaigning—certainly overseas and even right here in Australia. Isn't it ironic that the Greens have a slightly well-hidden dirty little secret? Their campaigns are actually helped by the funding Putin provides to anti-fossil-fuel organisations. That's right—funded by Russia, with love!

Senator Whish-Wilson also talked about food. Well, if we look at food security, products of the oil and gas industries account for approximately 45 per cent of the world's food production. We all know that urea, which is part of the composition of most of the fertilisers that we use in this world, comes from the oil and gas industry, which they want to stop. They want to stop this industry with 45 per cent of the world food production. So the Greens not only want us to freeze to death they also want us to starve to death. This will hurt the world's poorest nations.

Senator PRATT (Western Australia) (17:15): I rise today also to speak on the urgency motion that Senator Rice has put forward. As most of us understand in this chamber—but not all, I'm sad to say—climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time. In Australia, indeed, we have seen its devastating impacts, which have increased over recent years and even months: tragic fires, floods, cyclones and more.

Here in the Labor Party, we have always been committed to strong action on climate change. We saw that when we were last in government and we committed to net zero by 2050 some seven years ago. In Labor's view, that is an essential starting point. This is a goal that the CSIRO says will deliver higher wages and incomes, and also lower power costs for Australians. Why? Because we know that renewable energy is in fact cheaper than bringing new coal or fossil fuel power online. It's a goal that the University of Melbourne says will deliver a 20 times greater benefit to the economy than any costs. It's a goal that is not only the right thing to do by future generations here in Australia and around the world but is also the right thing to do by our economic and social goals right now, today.

But as the motion before us, put forward by the Greens—which we don't support—seems to argue against, we need a real path to get there. We can't have passionate speeches; they're not worth much without discernible action and a real plan to get the job done. We want to see in our nation—and Labor has a plan for it—job-creating investment that delivers real emissions reduction. This is a plan where we will need to bring the Australian people with us. I speak to many voters in the course of the upcoming election about their desire to see real action on climate

change. But I also speak to voters—the vast majority of voters—who aren't about to vote for a plan that's going to see them out of work and out of a job. That's why they have confidence in Labor's plan and Labor's approach in addressing action on climate change. That's because we know we can have a productive economic future and create a path to zero emissions by 2050.

The Labor Party is the only party that has a medium-term commitment to get us to 2050 with that zero emissions outcome. Its impact on the economy is modelled properly. That is how you get sustainable, enduring and long-lasting action on climate change—not stunt motions here in the Senate. Australia has the potential to become one of the world's renewable energy superpowers, but only if we have the leadership and vision needed to bring Australia together to seize the opportunities in front of us. This can't be about wedge stunts. It has to be about a real path for jobs and that includes the jobs that exist in our fossil fuel industries currently.

The Greens fail to note in their motion the obvious truth that changing where countries buy their fossil fuels from doesn't reduce global emissions one bit. We have seen this happen before with much of the offshoring that's already happened in Australia. We have seen jobs go offshore to countries with dirtier fuels, lower safety standards and lower labour standards. So we don't support the motions before us today, but what we do support is a strong plan. Labor's put forward a strong plan that will deliver \$24 billion in public investment to Australia's efforts to address climate change and energy transformation, energy transformation of our coal- and gas-powered electricity generation here in Australia. That public investment is absolutely critical to increasing the penetration of renewables in the electricity grid. The independent modelling of Labor's plan shows that we can reach 82 per cent penetration of that production of energy by 2030—that is, 82 per cent of our nation's electricity by 2030 will be renewable.

We know that this transformation is already happening. Renewables and storage are already the cheapest form of new energy. We know that the international outlook for coal is becoming more constrained. Ultimately the market and a commitment to global action will be the decider of timing of fossil fuel exits. But, I have to say, the market is already deciding. Eighty per cent of global GDP is already decarbonising. This will have serious implications for our resources sector in coming years. We will be here to support the sector to reorganise itself to create the jobs of tomorrow.

We've got more than 140 countries worldwide signed up to the NZE2050. But this government's Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, and his National Party buddies like to pretend that the world won't change. They've got their heads well and truly in the sand. The simple fact is—and we know that the Greens know it already, but they have to find a deeper way of politicising this to wedge the Labor Party—Labor knows, business knows, Australians already know that global capital is already moving.

Here with Prime Minister Morrison we have yet again a man without a plan. We have a Prime Minister without a vision and a path to get us to the future, to get us to that better future that we all, as Australians, deserve. There hasn't been a new coal-fired power station built in Australia since 2009. Given how renewable energy generation has now become dominant since then, the Labor Party doesn't see that changing. The Greens would have Australia exit coal and gas tomorrow, but with no plan for workers, communities or our energy system. We are making those plans for that transition.

The government tries to use taxpayer funds for coal-fired power stations that the market won't even touch. Labor knows that this exposes taxpayers to a massive carbon liability. So here we are with clowns to the left and jokers to the right. We have an opportunity here for a solid, stable government that believes in real action on climate change. We will have that opportunity before us at the next election. We're confident in the way that we are taking our climate change policies out to the Australian people. They have strong support from business, strong support from environmental groups and strong support from the community.

We've seen in the last two months alone the closure of three coal-fired power stations in our country being brought forward. With the election imminent, we're not here blaming Scott Morrison and his energy minister for those closures. The fact is that those closures have nothing to do with government policy. This is about the market operating.

Senator ROBERTS (Queensland) (17:25): As a servant to the people of Queensland and Australia, all I can say is: here we go again. The Greens, Labor, Liberal and Nationals seem to think that science occurs when someone says the words 'the science says'. That is a lie; that is a delusion—a dangerous lie and a dangerous delusion. Empirical scientific evidence, measured observations, decide science when presented within a causal framework that proves cause and effect. The Greens never present empirical scientific evidence showing cause and effect.

Let's assess each of the Greens' statements and implied claims and the empirical scientific evidence that exists. Their first claim is there is global heating. The global atmosphere has not warmed since 1995, especially when you include analysis of natural El Nino cycles. There has been no increase for 27 years. The longest temperature trend in the last 140 years has been the 40 years from 1936 to 1976—40 years of cooling. It was warmer by far in Australia

in the 1880s and 1890s. It was far warmer than today. Today is now cooler than 97 per cent of the Holocene—that period of Earth's history of the last 10,000 years since the last glaciers. There's no heating—end of story.

Let's continue. They make the statement that the burning of coal, oil and gas is the primary cause. Human use of hydrocarbon fuels leads to the production of water vapour, H₂O, and carbon dioxide. Water vapour has a net cooling effect on the planet. Human carbon dioxide is a plant food. It's essential for all life on this planet. It increases plant growth as it gets higher in the atmosphere and it has a net cooling effect because of the vegetation.

The next question is: does human carbon dioxide affect the level of carbon dioxide in the air? That's fundamental. During the global financial crisis we had a natural experiment for the whole planet. We saw a seven per cent reduction in the level of carbon dioxide produced by human activity, industrial and transportation activity, yet the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere continued to increase. So we cut our carbon dioxide and the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere increased. In 2020 we had a second planetary experiment with the COVID restrictions. We had a bigger decrease in human carbon dioxide output yet the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere continued to increase.

Human production of carbon dioxide does not and cannot affect the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere—full stop. Nature alone controls the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, regardless of what we do. Each year nature alone produces 32 times the level of carbon dioxide that we produce. Entire human activity is just one thirty-second of what nature produces. Nature produces 97 per cent of Earth's carbon dioxide every year. The oceans contain, in dissolved form, 50 to 70 times the carbon dioxide in Earth's entire atmosphere. Slight cooling in the ocean temperatures leads to absorption of carbon dioxide, and slight warming leads to release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Nature alone controls the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

Let's have a look at some other statistics. Let's look at floods in Brisbane and South-East Queensland. In the last 100 years there were two major floods. In the previous 90 years there were nine major floods in 1893 and 1841—far higher than any recent flood. In the summer of 1893 Brisbane endured three floods within three months. There has been no increase in tropical cyclones. There has been a slight decrease or flattening in frequency and severity. Today's fires are far less than in the past. Heatwaves are much shorter and much cooler than in the 1880s and 1890s. Don't believe me? Go and see the Bureau of Meteorology data. Next is reef bleaching. It's natural. Record cooling in the southern Great Barrier Reef in June 2008 saw the coral bleaching. It's caused by symbiosis in the corals.

Who pays for these lies? The people of Australia, especially the poor. The Greens' lies are dishonest, treasonous and a betrayal of Australia and Australians.

Senator ANTIC (South Australia) (17:31): Here we are again on groundhog day—more alarmist rhetoric from the Australian Greens, who choose to take up the Senate's time moving a motion straight from the mouth of the child prophet of their climate cult, Greta Thunberg. It's a motion so out of step with the global crisis in Europe. It's one that would destroy jobs, industries and livelihoods all across Australia, particularly in regional Australia. What is most concerning about this is we know that, if the election goes the way of Labor, there's more to come. We know that because this will be the ransom for the Greens to support the Labor government. Every bill, every motion and every vote will depend on the Greens' support.

Petrol prices have risen dramatically following the breakout of war in Ukraine, climbing from \$1.60 per litre in December to over \$2 in March 2022, and there doesn't appear to be any sign of it slowing anytime soon. Former US President Donald Trump was absolutely right to work towards making America energy-independent. He understood that relying on foreign powers, like Russia, China and the Middle East, was not a practical long-term option. These are nations that do not have our best interests or the best interests of the West at heart. Their values are not compatible with ours, and to remain dependent on energy in which they are involved is dangerous.

Here in Australia we're blessed with natural resources—oil, coal, gas and uranium. We have the resources to ensure Australia is less dependent on foreign powers. So why don't we do it? Because we're continuing to pander to nonsense like this. The Greens Left obsession with climate change is making this country weak. They've failed to grasp the importance of ensuring Australia's energy independence, ignoring the fact that drilling can actually be done safely and efficiently, and that it ensures that we don't remain precariously dependent on other nations for our energy security. These are the same Australian Greens who have so little regard for this country that they stand on a defence policy platform which seeks to reduce our defence spending. It's a platform which seeks to slash defence spending at a time when the prospects of conflict are rising every single day.

Senator Thorpe interjecting—

Senator ANTIC: Listen to this, Senator Thorpe; you'll learn something. This is a policy platform which seeks global cooperation facilitated by peaceful, non-violent conflict. This is true. It's straight from their website. It says: Nonviolent conflict resolution is the most effective way of promoting peace.

Those are two fairly realistic prospects, right there. I can just see it: if the Labor Party make government, they'll make Adam Bandt the foreign minister. They'll send him off with his little hemp bag, and he'll sit down with Putin and Xi and they'll talk about peaceful solutions. It's hilarious.

When an unexpected crisis comes up, like Russia's invasion of Ukraine, pressure is brought to bear on the international energy market, and it's Australian families who end up spending more on petrol and who endure the tremendous financial strain. That's a matter that's lost on our friends across the chamber. That means Australians have less to spend on their groceries and on their lifestyle, and it causes the economy to lag. This is because, frankly, too many in this place and too many in the community aren't prepared to stand up to the petulant Left. This is a movement which has been telling us for the past 50 years that we're going to get a mass extinction episode in the next decade, one after the other. The Greens would rather have us dependent on China, Russia and the Middle East than energy independent.

Despite the Norwegian company Equinor having, sadly, been forced to pull out of drilling in the Great Australian Bight, there will be others that will seek to do so, and we should be ensuring that we allow every possible opportunity for them to do so. Rather than shamefully celebrating the bullying of these projects out of town, these green Left activists should put down the French champagne, turn off the Tesla and stand up for Aussie jobs. What's important is that the Australian government continue to ignore the voices of the radical Left and encourage companies to explore and drill the bight, which could still be, if we make it so, Australia's North Sea. Let's be clear. I'm happy to call for drilling in the Great Australian Bight. It should be explored, drilled and used safely for the greater Australian good, not left on the shelf to aid and abet phoney crony capitalists and the interests of our strategic foes like the Chinese Communist Party. Australians need to reject the false prophets of green politics.

The same applies, by the way, to nuclear power. If the climate catastrophists are so concerned with carbon emissions, why not utilise a form of energy that produces zero emissions and is energy efficient as a way of generating power? The science tells us it's safe. Remember the science? Could it be that following the science is simply a rhetorical sleight of hand to bully others into not questioning their ideology? We have to make the most of those opportunities that living in this country affords us and be prepared for crises like what's happening in the Ukraine as they arise. We're blessed to live in this country. Its natural resources are plentiful. Yet we continue to ignore what's available on our doorstep to appease the climate cultists.

Like Australia, the US is languishing under increased fuel prices, due mainly to its energy dependence under President Biden, who could have kept alive the Keystone XL pipeline project, which would have seen almost a million barrels of oil carried from Canada to Nebraska in one single day. Construction of the pipeline had been revived by President Trump after being cancelled by Obama, only for it to be cancelled by Biden again. Look what's happened. As usual, this kowtowing to the green Left leaves the West and countries like the United States in a far more vulnerable position, for the non-existent greater good of fighting climate change, while they continue to completely ignore countries like China and India, which pollute far more than any Western country.

How often is the extreme Left going to beat the drum of climate action in this country? No emissions reductions will ever satisfy them, because, if they admit that there's nothing more to talk about and that Australia's doing its fair share, their political relevance drops away. This country has in fact, as we have said so many times in this chamber before, both met and beaten its 2020 targets. Emissions are 20 per cent below 2005 levels, which was the baseline for the Paris Agreement, and emissions have fallen faster than in many comparable advanced economies, outpacing reductions in the United States. The latest projections show Australia is on track to reduce emissions by 35 per cent by 2030. Yet it's still not enough. It will never be enough. It's as if green activists are actually interested not in the environment but just in their job-destroying ideology.

The invasion of Ukraine has meant that Western nations are thoroughly distancing themselves from Russia, which has meant that a large portion of our oil must be sourced either from elsewhere or from inside our own borders. China has been spouting concerning rhetoric regarding Taiwan for some time now, and the day may soon arrive when there is an attempt at invasion. We have to ensure that we're self-reliant. We have to ensure that we're not dependent on other countries whose values do not align with our own. It's time to stop pandering to the ideological Left. There's no good reason for Australia not to be far more energy independent. If we are to prioritise our long-term national security, not to mention our economy and the wellbeing of the Australian family, there's really no other option. So I say: let's start drilling the bight.

Senator WATT (Queensland) (17:38): I rise to oppose this motion, which is yet another Greens stunt. I suppose we are drawing to the end of this parliamentary sitting, and every week of this parliamentary sitting has been characterised by Greens stunts, so why would anything change now as this parliament comes to an end?

Climate change is a real issue. We are feeling it, seeing it and experiencing it every day right now. As we speak, northern New South Wales is flooding again. South-East Queensland has had heavy rainfall. We see heatwaves and

bushfires more often and of more intensity. All of the scientists tell us that, unless we take serious action on climate change, the situation will get worse with more natural disasters more frequently and more intensely.

So climate change is a real issue and it is one that the parliament should take seriously and it is one that, as a country, we should take action on. However, the way to deal with it is through a real plan that has been thought through, costed, modelled and which establishes exactly what needs to be done in the most effective, most efficient way. That is the plan that Labor has put forward.

Labor has put forward a comprehensive plan, as opposed to the Greens putting forward a three-line motion. That's the extent of the Greens plans for dealing with the very real challenge that we have around climate change. So, it is only Labor that has a real plan to deal with the challenge of climate change. On the one hand, we have the government which doesn't even believe in climate change if you just scratch below the surface. We have had under this government a lost decade of action on climate change where we've seen temperatures increase, we've seen sea levels rise and we've seen natural disasters become more frequent and more intense with no action, and simply denial from this government about the need to do anything. Finally, when they were dragged kicking and screaming to committing to net zero emissions by 2050, all they had to back it up was a flimsy booklet marketing-man style from the Prime Minister which. It relies on technology that has not even been invented yet as a way of the getting to net zero by 2050.

Their policy is a complete joke. It has more holes in it than a piece of Swiss cheese, and the reason for that is that they don't fundamentally believe that climate change is a real risk. What they do believe is that they are now in danger of losing seats, particularly to Independents in Sydney and Melbourne. That is the only thing that has prompted the government to even come up with a flimsy booklet that relies on technology that has not yet existed. That's the government's position.

On the other side, we have the Greens who argue that we should and can exit the use of coal and gas tomorrow. That's what this motion goes to. They have no plan for the workers who will be affected by that. They have no plan for what that means for the energy grid. They don't recognise that until we do have renewables at scale we will continue to need coal and gas to back up our electricity system. That's just a reality. Unfortunately, the Greens are denying that reality and they have no plan for what happens to workers, the energy grid or people's ongoing need to use electricity. The Greens plan also says nothing about the fact that other countries continue to consume coal and gas, continue to mine it, continue to supply it and continue to use it. Even if we followed the Greens motion, it would do absolutely nothing about the rest of the world's use of coal and gas and in fact we'd probably see dirtier resources being used rather than those produced in Australia.

In contrast to the Greens and the LNP, Labor is the only party that is taking a real plan to deal with climate change to the coming election. Our powering the nation policy, which we launched at the end of last year, will create jobs, cut emissions and power prices. They are the things that we need to do as a country to tackle the economic challenge that we have around our future energy sources, and that is the policy that will deliver real change and real action on climate change, not stunts like this from the Greens party—three-line motions that will do nothing to fix these problems, that won't deliver cheaper power, that won't reduce emissions and certainly won't look after people's jobs.

I'd encourage the Greens to reflect on their behaviour and the way they approach this issue. This is a significant issue. It deserves a well thought-through plan, and that is not what the Greens are offering us.

Senator THORPE (Victoria) (17:43): I've just come back from Larrakia country, Darwin, where I listened to and sat with around 40 traditional owners, senior law people and junggayi. They told me to give you this message: 'We need all of the governments to listen to us. We don't want no fracking in the Beetaloo. This is our land, our future, our water, our life.' Aunty Nancy McDinny told me to tell you fellas to actually go to Borroloola, go drink their water, live like they live and go and give them what they need, because none of you have. You all talk about it in here. None of you have been there. You get to sit here and make decisions for country you don't know and could never know or understand. Traditional owners do not want fracking—not now, not ever. Some of you probably have Aunty Nancy's paintings in your offices. When it comes to actually listening to what she wants for country and community, you're all of a sudden not interested, but you'll rave and rant about your dot paintings, I'm sure. Do not frack the Northern Territory.

We also heard how the Northern Land Council is helping these mining companies, like Santos and Origin, destroy country and water. Both those companies had to be summoned to attend a separate hearing because they flat out refused to look traditional owners in the eye in Darwin. Shame! Traditional owners told us that the Northern Land Council just refuses to hear the word 'no'. Traditional owners have time and time again said no to fracking, no to destruction of country and heritage and no to the poisoning of water. The Northern Land Council is complicit in the lies that gas companies are telling our people. What's worse is that the NLC is meant to be protecting country and working with traditional owners. It's absolutely shameful and disgraceful and disrespectful. The sooner that this

parliament investigates the dodgy dealings of these land councils, the better. I say to these dodgy land councils: I'm watching you. Our people are watching you, and we are coming. You are on notice.

In conclusion, I would like to thank my colleagues Senator Cox and Senator McCarthy, who sat with traditional owners, who were part of the story and who were part of listening. How powerful it was to see three deadly, staunch black women senators sitting in front of these people, genuinely listening to what they had to say and genuinely taking on their fight and their voice and bringing it into this place. Thank you, my sisters.

Don't frack the Northern Territory. Respect the traditional owners. Again, if you have a dot painting in your office that you admire each day and you tell your family and your friends about, then maybe look at the story of that dot painting, because you're killing the person who painted it. You're killing the land of the people who painted them. You're taking their children, and you're doing all you can to destroy everything that they are and everything that their country means to them. Give up your dot paintings or don't frack the NT—it's pretty simple. I urge all of you senators with the dot paintings to go back and have a look at them. If you don't take them down, I hope they haunt you.

Senator AYRES (New South Wales) (17:48): If the Greens political party is going to treat this chamber like a sort of youth model United Nations, I'd prefer it if the motions were a little bit more interesting and original. It is nothing if not predictable. We got the usual thundering speech at the beginning from the barefoot investor. It is good for the social media posts—I get it—but it is a tired contribution from a party that looks and sounds exhausted. They have been in this Senate for 34 long years, and this is all that they have, and a record of zero achievement. A few decades ago, there was at least some energy to them. Perhaps they had enough of the old activists still around to put some fuel in their ideological tank. Instead, the party of protest has become the party of performance art and street theatre. They've lost their ambition. They've lost their drive. Now this is all just about securing the little 10 per cent that each of them need to come back here. It keeps them occupied, I suppose—

An honourable senator interjecting—

Senator AYRES: It's going to get better! To turn to the substance of this motion—although 'substance' is an optimistic assessment of what we have before us—Labor won't be supporting it, but that's a foregone conclusion. It was written so that Labor would oppose it; that's what it was for. It's so the Greens have something to share on social media, so they can continue to justify their position in this chamber. The Greens aren't talking to the communities that actually have to live with the consequences of their ideas.

The Labor Party is the only political party in this country that's capable of enacting real action on climate change because we actually come from those communities. Consider Labor's candidate for the Hunter, Dan Repacholi, who actually works in the mining industry. Dan Repacholi has a more sophisticated understanding of climate change and what action on climate change means for the Australian energy system than the entire Greens caucus combined, because he lives it. It's his workmates, his family and his community who are in the middle of this debate. And as the future member for the Hunter, he will continue to fight for them and he'll continue to fight for their future, instead of treating this like a debating society.

I understand that it's attractive to have a fight between the Greens and the citizen scientists over there: poor old Senator Roberts, Senator Antic and some of those other characters who sit at home and twiddle the dials and fill out their own spreadsheets and try and work out what's really going on because the scientists must be conning them. Poor old Senator Roberts does it on the vaccines, too. Actually, there is a more serious issue here that goes to the heart of how this country is going to deal with the failure of the last decade and the climate conflicts of the last decade that have left us stone-cold, motherless last, instead of leading the world on these questions.

There is an alternative strategy and there is an alternative plan. Do you know what people should do? They should get behind it. This resolution comes as the floodwaters are working their way through the Richmond River and Wilsons River systems in Lismore. Once again, families are facing up to the consequences there. We should not be ambulance-chasing about these issues; we should be solving problems. After 34 long years, we've got to do better than this.

There is an alternative plan: the Albanese Labor plan. With \$24 billion of public investment, it is a fully costed plan. It is the most effectively costed plan from an opposition in Australian political history. There will be 604,000 jobs, with five out of six of those jobs in the regions. By 2030, 82 per cent of the power in the electricity grid will be from renewable sources. Power prices will be down; that's guaranteed. There's a 43 per cent target by 2030 and a target of net zero by 2050 with a pathway to get there. There will be investment in manufacturing. You can choose. My view is that people ought to get behind a plan that could actually work.

Senator COX (Western Australia) (17:53): I rise to make a contribution to this urgency motion calling for a moratorium on new coal, oil and gas projects. We are in a climate crisis. There is no way around this, and coal and gas are the leading causes of climate change. This is not just the opinion of the Australian Greens. This is actually

detailed in the IPCC report. The science is perfectly clear, and every tonne of coal and gas burned increases the intensity and the speed of changes to the climate. Across Australia, there is a climate crisis. It's caused by the mining and burning of coal and gas. The continued mining and burning of coal and gas is causing more frequent floods, heatwaves and bushfires that we are watching in real time. And, unfortunately, it's costing lives.

In my home state of Western Australia, we know this all too well. Over the summer, we experienced record-breaking heatwaves and devastating bushfires. Those heatwaves were both in Perth and in the Pilbara region, and we watched those bushfires in real time in the South West. Parts of this beautiful country are now becoming unlivable due to the extreme temperatures, and I wish other senators had hung around for this detail: in Fitzroy Crossing, in Western Australia, currently they experience 67 days per year over 40 degrees. If we are to stay on track with either the government's policies or the opposition's policies, by 2050 they'll be experiencing 155 days over 40 degrees, which is basically unlivable.

We need real climate action now. We need real climate action, meaning phasing out coal and gas by 2030 and keeping climate-destroying coal and gas in the ground, where they belong. Real climate action means banning new coal and gas projects and stopping the gaslighting that is happening—the false narrative that is being created by this government. Real climate action means protecting our environment for future generations, both mine and yours.

The burning question here is: what's stopping the Liberals and Labor from taking action on climate change? Well, it's no secret that both the Liberals and Labor take millions of dollars of donations from coal and gas billionaires and big corporations. So this is for the folks out there watching, the Australian public. In fact, in every budget, the government slips into the books billions more of your taxes, earmarked for coal and gas corporations. From these tax breaks that they give to those billionaires and big corporations, they give handouts. They spend public money on making the greatest challenge that we face far worse by backing more coal and gas projects across this country. So you won't hear Labor criticise the Liberals' fossil fuel handouts, which is why only putting the Greens in the balance of power will stop the pouring of more fuel onto the climate fire.

Dirty donations explain why the Labor Party is also giving the green light to climate-wrecking projects like the one that's operating in my backyard in Western Australia: the Scarborough project, on the lands of the Murujuga people. The Scarborough gas project is a climate bomb and will create pollution equalling that of 15 coal-fired power stations every single year. It's worse than Adani. In fact, it will be like Juukan 2.0. This federal government, as well as the state government, claim that major oil and gas projects like Scarborough will create jobs. But what they won't tell you is that, in WA, their workforce in fact does not create jobs for Western Australians. They would be better off supporting literally any other industry, because it's less than one per cent of WA's workforce.

Political capture by the big coal and gas corporations through donations, through that revolving door of lobbyists and through job offers and well-funded disinformation campaigns continues to see the Labor and Liberal parties throw money at their incumbent fossil fuel companies, all at the expense of slowing down that ever-present transition that we need to make. I'm proud to be from the only party that doesn't take money from the fossil fuel industry or big corporations, because we won't take money from the Woodsides and Rio Tintos of this world.

The Greens have a plan for real action on climate change, but the only way we can do that is to kick the Liberals out and to push a Labor government further and faster on climate action, by voting 1 for the Greens. A small change in the vote can put the Greens into shared power again so we can push Labor to go further and faster on tackling the climate crisis and making those billionaires and big corporations pay their fair share of tax so that we can get money back into our community services, where it's needed. In shared power, we can tackle the climate crisis, creating hundreds of thousands of jobs and making those corporations pay their fair share of tax so we can create a safer future for all of us. We can power a clean energy revolution that, again, will create all of those long-term jobs, enabling our workers in fossil fuel industries to transition away from polluting industries. We know the Labor Party—

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator Walsh): Thank you, Senator Cox. The time allotted for this debate has expired.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The question is that the urgency motion be agreed to.

The Senate divided. [18:05]

(The Deputy President—Senator Lines)

Ayes.....	8
Noes.....	30
Majority.....	22

AYES

Cox, D.
McKim, N. J. (Teller)
Thorpe, L. A.

Faruqi, M.
Rice, J. E.
Whish-Wilson, P. S.

Hanson-Young, S. C.
Steele-John, J. A.

NOES

Abetz, E.
Cash, M. C.
Davey, P. M.
Henderson, S. M.
Lines, S.
McKenzie, B.
O'Neill, D. M.
Ruston, A.
Small, B. J.
Urquhart, A. E. (Teller)

Askew, W.
Chandler, C.
Farrell, D. E.
Hughes, H. A.
McDonald, S. E.
McLachlan, A. L.
O'Sullivan, M. A.
Scarr, P. M.
Smith, D. A.
Van, D. A.

Bragg, A. J.
Colbeck, R. M.
Fawcett, D. J.
Keneally, K. K.
McGrath, J.
Mirabella, G.
Paterson, J. W.
Sheldon, A. V.
Stoker, A. J.
Watt, M. P.

Question negatived

PETITIONS**Primate Experimentation**

Senator FARUQI (New South Wales) (18:06): by leave—I table a nonconforming petition to ban primate experiments.

Aged Care

Senator RICE (Victoria—Deputy Australian Greens Whip) (18:07): by leave—I table a nonconforming petition signed by 20,000 people to ensure that physiotherapy and allied health are covered for nursing home residents.

DOCUMENTS**Consideration**

The following documents were considered:

Commonwealth Ombudsman—Activities in monitoring controlled operations conducted by the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity, the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission and the Australian Federal Police—Report for 2020-21. Motion to take note of document moved by Senator Urquhart. Consideration to resume on Thursday.

Department of Home Affairs—Protection visas—Statements pursuant to the order of the Senate of 14 November 2019—January and February 2022. Motion to take note of document moved by Senator Urquhart. Consideration to resume on Thursday.

BUDGET**Consideration By Estimates Committees**

Senator McGRATH (Queensland—Deputy Government Whip in the Senate) (18:11): Pursuant to order and at the request of the chairs of the respective committees, I present reports from the legislation committees in respect of the 2021-22 additional estimates, together with accompanying documents.

COMMITTEES**Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee****Additional Information**

Senator McGRATH (Queensland—Deputy Government Whip in the Senate) (18:11): On behalf of the chair of the Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee, I present additional information received by the committee on its inquiry into provisions of the COAG Legislation Amendment Bill 2021.

Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee**Additional Information**

Senator McGRATH (Queensland—Deputy Government Whip in the Senate) (18:11): On behalf of the chair of the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee, I present additional information received by the

committee on its inquiries into the provisions of the Religious Discrimination Bill 2021 and related bills, and the Social Media (Anti-Trolling) Bill 2022.

Corporations and Financial Services Joint Committee

Report

Senator McGRATH (Queensland—Deputy Government Whip in the Senate) (18:12): On behalf of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services, I present the report of the committee on the 2020-21 annual reports of bodies established under the ASIC Act.

Human Rights Committee

Report

Senator McGRATH (Queensland—Deputy Government Whip in the Senate) (18:12): On behalf of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights, I present *Human rights scrutiny report: report 1 of 2022* and *Human rights scrutiny report: report 2 of 2022*.

Law Enforcement Joint Committee

Report

Senator McGRATH (Queensland—Deputy Government Whip in the Senate) (18:12): On behalf of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement, I present the report of the committee entitled *Vaccine related fraud and security risks*, together with accompanying documents.

National Disability Insurance Scheme Joint Committee

Report

Senator McGRATH (Queensland—Deputy Government Whip in the Senate) (18:12): On behalf of the Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme, I present the report of the committee entitled *NDIS workforce final report*, together with accompanying documents.

Trade and Investment Growth Joint Committee

Report

Senator McGRATH (Queensland—Deputy Government Whip in the Senate) (18:12): On behalf of the Joint Standing Committee on Trade and Investment Growth, I present the report of the committee entitled *The prudential regulation of investment in Australia's export industries*.

DELEGATION REPORTS

Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum: 29th Annual Meeting

Senator McGRATH (Queensland—Deputy Government Whip in the Senate) (18:12): by leave—I present the report of the Australian Parliamentary Delegation to the 29th Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum, which took place virtually from 13 to 15 December 2021. I seek leave to move a motion to take note of the document.

Leave granted.

Senator McGRATH: I move:

That the Senate take note of the document.

Debate adjourned.

COMMITTEES

Public Works Joint Committee

Report

Senator McGRATH (Queensland—Deputy Government Whip in the Senate) (18:13): On behalf of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, I present the committee's second and third reports of 2022.

Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee

Report

Senator McGRATH (Queensland—Deputy Government Whip in the Senate) (18:13): Pursuant to order and at the request of the Chair of the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee, Senator Henderson, I present the report of the committee on the provisions of the Customs Amendment (Controlled Trials) Bill 2021, together with accompanying documents.

DELEGATION REPORTS

42nd Association of South-East Asian Nations Inter-Parliamentary Assembly

Senator McGRATH (Queensland—Deputy Government Whip in the Senate) (18:14): by leave—On behalf of Senator Fawcett, I present the report of the Australian Parliamentary Delegation to the 42nd ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, which took place virtually from 23 to 25 August 2021. I seek leave to incorporate a tabling statement into *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The statement read as follows—

I am pleased to present the report of the delegation to the 42nd ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, AIPA.

I was joined on this virtual delegation by Ms Maria Vamvakinou, the Member for Calwell, in August.

I would like to begin by congratulating Brunei Darussalam, this year's host nation, for holding a successful general assembly - the second AIPA assembly to be held virtually as a result of the pandemic.

As I said in the opening statement I made to the assembly as the head of delegation, ASEAN is a critical partner for Australia, a partner we have supported since ASEAN's creation. We share the same vision of prosperous, secure and vibrant societies, working to advance sustainable and inclusive development, within a peaceful region built on respect for the rule of law. We share the same concerns for our region, and work together to ensure it remains inclusive, resilient and open.

The theme of this year's assembly centred around digital inclusion. In the plenary sessions we both attended, as well as in the meeting of Women Parliamentarians of AIPA, which Ms Vamvakinou attended, the discussions focused on the great power that the digital economy has to transform the ASEAN region and the opportunities it creates for SMEs and innovation. However, as many speakers remarked, the possibility of rapid economic growth must not be pursued at the expense of inclusivity, safety and sustainability. I was pleased to note in my opening statement that Australia is working with ASEAN on digital trade and on cooperation to ensure robust cyber security.

Member countries' responses to the pandemic was a common thread throughout the discussions. Many speakers noted that one of the effects of COVID-19 had been the increased uptake of digital technologies, including by parliaments.

Some speakers also highlighted the need for member countries to progress legislation to ratify and implement the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which Australia is also a party to. I was encouraged by the discussion of the situation in Myanmar, following the coup in February, and the recognition of the need for action. A response to the coup in Myanmar was also the subject of committee discussion.

While the Australian delegation attended the plenary sessions, as an observer nation, we were not included in the committee meetings. If approved by the hosts, observing committee proceedings would be an opportunity for Australian delegations to deepen their understanding of AIPA and the challenges it must rise to, and we suggest that future delegations seek to attend select committee meetings in addition to the plenaries.

Online events have fewer chances for less formal engagement between delegates—for example, through bilateral meetings. Once circumstances permit, Australian participation in future AIPA assemblies should be in person again to allow more opportunities for engagement and relationship building with ASEAN counterparts.

Australia values its role as annual observers to the AIPA general assembly. We have always enjoyed strong relationships with the people and parliamentarians of ASEAN, and we look forward to continuing this, preferably in person in years to come.

COMMITTEES

Finance and Public Administration References Committee

Additional Information

Senator URQUHART (Tasmania—Opposition Whip in the Senate) (18:14): On behalf of the Chair of the Finance and Public Administration References Committee, Senator Ayres, I present additional information received by the Finance and Public Administration References Committee on its inquiry into the Urban Congestion Fund.

Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee

Report

Senator URQUHART (Tasmania—Opposition Whip in the Senate) (18:14): On behalf of Senator Carr, I present the report of the Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee on family and partner reunion visas, together with accompanying documents, and I move:

That the Senate take note of the report.

I seek leave to continue my remarks later.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

Public Accounts and Audit Committee

Documents

Senator SCARR (Queensland) (18:15): On behalf of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit I present this statement on the draft budget estimates of the Australian National Audit Office, the ANAO, and the Parliamentary Budget Office, the PBO.

The committee is required under the Public Accounts and Audit Committee Act 1951 and the Parliamentary Service Act 1999 to consider the draft budget estimates of the ANAO and the PBO and make recommendations to both houses of parliament regarding these estimates. For this year's budget, neither the ANAO nor the PBO has sought additional funding. The committee therefore endorses both the ANAO's and the PBO's draft budget estimates. The committee continues to consider both offices vital in supporting the work of this parliament.

The PBO's estimated expenses for 2022-23 amount to \$9.253 million. Over the last year, the PBO has modernised its ICT environment, shipped into a CLOUD based platform. This will have an ongoing impact on the PBO's budget, and the JCPAA will continue to monitor this over coming years.

The ANAO sought and received, with support from this committee, substantial budget supplementation in the 2021-22 budget, along with additional funding to support the staged implementation of the auditing of performance statements in the Australian public sector. The ANAO's estimated expenses for 2022-23 are \$90.462 million. In the last financial year the ANAO reported an operating loss of \$1.833 million, including through contracting costs to complete such audit work, investment in cyber-resilience and investments in data analytics, technology and capability.

I thank the Auditor-General and the Parliamentary Budget Officer for their work in support of the parliament and the JCPAA, and I also take this opportunity to thank Ms Lucy Wicks MP, member for Robertson, who chaired the committee, and Mr Julian Hill MP, member for Bruce, who was the deputy chair. I table the statement.

Privileges Committee

Report

Senator O'NEILL (New South Wales) (18:18): I wish to move a motion in relation to the 182nd report of the Committee of Privileges regarding a possible contempt. The report relates to the committee's inquiry into possible obstruction of the naval shipbuilding inquiry of the Economic References Committee. I move:

That recommendation 1 of the report be adopted.

Recommendation 1 is that the Senate adopt the committee's conclusion that no contempt be found in relation to this matter.

This inquiry was referred to the committee in June last year. The Senate required the committee to consider whether:

- any conduct of the former Minister for Defence, Senator Reynolds, or any other person amounted to an improper interference with the References Committee inquiry; and
- if so, whether any contempt was committed in that regard.

The committee sought and considered submissions and correspondence from the References Committee, Senator Patrick, the late Senator Gallacher; Minister Reynolds and Minister Payne (in her capacity as Minister representing the Minister for Defence).

Briefly, this matter relates to the references committee seeking access to Australian Industry Capability plans which were relevant to the naval shipbuilding inquiry. The references committee made initial requests for unredacted versions of documents in February and May 2020 which were declined by the Department of Defence in June 2020.

The chair of the committee lodged a motion to order the secretary of Defence to produce the documents to the references committee. The Senate agreed to that motion on 6 October 2020 but the then Minister for Defence declined to provide the documents. The minister made a public interest immunity claim centring on the commercial sensitivity of the documents.

In November 2020, the Senate resolved not to accept the public interest immunity claim and ordered the minister to provide the documents to the committee. In response to this order, heavily redacted versions of the documents were provided to the references committee including one document which was more heavily redacted than a previous version of the document released under the Freedom of Information Act. That document had already been published on the committee's website.

Criteria for a finding of contempt

The first criterion the committee must consider under privilege resolution 3 is whether the conduct of officials or the ministers in withholding the documents could amount to a substantial obstruction of the references committee performing its functions. The inquiry powers of the houses and their committees are essential to support the houses obtaining the information they require to effectively perform their legislative and accountability functions. It cannot be doubted that a committee being unable to obtain information at the heart of a matter referred to it for inquiry could substantially obstruct the committee in the performance of its duties.

The second criterion the Privileges Committee is required to consider is whether there is another, more appropriate, remedy available (other than the Senate's power to punish contempts). The committee accepted that this power is undoubtedly a remedy available where a committee is obstructed or a Senate order is not complied with. However, as a matter of practice, the Senate has generally pursued political or procedural remedies rather than having recourse to the contempt power.

The committee considered the most obvious alternative remedy in this case was the provision of the documents to the references committee on terms that allowed it to proceed with the inquiry. It therefore sought advice from Minister Payne and the chair of the references committee as to whether arrangements had been agreed to provide access to the documents on such terms. Negotiations for provision of the documents required by the references committee were, to say the least, protracted. However, the references committee ultimately reached agreement with the Department on appropriate arrangements for access to the documents.

The final criterion the committee was required to consider relates to culpability and, in particular, whether any person alleged to have engaged in conduct which could constitute a contempt had a reasonable excuse for that conduct. However, the committee did not consider it necessary to evaluate the issue of culpability because of the conclusions it had reached in relation to the other criteria.

Findings

The committee noted that ministers and public servants have direct accountability obligations to the parliament. The government's own guidelines for official witnesses appearing before parliamentary committees state that they 'are intended to assist in the freest possible flow of information to the parliament'.

The intention of the government guidelines was not fulsomely adhered to in the initial responses by officials to requests for information from the References Committee.

While the committee acknowledged the public interest grounds raised by the former minister and maintained by Minister Payne, the harm to the public interest would only have arisen from disclosure of the documents beyond members of the references committee. Senate committees routinely handle sensitive information without unauthorised disclosure and, where there are particular sensitivities, committees often accommodate arrangements which provide added assurance that the confidentiality of information will be maintained.

The committee noted its concern that officials were unable to expeditiously reach agreement with the references committee to provide the information in a manner which allowed that committee to perform the inquiry delegated to it by the Senate.

It should not require reference of a matter as a potential contempt before officials reach a satisfactory arrangement to provide information relevant to a Senate inquiry on terms that protect any genuinely sensitive information.

As the information has now been provided, the committee concluded that no minister or official should be found to have committed a contempt in this matter. In doing so, the committee recognised that the contempt jurisdiction is primarily a remedial jurisdiction which exists to prevent obstruction of the Senate, its committees or senators performing their functions.

Accordingly, the committee has recommended that no contempt be found in relation to the matters referred.

However, the committee cautioned that it cannot allow a creeping understanding that orders of the Senate or its committees may be ignored with impunity. The Privileges Committee has rightly been sparing in its recommendations that a finding of contempt should be made and reticent to recommend further penalties where a contempt has been found. There should be no doubt that it will do so if it is necessary to resolve such matters without implicitly conceding an unfounded constraint on the powers of the Senate.

In short, the committee considered these were matters which ought to have been promptly resolved through negotiation between committees and officials applying the direction in the government guidelines for officials to assist in "the freest possible flow of information to the parliament".

Recommendation for audit

Finally, the committee is concerned by the protracted delay in relevant information being provided to a committee inquiry by the Department of Defence. The committee therefore endorsed a recommendation of the late Senator Alex Gallacher that: the Auditor-General be asked to conduct an audit of compliance with obligations to respond to

the Senate and its committees in a timely and accurate manner. Specifically, the committee recommended that ANAO conduct an audit of the Department of Defence and consider auditing compliance by other large departments. Such an audit would help to ensure that departments and agencies have a clear understanding of their responsibilities to the parliament and processes which support them effectively fulfilling those responsibilities.

I commend the report to the Senate.

Question agreed to.

Consideration

The following committee reports and government responses were considered:

Autism—Select Committee—Services, support and life outcomes for autistic Australians—Report. Motion to take note of report moved by Senator Hanson-Young. Consideration to resume on Thursday.

Community Affairs References Committee—Purpose, intent and adequacy of the Disability Support Pension—Report. Motion to take note of report moved by Senator McCarthy. Consideration to resume on Thursday.

Environment and Communications References Committee—Oil and gas exploration and production in the Beetaloo Basin—Second interim report. Motion to take note of report moved by Senator Hanson-Young. Consideration to resume on Thursday.

Job Security—Select Committee—The job insecurity report. Motion to take note of report moved by Senator Hanson-Young. Consideration to resume on Thursday.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee—Future of Australia's aviation sector, in the context of COVID-19 and conditions post pandemic—Report. Motion to take note of report moved by Senator McCarthy. Consideration to resume on Thursday.

DOCUMENTS

Myanmar

Order for the Production of Documents

Senator STOKER (Queensland—Assistant Minister to the Attorney-General, Assistant Minister for Women and Assistant Minister for Industrial Relations) (18:29): I table a document concerning the order for the production of documents concerning Myanmar.

COMMITTEES

Parliamentary Standards Joint Select Committee

Membership

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (18:29): The President has received letters nominating senators to be members of the Parliamentary Standards Joint Select Committee.

Senator STOKER (Queensland—Assistant Minister to the Attorney-General, Assistant Minister for Women and Assistant Minister for Industrial Relations) (18:29): by leave—I move:

That senators be appointed to committees as follows:

Parliamentary Standards—Joint Select Committee—

Appointed—

Senators Chandler, Faruqi, McDonald and McLachlan

Participating members: Senators Abetz, Antic, Askew, Bragg, Canavan, Davey, Fawcett, Fierravanti-Wells, Hanson, Henderson, Hughes, McGrath, McMahon, Mirabella, Molan, O'Sullivan, Paterson, Rennick, Roberts, Scarr, Small, Dean Smith, Van and Waters

Question agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 18:30 to 20:30

BUDGET

Statements and Documents

Senator BIRMINGHAM (South Australia—Minister for Finance, Leader of the Government in the Senate and Vice-President of the Executive Council) (20:30): I table the following documents:

The Budget 2022-23—Statement by the Treasurer (Mr Frydenberg), dated 29 March 2022.

Budget papers—

Budget strategy and outlook—Budget paper No. 1—2022-23.

Budget measures—Budget paper No. 2—2022-23.

Federal financial relations—Budget paper No. 3—2022-23.

Agency resourcing—Budget paper No. 4—2022-23.

Ministerial Statements—

Women's budget statement 2022-23, 29 March 2022.

Regional ministerial budget statement 2022-23—A secure future for regional Australia, 29 March 2022.

I seek leave to move a motion in relation to the documents.

Leave granted.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: I move:

That the Senate take note of the statement and documents.

Debate adjourned.

Proposed Expenditure

Senator BIRMINGHAM (South Australia—Minister for Finance, Leader of the Government in the Senate and Vice-President of the Executive Council) (20:30): I table the following documents:

Particulars of proposed expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2023.

Particulars of certain proposed expenditure in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2023.

Particulars of proposed expenditure in relation to the parliamentary departments in respect of the year ending on 30 June 2023.

I seek leave to move a motion in relation to the documents.

Leave granted.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: I move:

That the documents be referred to legislation committees for the consideration of the estimates.

Question agreed to.

Portfolio Budget Statements

The PRESIDENT (20:31): I table portfolio budget statements for 2022-23 for the Department of the Senate, the Parliamentary Budget Office and the Department of Parliamentary Services.

Senator BIRMINGHAM (South Australia—Minister for Finance, Leader of the Government in the Senate and Vice-President of the Executive Council) (20:31): I table portfolio budget statements for 2022-23 for portfolio and executive departments as listed on the Dynamic Red.

The list read as follows—

Estimates of proposed expenditure for 2022-23—Portfolio budget statements—Portfolios and executive departments—

Agriculture, Water and the Environment portfolio.

Attorney-General's portfolio.

Defence portfolio.

Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Education, Skills and Employment portfolio.

Finance portfolio.

Foreign Affairs and Trade portfolio.

Health portfolio.

Home Affairs portfolio.

Industry, Science, Energy and Resources portfolio.

Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications portfolio.

Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio.

Social Services portfolio.

Treasury portfolio.

ADJOURNMENT

The PRESIDENT: I propose the question:

That the Senate do now adjourn.

Mercedes-Benz

Senator O'NEILL (New South Wales) (20:31): I rise to speak about an issue of great concern to the hardworking car dealers of Mercedes Benz and the car dealer network in Australia more broadly. The imposition of the agency

model by car dealers Honda and, now, Mercedes-Benz onto Australian dealers is a disaster for these local businesses who provide local jobs, apprenticeships and community sponsorship, and, of course, pay their taxes.

I'm in this place to stand up for fairness—fairness in workplaces, fairness in our society and fairness in business. The growing power and arrogance of large multinationals in Australia have found fertile soil in the government's stuttering actions to introduce fairness into our franchising sector. I particularly want to raise the issues regarding the agency model that have arisen since those initial hearings on the car dealership industry in Australia.

Seven key assertions were made by the senior executives of Mercedes-Benz in statements to the Senate Education and Employment References Committee on 24 November 2020. Mercedes-Benz asserted that the dealers were happy with the proposed changes to the agency model, that they had consulted widely with the dealers regarding the changes, that the agency model would be a win for dealers, that the reason Mercedes-Benz was shifting to the agency model was driven by consumer benefits, that dealer profits would not be impacted, that Mercedes-Benz was committed to the dealers for the long term and that Mercedes-Benz would not profit from the shift to an agency model.

I assert under the weight of current evidence that Mercedes-Benz appear to have misled the Senate committee. The detailed statement of claim from the Mercedes-Benz dealers in their current court action instead pours water on those seven claims. The dealers were not happy with the proposed changes and in multiple meetings they voted overwhelmingly not to proceed with the agency model. Mercedes-Benz did not consult widely with dealers. In fact, when dealers tried to negotiate some of the terms of the model, Mercedes-Benz issued a dispute notice under the franchising code. The agency model is not a win for dealers. If instituted, the agency model will cut the profitability of some dealerships by over 50 per cent, and the experience, now that the model has been introduced, has sadly lived up to the dire predictions. The agency model is not about consumer benefits. It merely is about ensuring greater profits in Stuttgart instead of main streets in suburban and regional Australia.

Dealer profits will be impacted. Deloitte analysis said that the profitability under the new model would decline by more than 50 per cent. Mercedes-Benz were not committed to dealers long term; dealers were issued non-renewal notices as a means of terminating their agreements. Mercedes-Benz will profit from the shift to the agency model. This will take profits out of dealerships and straight into the pockets of Mercedes-Benz. This is an extremely serious matter and begs the question: if Mercedes-Benz are willing to perpetuate untruth to the members of the Australian Senate, who else are they willing to lie to? These untruths must be called out in the public interest—in the interests of Australian businesses and Australian dealer networks. The Australian Senate must not be treated with contempt by large multinationals who are only concerned with extracting profit and shipping it offshore.

I will be watching developments and, given the seriousness of my concerns, I intend to take this matter to the Senate Education and Employment References Committee to request that that it be raised with the President of the Senate as a matter of privilege.

Budget

Senator MIRABELLA (Victoria) (20:36): I rise this evening to speak to this year's federal budget and a specific item contained within it—that is, the \$1.6 billion for the vitally important Beveridge Intermodal Freight Terminal, also known as the BIFT. I was honoured to have been present while the Treasurer delivered the national budget earlier in the other place. This is a budget that I believe will be well received by the public, because, at its core, this budget is a blueprint for securing Australia's strong economy and safe and secure future. It is an investment budget. It delivers more jobs and more tax relief and, importantly, it invests in rail, roads and the critical areas of energy, defence and health to assist Australians facing the real challenges that we're currently living through.

Infrastructure, rightly, is a major part of the budget. The Morrison government is investing a record \$17.9 billion towards building new, and upgrading existing, infrastructure projects. This record amount adds to over \$120 billion in the government's infrastructure investment pipeline that will be rolled out over the next decade. Since 2013 the coalition government has invested more than \$35.5 billion in infrastructure projects in Victoria, with 293 distinct major road and rail projects. Currently, these projects support more than 11½ thousand jobs. Tonight, Victoria receives \$3.3 billion in committed infrastructure funding. The Morrison government will get freight moving quickly and keep commuters safe while cutting down their travel time.

I'd like to speak to how the people of Melbourne's north and west will directly benefit from this. What will the BIFT be? It will be an intermodal terminal, a point of junction in our freight network that allows for the consolidation, storage and transfer of freight between port, road and rail. It will provide connectivity between the Port of Melbourne and Victoria's regional networks and, of course, north to Sydney and Brisbane. It will enable and maximise the benefits of that other great project, the Inland Rail, catering for double-stacked 1,800-metre freight trains. By integrating road and rail, freight will now travel directly from Melbourne's port to the terminal in Beveridge without the need to put trucks on Melbourne's roads. Simply said, it will take freight off our metro roads

and onto rail, to get it to its destination on time at a lower cost. In real terms, this will take 5½ thousand trucks off Melbourne roads per day. This will benefit commuters, especially those in the north and west of Melbourne, who will no longer have to contend with large numbers of trucks clogging up their main arterial roadways. Through the easing of this congestion, the people living around Kilmore, Wallan, Whittlesea and Truganina will get to and from work quicker. This means working mums and dads will be at home with their children sooner. Ultimately, it will give them more time with what matters most—family.

I would now like to acknowledge a relentless advocate for this project and, more broadly, for the people of the electorate of McEwen, in which the BIFT lies: my very good friend Richard Welch, who is the Liberal candidate for McEwen. Unlike the current ALP member, since being preselected last year Richard has tirelessly made the case for the interstate terminal to be placed in Beveridge, to the north of Melbourne and the logical place between Melbourne and Sydney. He knows, he sees, that modernising our logistics network is a vital component that will underpin Australia's economic recovery.

This excellent project has faced resistance from the Victorian state Labor government. Evidently, Premier Andrews and his ministers have not realised the tremendous potential of the BIFT. The state government has dragged its feet in assisting with funding of this project, like with many others, and has ignored the people of Melbourne's north and west. Not only will the BIFT alleviate congestion and improve travel times; it will also address the conflicting land use between industrial and urban areas. The BIFT will contain an entirely new precinct to the north of Melbourne for working and living. The BIFT is a \$1.6 billion commitment that creates jobs for the people of McEwen and gets freight off Melbourne roads and onto rail efficiently and at low cost. It will ease congestion. *(Time expired)*

Ukraine

Senator STEELE-JOHN (Western Australia) (20:41): Over the last four weeks we have seen a full-scale humanitarian disaster unfold across Ukraine at the hands of a Russian oligarch and the military he controls. We here in Australia have seen devastatingly and in real time the effects of war, relayed to us via the news and social media. Never before have the results of those who push for war been so accessible so quickly to those across the world. We are already seeing the generational scars that only wars can cause: the thousands who have died, the tens of thousands wounded, the millions who have been forced to flee their country, and entire cities facing destruction at the hands of weapons of war put there by oligarchs who know they will never have to face the realities of what they cause.

At home in Perth I have seen people come together and rally behind the Ukrainian community. A few weeks ago I attended a vigil alongside supporters and those with family members living in Ukraine. I was struck by the number of people, especially young people, who came out to show their solidarity. Our solidarity must go beyond just saying it—just saying the words. We in Australia must put into action serious steps designed to bring peaceful resolution to the conflict that has already inflicted so much damage upon communities, whose lives have been torn apart by the whims of a few Russian oligarchs and the militarism and colonialism they pursue. Let me say it again very clearly: Ukraine is suffering at the hands of militarism and colonialism pursued by a tiny minority of those in Russia who've amassed incredible power.

We must put this solidarity into action by working together, as part of the international community, to call for an immediate ceasefire and withdrawal of all Russian troops and for an end to the violence and risk to life. We need the immediate provision of humanitarian aid and support that includes food, evacuation support and other necessities for ensuring the survival of transient communities. States, particularly states in Europe, must without delay commit to an urgent transition away from the use of Russian oil and gas. Let's place this in context: Russia has earned \$119 billion in revenue in 2021 alone from the sale of oil and gas. This is a petrostate, and oil and gas is funding Putin's war machine.

We also need to move immediately and globally for a program of debt forgiveness for Ukraine. Ukraine holds more than US\$129 billion in debt, and cancelling this debt, particularly that which is owed to the International Monetary Fund and the European Commission, will significantly aid in the country's future recovery. Increasing our humanitarian intake via a special intake of 20,000 people would enable those who are fleeing the conflict to have a place to call home in Australia, as would the immediate offering of permanent visas for Ukrainian nationals or those on temporary protection visas.

We must do all of this as well as continue to pursue targeted sanctions on powerful Russian individuals who are supporting the invasion of Ukraine. This must be done with peace as the goal. As a global community we have the opportunity to turn away from the steps that will only work to prolong the conflict and suffering and learn from history the steps that must be taken to aid the Ukrainian people in recovering from this terrible invasion, not simply to line the pockets of weapons manufacturers and global energy companies.

Clough, Mr William Harold, AO, OBE

Senator DEAN SMITH (Western Australia—Government Whip in the Senate) (20:46): I rise to celebrate the legacy of a particularly outstanding Western Australian and Australian, the late Harold Clough. The Clough name is iconic in Western Australia and has been for more than a century. Harold's grandfather, William Clough, was an early mining entrepreneur who brought his family to the west, in pursuit of the Kalgoorlie gold rush, in 1900. John Clough, Harold's father, inherited an adventuring spirit, which took him to Gallipoli. He was awarded a Distinguished Conduct Medal, among other decorations. Clearly, Harold came from a courageous and deeply patriotic tradition.

Harold was born in Nedlands on 30 September 1926. He grew up during the Great Depression and the Second World War, during which he assisted his father in training the 3rd Field Regiment, WA's artillery unit. After leaving Scotch College in 1943, Harold took his first job as a junior clerk at AMP but quickly changed to an engineering degree at the University of Western Australia. Despite being told by his professor that there was no chance he would pass, Harold ended up graduating with first-class honours and, a few years later, was accepted for a Fulbright scholarship to study at the University of California, Berkeley. It was in California that he met his wife, Marg, with whom he would go on to raise six children.

After completing his postgraduate degree, Harold was offered a doctoral scholarship but instead returned to Perth, where he began a lifelong career as a builder, working with his father in the company he had set up in 1919, JO Clough & Son. They were integral to the construction of some of Perth's critical infrastructure of the postwar boom of the 1950s. In 1955 they secured the contract to build the National Mutual Life Association's new WA head office, a 12-storey building and the highest in Perth at the time. Even better known and more significant was the Narrows Bridge, which finally linked the southern and northern suburbs of Perth, across the historic Swan River. Upon completion in 1959 it was the largest precast, prestressed concrete bridge in the world. Although Harold's father died just before it was opened, it stands today as a testament to the ingenuity of this father-son duo.

Harold took on the business his father began and expanded it to new frontiers. Under his leadership, Clough built power stations, railways, jetties, pipelines, dams and even the Harold Holt Australian-US naval base in Exmouth. Scores of buildings and facilities across Western Australia stand today thanks to Harold Clough.

Harold was a man who prided himself on marrying his business with service to Western Australia and to the Australian community. In the 1960s, at a time when most Australian leaders were dismissive of Australia's place in Asia, his business ventures in Indonesia paved the way for stronger relations between Australia and our northern neighbours. Harold began the Clough scholarship for engineering students at UWA, served on the UWA Senate and made donations to many charitable causes. Perhaps the best way to illustrate how greatly appreciated Harold was by the community is to list some of his many, many honours, which included the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal, in 1977; Officer of the Order of the British Empire, in 1979; Officer of the Order of Australia, in 1990; and the Sir Edward Weary Dunlop Asia Medal, in 2005, for improving Australia-Asia relations.

Harold was not someone who was afraid to express his opinions, and he concerned himself wholeheartedly with the politics of his nation and his home state. He worked with former Liberal member for Moore John Hyde in establishing the Australian Institute for Public Policy, Perth's first free enterprise orientated think tank. This organisation would later merge with the Institute of Public Affairs. He also spent time as the President of the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, director of West Australian Newspapers Ltd and as a board member of the White Paper Advisory Panel on foreign trade for the Australian government.

In short, Harold Clough spent his life constantly servicing and striving to do more; constantly supporting the Western Australian community and his own country, Australia; pursuing meaningful projects; and embodying the title of 'builder' in every sense. When asked about retirement, he dismissed the notion and said: 'I've still got too much to do. As you get older, if you are busy and have a lot to do, you don't get time to die. I have too many things to do next month and I'll just have to put it off.' True to form, just days before he passed away on 5 January this year, Harold was working at his desk.

His legacy lives on in his family and the countless contributions they have made. Western Australia is indeed a better place for his contribution. Vale, Harold Clough.

Tigray

Senator LINES (Western Australia—Deputy President and Chair of Committees) (20:51): Over 17 months ago the northernmost region in Ethiopia, Tigray, was embroiled in a war that has led to massacres of civilians, destruction of hospitals and clinics, an exodus of refugees and the emergence of famine. The region has been plunged into a human rights and humanitarian crisis.

A member of my staff, Nyat, who is part of the Tigrayan community, tells me that her community, particularly the youth, have been working tirelessly to advocate for their families. Due to the communications blackout, members of the diaspora have not been able to communicate with their family members. Nyat says that, even though there was a communications blackout, she tried to call her family every day in the hope that she could hear their voices and to make sure they were okay. She hasn't heard from her family for 11 months. There have been many accounts of Tigrayan people in Australia not having heard from family members only to find out that a number have been killed. The weight this has on the Tigrayan Australian families is devastating.

Researchers have estimated that as many as half a million people have died from war and famine in Tigray since November 2020. Millions of Tigrayans are still going hungry. According to the World Food Programme, 80 per cent of Tigray's population is food insecure and three-quarters of Tigray's population of six million are using extreme coping strategies to survive. What is clear is that the humanitarian situation in Tigray remains alarmingly dire and could further deteriorate if immediate action is not taken.

Staff at Tigray's biggest hospital say that patients are dying due to lack of medical supplies. This means people with HIV, tuberculosis, diabetes and cancer don't have access to treatment. In addition to this, women and girls have been subjected to sexual violence and then threatened so as not to seek medical care. The Amnesty International report titled *I don't know if they realised I was a person* highlights harrowing details of survivors of sexual violence suffering from a number of medical complications. Out of the 198 hospitals and health centres assessed by the World Health Organization, 141—almost all of them—were partially or fully damaged.

Just one month ago an Ethiopian government air strike hit a school compound hosting thousands of displaced Tigrayans in north-west Tigray. Human Rights Watch reports that 53 people were killed immediately and 15 of those were just children. Government air strikes in Tigray rose in number in October 2021 and increased significantly in mid-December. These air strikes, which obviously target civilians, have continued into 2022.

Those that fled the region now live in refugee camps in Sudan. They tell harrowing accounts of ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity to human rights groups and diplomats. They're far from home and separated from loved ones, and they pray that they will return home soon. These 70,000 refugees, a third of whom are unaccompanied children, are at risk of exploitation. Conditions in the refugee camps are precarious, with a lack of food, shelter and medicine and extreme weather conditions.

I echo the words of Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization: a communications blackout means Tigray has become a 'forgotten crisis, out of sight and out of mind'. I would urge the Australian government to do what it can to raise this issue urgently at the UN and to ask the UN to immediately start to act to work towards peace and the return of refugees to their homeland of Tigray.

Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence

Senator HANSON (Queensland—Leader of Pauline Hanson's One Nation) (20:56): The inquest into the terrible death of Hannah Clarke and her children at the hands of her ex-husband is a daily reminder of the epidemic of domestic violence. That horrendous crime is embedded in our memories and will hopefully crystallise actions to safeguard families against all domestic violence of that nature. But what about the other aspect of domestic violence playing out in Australia, which rarely gets the same sort of attention?

This is a difficult story to relate in this chamber, but it must be told. On 10 March this year, a woman is alleged to have broken into the home of her ex-partner in Logan, Queensland, doused the man in petrol and set him alight. It's difficult to imagine a more horrific death, but it could have been much worse. His current partner and his children were also in the house at the time, and it's believed he fought to protect their lives when the attack took place. I want to acknowledge the bravery of Stanley Obi, another victim of the epidemic of domestic violence in Australia.

This incident is not the first of its kind. In 2019, a Geelong woman doused her husband in petrol and set him alight. She was later convicted of manslaughter. In 2018, a Southport woman killed her partner with a shotgun. In June last year, a Brisbane woman is alleged to have murdered her ex-husband because she no longer wanted to pay child support. And in 2014, in a case which truly horrified Australia, a Cairns woman killed eight children, all but one of them her own. The atrocities I've listed here all have one thing in common: they were committed by women, not men. The tragic death of Stanley Obi this month must serve as a wake-up call.

Only a year ago, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs handed down the report of its inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence. This committee finally recognised the truth about domestic violence: women can be perpetrators and men can be victims. The report made a number of recommendations that are worth repeating. The next national plan to reduce violence must be more inclusive of all victims and should be named the 'National Plan to Reduce Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence'. The Australian government should commission research into the prevalence of family, domestic and sexual violence against men and its impact on male survivors, and the Department of Social Services should review the adequacy of advice and

referral services for men as survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence. As we have seen in tonight's budget, however, a record \$1.3 billion has been committed to end violence against women and children, but there is no mention of men, and the new national plan is not inclusive of men. If Stanley Obi's tragic death does not underline the need to recognise that both genders are victims of domestic violence, what will?

The solution in this respect is quite simple: take gender out of the equation, because the violence is being committed by both men and women. Men as victims-survivors deserve as much support as women and children, but they do not receive it because the support is not there. If it is—and I mean a big 'if'—it's not advertised. Women are told they can receive assistance of up to \$5,000 to relocate and escape an abusive partner. Men are eligible too, but they're not told. Domestic violence support is too focused on women and children as the sole victims and men as the sole perpetrators. Evidence presented to the Joint Select Committee on Australia's Family Law System shows this bias also extends to family courts. Although women also presented evidence of the reverse, it was in nowhere near the same numbers.

It's one of the reasons why I have been working hard to reform family law and Australia's broken child support system. We must have a new national plan to reduce violence and recognise that anyone, male or female, can be a victim. There must be funding to support male survivors and research into the prevalence of domestic violence against them. And it must be addressed in the courts, ensuring that men get an equally fair hearing in their cases.

For too many decades now women have successfully challenged society to recognise their agency and independence. It was a long time coming, and social equality between the sexes is still a work in progress. But it goes both ways, and our policies must reflect that too. We will not end domestic violence until we recognise and acknowledge all its victims. We will not end domestic violence unless we as parliamentarians—and the media—portray men as victims too. And we will not— *(Time expired)*

Top Blokes Foundation

Senator STOKER (Queensland—Assistant Minister to the Attorney-General, Assistant Minister for Women and Assistant Minister for Industrial Relations) (21:01): I rise tonight to speak about something that's really close to my heart, and in some ways it's connected to what Senator Hanson has just mentioned. If we're serious about making sure that we reduce the incidence of violence against women and men—violence against anyone—in our community, we don't just need to invest in making sure that there are support services for people who experience this terrible phenomenon and we don't just need to make sure that they have safe places to go if the worst should happen. We also need to make sure that we're doing what's necessary not just to put ambulances at the bottom of the cliff but to put fences at the top of it. It's to do the preventative work that's necessary to keep people in the kinds of healthy relationships with one another that underpin a society which is functioning so well that these statistics move in the right direction.

I was really encouraged to get to know an organisation called Top Blokes Foundation. Top Blokes do something which is really special: they engage in small group mentoring with young men aged between 10 and 17. During a three- to six-month regular program of meeting up at school, they talk through the hard issues. In an ideal world, everybody would have a strong father or mother figure who could do this for them. In an ideal world, people would have a home environment that has good examples of how to treat one another and relationships with those who raise them which stick together in the best possible way. In an ideal world, people would have parents who can talk about difficult subjects, whether it's about how to treat people with whom they're in a relationship, whether it's about body image, whether it's about work ethic, whether it's about how we present ourselves to the world or whether it's about expectations and what we expect from people of the opposite sex, even as it relates to young people's unfortunate but surprisingly prevalent exposure to influences like pornography.

Top Blokes help to bring out the best in some of the most troubled and high-risk young men in Queensland by providing experienced social work guidance from great influencers like Zed and his peers—JT, Jason and the like—who I got to meet recently at Shailer Park State High School. They're transforming the lives of young men and keeping them out of our jails, out of our family court system, in work and contributing to our community in a way that their parents and teachers had almost given up hope of at the time they enrolled in the program. Teachers report young men who are better able to manage their anger and calm themselves; cope with adversity; and manage conflict in healthy ways. They've got clearer and healthier expectations of what a good relationship looks like. And here's something I think we can all be really excited about: instead of turning to influences like drugs and alcohol as a way of numbing or blocking anger, they've got the skills needed to be able to process it healthily and direct their energies in a positive way so that they don't feel the need or wish to use drugs or alcohol.

This is transformative for the lives of the young men involved, and it is an investment that I am so proud to see the philanthropic community of Queensland making. They are doing incredible work, and I can only commend it enormously. I remember the stories of one of the young blokes I got to talk with. He was able to greet me with a

strong look in the eye and a handshake, introduce himself by name and explain to me some of the things he'd done in past that he wasn't proud of, as well as all the ways he'd changed and the ways in which he looks to the future with positivity. He says he's going to do an apprenticeship, and that he's looking forward to being a mechanic. I have no doubt he's going to achieve that goal. That's partly due to his great teachers at Shailer Park State High, but it has a lot to do with the talented and caring people who are transforming women's safety by giving men the skills they need to flourish.

Fuel

Senator CICCONE (Victoria—Deputy Opposition Whip in the Senate) (21:06): The events of the past two years have shone a bright light on Australia's vulnerability. The COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine have exposed dangerous dependencies in our economy. Once-hypothetical weaknesses have become all too real as stressed supply chains continue to adversely impact Australian businesses and consumers. But as we manage from one crisis to the next, I fear that we have not addressed these vulnerabilities. We have treated symptoms as they have arisen, but the underlying causes remain largely unattended to. This is particularly true when it comes to Australia's fuel security.

Steady access to quality fuel is essential for Australia. The transport sector—the backbone of so much of our economy—sources 98 per cent of its energy from liquid fuels. Given its prerequisite for our economy to function—can we imagine an economy without our truckies and the fuel that they need to fill up their trucks?—the Australian government must ensure that we have secure access to quality fuel, yet our supply of fuel largely continues to be left vulnerable to disruption in global supply chains.

The last national energy security assessment was conducted back in 2011, meaning the coalition has not conducted an assessment since it was elected almost a decade ago. In that time, our fuel security has diminished. By 2018 we were importing over 90 per cent of our liquid fuels, in the form of either oil for our few remaining refineries to process or refined fuels processed by refineries in Asia. All of this imported fuel and oil comes to Australia on foreign-owned or foreign-controlled ships. Lower costs overseas and pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic have led to the impending closure of Australia's four remaining refineries in 2020. Faced with this crisis, the Australian government finally stepped up and stepped in with a rescue package in the form of subsidies, but it was all too little, too late. BP announced the closure of the Western Australian Kwinana Oil Refinery back in October 2020, and Victoria's ExxonMobil Altona Refinery announced its closure only a few months later.

With only two operational refineries left in Australia, we are exposed to supply chain disruptions. This is not some imagined threat; we are seeing this play out in Europe at the moment. Approximately 60 per cent of Europe's energy is provided by gas from Russia. It took Russia invading Ukraine for Germany to cancel the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline project with Russia, which would have further concentrated Europe's energy reliance on that state. Europe is now moving rapidly to address this issue, with the European Union pledging to cut its gas dependency on Russia by two-thirds this year and cutting it entirely by 2030.

With China rapidly expanding its own oil refinery capacity and naval presence in our region, and along vital sea routes connecting Australia to suppliers, we should learn the lessons from Europe before we are forced to learn from firsthand experience. In 2020, the Morrison government announced it would build a stockpile of crude oil that could be tapped in the event of a major disruption, but this stockpile is being stored in the United States, meaning that we could have difficulty accessing it if the sea lines are closed. We still do not have enough fuel on Australian soil to meet the International Energy Agency's 90-day stockpile commitment. Recent events show that we need to get serious about our sovereign capability to refine fuel and store it here in Australia. Prime Minister Morrison and the coalition have let our fuel security languish for almost a decade. As global tensions escalate, we must act with haste to ensure Australia has the infrastructure that we need locally to protect our prosperity.

Racism

Senator FARUQI (New South Wales) (21:11): Islamophobia in this country is rising. The third report on Islamophobia, *Islamophobia in Australia*, was released this month by Charles Sturt University and the Islamic Science and Research Academy. This report tells us in no uncertain terms what many Muslims living here already know: that Islamophobia is getting worse. There was a fourfold increase in in-person anti-Muslim hate incidents, and online incidents were 18 times higher after an Australian white supremacist killed 51 innocent people in mosques in Christchurch in 2019. These are just the reported incidents. This is just the tip of the iceberg. Islamophobia is also deeply gendered. Muslim women are by far the majority of targets, especially those wearing a hijab. The number of children exposed to Islamophobia is also on the rise.

Australia has yet to reckon with the fact that this country produced the Christchurch killer. The Christchurch mosque murders were found to be motivated by extreme right-wing Islamophobic ideology. But that didn't really

shake up the decision-makers in Canberra, who avoid even uttering the word 'Islamophobia'. Multiple reports of a dangerous rise in far-Right extremism and the growing threat of white supremacy haven't moved the dial either.

This climate of Islamophobia and racial hatred is not happening in a vacuum. Political leaders have been complicit in normalising hate and racism and the othering of those who don't meet their description of what an Australian should look like. Some in here have openly fuelled racism, from putting up motions such as the racist slogan, 'It's okay to be white,' to calling for a ban on Muslim immigration, to wearing a burqa in the Senate. Others dog whistle about Muslims, migrants and refugees, and yet others stand on the sidelines and remain totally silent. You are all responsible for where we are today, and it saddens me to admit that not a finger has been lifted by this government to tackle Islamophobia and racism.

MPs across the board are very quick to claim Australia as the most successful multicultural country in the world, but the reality is that your version of multiculturalism is skin deep. You will happily use us for photo opportunities at our festivals, religious and cultural events. And, with the month of Ramadan starting in a few days, I'm sure plenty of you will come to Iftars organised by the Muslim community to eat our food and celebrate with us, while you brush aside the real issues of Islamophobia and Muslim hate.

Australia has a racism blind spot. For too long decision-makers have chosen to pretend that we don't have a problem. It is people who highlight the existence of racism who are attacked, marginalised and labelled as divisive. Sadly, this place is so far away from recognising the toxicity and danger to our society presented by racism. You have absolutely no idea of the harm and damage this causes to people and communities, and why would you? The corridors of power are filled with privileged white people who have never experienced the corrosiveness of racism, so it's easy for them to ignore it and to deny its existence. Perhaps people in power don't want to acknowledge the existence of racism in case they might be obliged to do something about it or, God forbid, share some of that power that you hold.

It's time to have an honest reckoning with toxic racism—no more tinkering around the edges. It's time to challenge racism in the very echelons of leadership right here in Canberra. MPs need to be forced to the table to unpack their white privilege, their white superiority and their white fragility, even if it makes them uncomfortable. It's time to challenge the notion that our institutions and services, such as health or justice, are colourblind. It's time to mandate antiracism training for every single federal MP, so they can confront and overcome their biases and privilege and learn and acknowledge Australia's colonial history that is tainted with violence, dispossession, oppression and discrimination against First Nations people, which continue on to this day. It is time to once and for all start dismantling racism.

World Economic Forum

Senator ANTIC (South Australia) (21:16): Founded in 1971 by Klaus Schwab, the World Economic Forum is steeped in authoritarianism and Marxist ideology. It's an ideology which is creeping into governments across the world. When speaking about the Canadian parliament, Schwab himself said: 'We penetrate the cabinets. I know that half this cabinet—even more than half—are actually young global leaders of the World Economic Forum. It's true in Argentina, it's true in France—now with the President, who is a young global leader.'

The World Economic Forum promotes globalist issues such as climate change, so-called systemic racism and sexism and creating an online digital identity. However, closer inspection reveals that the World Economic Forum is an anticapitalist and anti free market organisation that seeks to subvert Western values and political processes. They are very organised and very well funded. Their message is designed to appear harmless when, in fact, the ideology that underpins it is revolutionary and destructive. They train aspirational leaders in their ideology and help them make connections in spheres that include politics, business and the arts.

The World Economic Forum has consistently advocated for the harshest and most extreme COVID measures possible, including lockdowns, mandatory vaccinations, vaccine passports and mask mandates, despite these policies assaulting many of our basic liberties. At the centre of the World Economic Forum's ideology is stakeholder capitalism. Essentially, this is a theory that traditional free market capitalism ignores the dangers posed by climate change, so the government must enforce restrictive policies to save the environment, even if that means less wealth. Why, then, are the forum's criticisms of capitalism always directed at Western nations, rather than the great polluters such as China and India? The forum believes that your freedoms should be minimised to prevent the imminent climate catastrophe—the one that has been coming for 10 years and the last 50 years, by the way.

The central theme of the World Economic Forum's material is what they call the 'great reset', which is Klaus Schwab's term for the opportunity the pandemic has presented to reimagine and reinvent the economic policies of the West. The term comes directly from Schwab himself with his 2020 book entitled *COVID-19: The Great Reset*. In a now-deleted video titled '8 predictions for the world in 2030', the World Economic Forum claimed, 'You'll own nothing and you'll be happy'—a slogan that hits the same dystopian note as 'Work makes you free' and 'Ignorance

is strength'. You don't have to be a political philosopher to figure out that, if you own nothing, the state owns everything. There's a word for this: it's 'communism'. The World Economic Forum and its affiliates shamelessly promote the abolition of private property—a central facet of Karl Marx's demented utopian ideology which led to the deaths of tens of millions of people worldwide in the 20th century. To quote Margaret Thatcher: 'Communism never sleeps, never changes its objectives. Nor should we.'

No matter how sophisticated the World Economic Forum tries to make the abolition of private property around the world sound, the fantasies of Karl Marx always lead to the crushing of individuals' liberties and lives and the expansion of the state's tyranny and power. It is imperative that we pay close attention to the World Economic Forum and do all that we can to preserve liberty and reduce government intrusion in our lives. If we fail to do so, the antidemocratic forces in the West will continue to march on, and we may wake up to an Australia that we no longer recognise. Australians deserve to know the extent of the World Economic Forum's influence and infiltration of our country, and we're going to find out.

Morrison Government

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS (New South Wales) (21:20): Given the events and outcomes of the dodgy preselection where I lost by a handful of votes last Saturday, my time in this place will finish on 30 June 2022. Accordingly, there are a few matters I wish to place on the record before my departure. Many in this place would be aware of the history I have had with Scott Morrison. Let me give some clarity and context to that history so there can be no misunderstanding.

In order to understand the man it is best to look at his past actions. While professing to be a man of faith and claiming Centre Right status Morrison is a product of the Left, having worked for Bruce Baird. He is adept at running with the foxes and hunting with the hounds, lacking a moral compass and having no conscience. His actions conflict with his portrayal as a man of faith. He has used his so-called faith as a marketing advantage. We learnt the leader of his Hillsong Church group, Brian Houston, was a mentor to Morrison. Houston recently stood down as head of Hillsong because he was charged with sexual offences. It is noteworthy that, in the past, Houston flew top cover for his paedophile father.

When Morrison worked for Tourism Australia he backstabbed his minister Fran Bailey. Eventually he was fired from the position. As state director of the New South Wales Division of the Liberal Party Morrison honed his manipulative skills when overseeing the Wentworth preselection to unseat Peter King. About 120 membership applications were rejected to help Turnbull get selected, the person Morrison ultimately backstabbed.

Morrison might profess to be Christian, but there was nothing Christian about what was done to Michael Towke. When Morrison made his run for the seat of Cook there were several hopefuls, including Towke, Fletcher and Coleman. Towke won the ballot in the first round with 84 votes. Morrison got eight votes. Having lost the ballot Morrison and his cronies went to Sam Dastyari to get dirt on Towke, who had been in the Labor Party for a period of time whilst at university. This dossier of anecdotes was weaponised and leaked to the media to the point where Towke's reputation was destroyed. I am advised that there are several statutory declarations to attest to racial comments made by Morrison at the time that we can't have a Lebanese person in Cook. The state executive voted 12 to 11 not to endorse Towke and ordered a modified selection process. The only way that Towke could get political exoneration for a future run was to agree to put his numbers behind Morrison. Morrison met with David Clarke and I and promised various things. Of course he took our votes and never delivered.

After the selection Towke joined my staff. He subsequently sued the newspapers for defamation. He won his cases but this was cold comfort. Morrison, his cronies and the Liberal establishment in New South Wales had destroyed a good, young man. I regret the day that Clarke and I agreed to put Morrison into Cook. Since then Morrison has never faced a preselection. Hence the trampling of members' rights in New South Wales. Denying them proper preselections and installing captain's picks is classic Morrison.

He and his consigliere, Alex Hawke, have deliberately contrived a crisis in New South Wales through a year of delays in not having selections. Hawke, as his representative on state executive for months and months, failed to attend nomination review committee meetings to review candidates, thereby holding up preselections. Spurious arguments were mounted to justify the unjustifiable. The constitution was trashed. There is a putrid stench of corruption emanating from the New South Wales Division of the Liberal Party.

All of this was under the eye of Philip Ruddock. As a former Attorney-General I am appalled that he has allowed Morrison to bully his way to a situation where the next election has been put at risk all to save Hawke's career. This is what it's all about. Hawke knows that, if he faces a plebiscite preselection, he will lose. Morrison has railroaded federal executive into setting up not only a committee which endorsed Hawke, Ley and Zimmerman but a second committee which is now endorsing captain's picks in seats like Parramatta and Hughes, which were scheduled for preselections this week.

So what is the hold that Hawke has over Morrison? Good question, especially given Hawke's own corrupt antics in New South Wales. During a speech advocating for a federal integrity commission I referred to Hawke's activities and the dealings of the Baulkham Hills branch. At a meeting in 2018, 10 members were admitted to the branch. This was confirmed in text messages from the branch secretary. Hawke was present at the meeting. He saw what went on. I'm told there is video evidence of the meeting. I also have relevant documents, including correspondence sent to Morrison on the issue.

After the meeting the minutes were falsified to show that the 10 members were not accepted. Statutory declarations were provided to counter this falsity. The branch was eventually suspended by state executive. The branch president and secretary, both acolytes of Hawke, refused to provide statutory declarations. Despite clear evidence of fraud, Hawke's role in this process has never been fully disclosed. The New South Wales state director has sat on this matter for years. Legal proceedings are now on foot, and I look forward to the day when Hawke will be required to give evidence under oath to explain his corrupt conduct.

There is a very appropriate saying here: the fish stinks from the head. Morrison and Hawke have ruined the Liberal Party in New South Wales by trampling its constitution. Indeed, I understand at a federal executive meeting Morrison was asked whether he was running a protection racket in New South Wales.

In recent months I have kept members of the division updated. I have received hundreds, if not thousands, of emails outlining their disgust. They have lost faith in the party. They want to leave. They don't like Morrison and they don't trust him. They continue to despair at our prospects at the next federal election, and they blame Morrison for this. Our members do not want to help in the upcoming election. By now you might be getting the picture that Morrison is not interested in rules based order. It is his way or the highway—an autocrat and a bully who has no moral compass.

Now to my own situation. Having lost by a handful of votes last Saturday and having analysed the data, I know the numbers tell their own story. Clearly, my push for democracy in the New South Wales division was certainly not welcome. This would mean that the factional operatives can't control preselections. For years, figures in the Liberal Party have denied the existence of factions and criticised the ALP. This is hypocrisy, given that the Liberal Party is now no different to the Labor Party.

In addition, having been a critic of Morrison on a range of policy matters, I was a marked woman. I have known for a number of years of the machinations involving the PMO and others to move me on. Recent media reports confirmed a deal agreed to by Hawke, Yaron Finkelstein from the PMO, Charles Perrottet, Dallas McInerney, Trent Zimmerman and Matt Kean. In my case, Dallas McInerney from Catholic Schools NSW was encouraged to run against me. Realising he did not have support from the conservative base to win a preselection, they resorted to getting Jim Molan to run, despite Molan having promised he would only see out the Sinodinos term.

In my case, Wade McInerney, brother of Dallas, worked in my office for five years. Following his departure to work for Robert Assaf at Greyhound Racing NSW, I discovered he was engaged in inappropriate conduct and activities. I was duty-bound to refer him to the Australian Federal Police, the Department of Finance and the Australian Government Security Vetting Agency.

Having engaged lawyers and fought hard for a preselection, I got it because my enemies realised my strong support from delegates meant plan B had to be implemented. Dom Perrottet's premiership is held together by a thread through a so-called unity deal with the Kean-Poulos Left. For years the Perrottets have railed against Hawke, threatening to prosecute the Baulkham Hills matter but never delivering. The Perrottets, the McInerneys, Assaf et cetera had only about 30 votes between them. In the ultimate act of treachery those numbers were press-ganged into voting for Hawke's candidate, Molan. Why? In short, the so-called conservative Premier aligned with his so-called enemy Hawke to do a deal: Morrison gets his captain's picks in federal seats and no state members jump ship to the federal arena, which would in turn have crippled the premiership of a supine and weak state leader.

In my public life I have met ruthless people. Morrison tops the list, followed closely by Hawke. Morrison is not fit to be Prime Minister and Hawke certainly is not fit to be a minister.

Budget

Australian Greens

Senator WHISH-WILSON (Tasmania) (21:29): Holy smokes! I'm happy to offer another five minutes to Senator Fierravanti-Wells if she'd like to continue.

The ACTING DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Senator McLachlan): Tell me about the environment!

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Okay. I have 10 minutes to talk about the environment, but I will say it was certainly worth being in the chamber to witness this late-night adjournment in person.

Tonight's Morrison government budget, the final one for this 46th Parliament, has made housing in this country more expensive, has locked in tax cuts for the wealthy and has provided more funding for coal and gas projects rather than acting on the climate crisis. This Liberal budget contains more than \$37.6 billion for coal, oil and gas companies, gives \$13 billion of public money to property investors and has no money to build affordable public housing in this country. The Greens want government to invest to build a million affordable public homes.

Scott Morrison's budget makes housing more expensive, locks in tax cuts for the wealthy and funds more oil and gas projects. This budget of election bribes will not keep you safe from the climate crisis and it won't put a secure roof over your head. It doesn't have a cent of new money for building new affordable housing, and it continues to pour more petrol on the climate crisis even as floods threaten the Northern Rivers for the second time in a month. Scott Morrison's plan is to give more than \$38 billion in handouts to coal, oil and gas corporations to fuel the climate crisis, and apparently Labor backs him in. There is \$1.6 billion for renewables, \$2 billion for disaster recovery and more than \$38 billion in subsidies to coal, oil and gas. It's an insult to every flood victim that the Prime Minister is spending on coal, oil and gas more than 10 times what he is on protecting us from future major climatic events.

Scott Morrison's budget spends \$13 billion on unfair tax breaks that will push up the cost of housing and lock people out of the housing markets—handouts that, once again, Labor will wave through. A temporary cut for fuel excise may not even make its way to people's pockets. There's every chance that world oil prices or profiteering from oil corporations will wipe out any gains to motorists overnight at very substantial cost to the budget.

We need to permanently boost the pension by almost \$250 a fortnight, not \$250 per election. To tackle cost-of-living pressures, the budget should have wiped out student debt, got dental into Medicare and built a million affordable public homes that people could rent for 25 per cent of their income or buy for \$300,000. That is the Greens' plan. That would have been much fairer, better and cheaper than proceeding with stage 3 tax cuts and temporarily cutting fuel excise. This budget shows more than ever that we need to kick this government out and get the Greens in balance of power in the next parliament to push the next government to tackle cost-of-living pressures by taxing billionaires, getting Denticare into Medicare, wiping out student debt and building affordable homes.

This budget is a budget for billionaires and big corporations, not for people who are struggling. Under this budget, the cost of living will increase and wages won't catch up. There are heroic assumptions for wages growth to keep inflation at bay and to cover cost-of-living expenses. The structural holes in our economy will keep widening the gap between rich and poor under this government. A \$420 payment won't go far for a family that's stuck spending half their income on housing, and the \$250 payment will lift a pensioner out of poverty for one pay packet and then send them back the next.

We need a budget that ensures the billionaires and the big corporations pay their fair share so we can invest in getting Denticare into Medicare and ensuring that everyone has a livable home. This government will never deliver the budget that the Australian people deserve, and, without pressure, Labor's not going to support the structural changes needed by everyone who is struggling. With the Greens in balance of power, we will tax the billionaires and big corporations. The 2023 Labor-Greens budget will be one that builds a more equal Australia.

Tonight I want to say thank you to all those people who have supported me over my last 10 years in the Senate. It's been nearly 10 years for me; the anniversary is coming up in a few weeks time. I'm confident that the people of Tasmania will recognise the good work that the Greens do in this place and will recognise that we have a good chance of holding the balance of power in the next government, that this is a climate emergency and that, more than ever, they need to vote for the environment and for real climate action. This is the last week of parliament and perhaps the last adjournment debate for the 46th Parliament, so I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those people who have supported me over the last 10 years and the Tasmanians who voted for me in 2013 and 2016. I am up for election this time around, and I would ask those people who have supported the Greens and me and my team: if you like what you've seen, please continue to vote Green. We're needed more than ever in this place.

As a party, last week at the Hobart town hall we celebrated 50 years of green politics in Tasmania. We're very proud of our heritage. On 23 March 1972, a group of people moved a motion at a very rowdy town hall meeting in Hobart to start the United Tasmania Group, the world's first green political party. That political party spawned a green political movement that has now gone around the world. From that very humble beginning on an island on the bottom of the world, Tasmania exported green politics to the globe. We now have Greens holding the balance of power in Germany, including the position of vice-chancellor. We have a Left-Green Prime Minister in Iceland. We have greens in nearly every country around the world.

I am incredibly honoured and privileged to have been twice preselected by my party and elected by the Tasmanian people to this place. I feel I have been honest in holding to the contract that I made with my party and with the voters of Tasmania. I have worked as hard as I could over the last decade to protect our oceans, to put the environment first and to do everything I possibly could to tackle climate change. I've also been fortunate enough to

have had the Greens Treasury and finance portfolio for nearly half the time that I've been in this place. We have achieved great things as a political party, working across party lines over many years. I would ask the voters of Tasmania to back that 10 years of experience. There's plenty more work that I would like to do in this place. I just want to once again thank the people of Tasmania, who have given me this amazing opportunity.

COVID-19: Vaccination

Senator ROBERTS (Queensland) (21:38): As a servant to the people of Queensland and Australia, tonight I'm speaking on this parliament's therapeutic response to COVID-19 and the horrific medical harm and loss of life in that response. Last week, leading Australian parliamentarians came together in an event I organised called COVID Under Question to present documented evidence and victim testimony proving a catastrophic failure of Australia's regulatory framework. COVID vaccine injuries are hidden behind anonymous government data, while supposed COVID virus harm is splashed across prime time. The very least we can do for the victims of COVID vaccines is to say their names—victims like Caitlin Georgia Gotze, a healthy and vibrant 23-year-old studying at Griffith University to become a vet while working as a horse strapper. Caitlin dropped dead at work of a heart attack following a second Pfizer shot. Her death was recorded as asthma, a condition Caitlin had never had. Reginald Shearer, a formerly healthy fit and active man, quickly went downhill and passed away from effects that began after receiving the AstraZeneca vaccine. Daniel Perkins, a 36-year-old healthy father from Albion Park, died of a heart attack in his sleep following his second Pfizer injection. Douglas James Roberts died after taking AstraZeneca. His family are concerned that his GP didn't warn him of the side-effects of the vaccine. In other words, no informed consent was obtained. Neurosurgeons at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital attributed his death to a stroke, despite no family history and a clean bill of health. They refused to report his death to the TGA—refused!

The Australian Health Practitioner Regulatory Agency, Ahpra, has been bullying medical practitioners into not reporting or even for talking about the harm they're seeing. The TGA erased 98 per cent of the 800 vaccine deaths—98 per cent erased!—that physicians reported. The TGA did so without autopsy or suitable consideration of all the patient medical data. TGA, ATAGI and Ahpra are the three monkeys of the pharmaceutical industry: hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil.

Section 22D(2) of the Therapeutic Goods Act 1989 requires the Secretary of the Department of Health to ensure the quality, safety and efficacy of the vaccines were satisfactorily established for each cohort for which the provision of approval is being granted. Data recently revealed in court papers in the United States clearly shows that vaccine harm was apparent in the clinical trials that Pfizer, BioNTech and others conducted. This information, if ATAGI had bothered to ask for it, should have resulted in a refusal of the application for provisional use. No data was provided to the secretary regarding individual test subjects—technically, anonymized patient clinical data. No independent analysis of the fundamental issues surrounding novel mRNA vaccines was conducted in Australia—none in Australia! Instead, the secretary took Pfizer, AstraZeneca and Moderna's word for it.

I will say that again: the secretary took pharmaceutical companies' word for the safety of their products. These are the same pharmaceutical companies that have been fined over and over for criminal behaviour. AstraZeneca got a US\$355 million fine for fraud and, separately, a \$550 million fine for making unfounded claims about efficacy. Pfizer got a \$430 million fine for making unfounded claims about efficacy, and a \$2.3 billion fine—that's billion dollars—for making unfounded claims about efficacy and for paying kickbacks.

This is who the Liberal-Nationals, Labor and Greens—our very own pharmaceutical lobby—want to pay more money to. That's not on the basis of extensive local testing and inquiry, it's simply on the basis of taking pharmaceutical companies safety assurances. There's no testing. It's an assurance made easy by indemnity against any damage that the vaccines cause. What deceit! What criminal incompetence! The Labor Party and the Liberal-National Party have accepted \$1 million each from the pharmaceutical establishment in this election cycle alone. Billions more are being set aside in this week's budget to pay the pharmaceutical companies to keep the COVID-19 gravy train going. What great value this parliament provides for those electoral donations.

Mention should be made of the TGA's decision to ban safe, fully approved and widely accepted alternatives to COVID-19 vaccines. This includes hydroxychloroquine and ivermectin; vitamins, minerals and natural antivirals; as well as proven messaging around healthy eating and lifestyles. The decision to ban proven, safe, affordable and accessible alternative treatments that are working around the world was taken to ensure the fastest and widest-possible adoption of the vaccines. The TGA's own customers fund the TGA. That means pharmaceutical companies fund their own product's approval. That fails the pub test. Where are the checks and balances? There are none.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics is culpable in this scandal and cover-up. The Australian Bureau of Statistics' annual budget is \$400 million. The most recent mortality data they provide is from November last year, four months behind. The most recent breakdown of mortality by cause and age is from 2020. The most recent data on live births

is from 2020. Birth data used to be available six weeks after, not 15 months and counting. Are they hiding miscarriages?

At what point do we consider the actions of the TGA, ATAGI and the Australian Bureau of Statistics as interfering with the operation of the Senate? Peer-reviewed and soon-to-be-published data that must require the secretary to cancel the provisional approval of the vaccines has been released from outside of the government.

Let me review those quickly so the Senate fully understands the extent to which we have been misled. Firstly, freedom of information documents indicate the TGA has failed to assess the reproductive toxicology of the COVID vaccines. Freedom of information documents indicate the TGA has failed to assess the impact of microRNA sequences and related molecular genetic issues on the human body. Peer-reviewed and published in-vitro research shows gene based vaccine-generated spike proteins can migrate into human cell nuclei to disrupt DNA repair mechanisms. The TGA has dealt with this abysmally—murderously?

Vaccine-derived RNA can be reverse transcribed, leading to possible integration into the human genome, which the TGA denies, based only on pharmaceutical companies telling them to deny it. Internal Pfizer data released in February indicate they accept 1,272 different adverse vaccine events, including paralysis and death. German and US insurance actuarial data suggests the TGA's database of adverse event notifications is underreporting side effects ninefold. Freedom of information documents from 2018 show the TGA keeps two databases of adverse event notifications: one internal, showing all reports of harm; and one public, showing only a part of those. This means vaccine harm is most likely significantly higher than reported.

Without honest and accurate data, the Senate has no way of deciding how much harm is too much harm. German pathologists describe pathological aggregates of spike proteins and lymphocyte infiltrations in inflamed organs in autopsies related to death post vaccination. In response, the TGA is failing to conduct autopsies on the 800 Australians the patients' own doctors have reported as having died from the vaccines. What the hell is the TGA hiding?

Whistleblowers to the *British Medical Journal* provided reports of inadequacies, irregularities and possible fraudulent practices in the Pfizer vaccine trial—you know, the same trial for which the TGA took Pfizer's word. From a modern immunological perspective, two frequent vaccines for respiratory viruses run the risk of desensitising the immune responses to the virus, and that leads to hyp immunity and worse illness than without the immunisation. To put that simply: repeated vaccination is doing more harm than good.

These are the matters I sought today to refer to the Senate Select Committee on COVID-19 without success. I thank Senators Hanson, Abetz, Rennick and Antic for their support, integrity and courage. The truth is the Select Committee on COVID-19 has been running a protection racket for the pharmaceutical industry, and today's vote proves it. This unprecedented betrayal of the Australian people must be referred immediately to a royal commission. To the Prime Minister, the health minister, the federal health department and all those in the Senate and the House of Representatives—all of you who have perpetrated this crime—I direct one question: how the hell do you expect to get away with it? We're not going to let you get away with it. We won't let you get away with it. We are coming for you. We have the stamina to hound you down and we damn well will.

COVID-19: Vaccination

Senator RENNICK (Queensland) (21:48): First of all, I acknowledge everyone who has suffered from a vaccine injury, the people who've lost their jobs from the mandates and those who've suffered discrimination because of their vaccination status. The suffering incurred by so many Australians should not be occurring in a plural democratic society where the rights of the individual, especially with regard to their own health choices, should be considered sacrosanct.

The destruction of civil liberties in the name of COVID demonstrates the blatant abuse of powers by all levels of government dealing with it—all this in the name of a virus that has an extremely high survival rate, greater than 99 per cent, and an average age of mortality similar to life expectancy. By all means we should protect the sick and vulnerable, but you don't destroy the strong to protect the weak.

Let's be honest: this is no longer about COVID. It's about the vaccine rollout and the government control that comes with it. This became obvious last year when the vaccination rate went past 80 per cent and the state premiers completely ignored their promise to the Australian people that they would open up and lift the cruel and unnecessary COVID restrictions of the last two years. Rather than open up, they doubled down with unnecessary mandates and discrimination. And it's not just the state premiers who doubled down. Employers doubled down and the federal government—despite saying they don't believe in mandates—doubled down with border restrictions and hypocritical rules for vaccine exceptions from ATAGI.

But here's the rub: the vaccines don't work. They didn't provide immunity, they didn't prevent transmission, they didn't prevent hospitalisation and they didn't prevent death. It wasn't that long ago that the definition of a vaccine

was that it gave the recipient immunity, in most cases for the best part of a lifetime. Do we get that with the COVID vaccines? No, we don't. No, what we get is the requirement that you have to take a jab every three months, because, hey, if the first didn't work, then try a second. And if the third didn't work, try a fourth. What's that definition of insanity again? So let me say this loud and clear: the COVID-19 vaccines are not fit for purpose.

Despite the fact that over 90 per cent of the population is jabbed, COVID still ran rampant throughout the community once we opened up late last year. No herd immunity was achieved. According to New South Wales health data at 12 February, there was no statistical clinical difference in outcomes between the vaccinated and the unvaccinated—none at all. I wish I had a larger or more recent dataset, but, unfortunately, no other state governments want to release their cumulative COVID clinical outcomes. I wonder why! And even New South Wales, which actually did release data on a granular basis, have scaled their reporting back so that the data is not clearly comparing the outcomes between the vaccinated and the unvaccinated. The data was showing that the vaccination didn't work. I can't say I'm surprised, though. New South Wales Health introduced us to the process of 'back-capturing', a process whereby you count anyone who had COVID in the last 28 days prior to entering the hospital, even if they had recovered—a masterclass in fudging numbers if ever I've seen one.

Because the vaccines are not fit for purpose, they should not be mandated or required, period—by an employer, by a government, by a business, by a school, by a sporting association or by a show association. No-one has the right to force someone to undergo a medical procedure, especially one that is ineffective, and, even more importantly, one that is dangerous. To date, according to the official government figures from the TGA, there have been over 116,000 recorded suspected adverse events here in Australia. This is more than for all other drugs in Australia since 1971 put together. And this number is still climbing. Is it any wonder our health system is struggling? It is important to note that most of these cases are recorded by medical professionals, and nearly every one of them has ticked the box indicating that they suspect the injury was caused by the actual vaccine: 116,000 reported cases is the mother of all safety signals. To put it into context, there are only 60,000 public hospital beds in Australia. By ignoring this signal, the TGA, ATAGI, AHPRA and the health department—and all other government officials, including politicians, who fail to speak up—are destroying the lives of so many Australian people.

One of the key criteria the World Health Organization uses as guidance for assessing causality is: 'In this patient, did the event occur within a plausible time window after vaccine administration?' And, of course, we know the answer to this is yes. But that's not all. All science is based on actual data. In medicine, the gold standard for data is based on a doctor's diagnosis. It is not based on models conjured up by bureaucrats in the health department and the TGA. Sure, that may help to show correlation, but it does not determine causation. But, yet again, this is the standard we apply here in Australia. We have a bunch of unelected bureaucrats at Ahpra, none of whom have any experience in frontline medicine, gagging doctors, nurses and other allied health professionals to keep them from doing their job—from writing the very diagnosis that our injured need feedback on and that our community need feedback on so they know just how dangerous these vaccines are.

By gagging our medical professionals, Ahpra are stopping vaccine victims from getting the treatment and support they need, and they are stopping the rest of society from understanding just how dangerous these vaccines can be. It is completely unacceptable that Ahpra have bullied our medical professionals into silence. I should however acknowledge the many medical professionals who had the courage to speak out at great cost to themselves and to their families. Your efforts will not be forgotten.

We have people injured from the first vaccine or the second vaccine who can't get an exemption from their next shot because doctors are afraid to write anything down. How cruel is that—to force someone to get a second vaccine after they've been injured from the first? What's even worse is that many people who've been injured actually can't get an exemption. Some get a medical exemption, but then they get the sack anyway. What is going on here? This is just unbridled abuse. I've heard these stories every day for the last five months. It has got to stop.

Ahpra's bullying doesn't just lead to poor treatment. It leads to further cover-ups, the worst being the underreporting of vaccine injuries. I know a cardiologist in Brisbane who lodged three reports of myocarditis from the vaccine with Queensland Health. They knocked the reports back, saying that the cardiologist wasn't qualified to give an assessment on the condition of someone's heart and that these vaccine victims had to go back to their GPs. Just how many adverse events are being underreported because of this systemic cover-up of vaccine-injuries, not just by Ahpra but also by our good friends at the TGA?

The TGA rushed the approval process with Pfizer, and they are now trying to cover up their own mistakes by hiding adverse events from the vaccines. The very fact that Pfizer wanted 55 years to release all their data should have been a red flag. The number of injuries and deaths is a red flag. The lack of controls in initial testing should have been a red flag. There was no genotoxicity testing, no carcinogenic testing, no reproductive testing, no development testing and no longitudinal testing. The trial was unblinded after two months. Even more importantly,

the two key clinical safety outcomes from the trial, injuries and deaths, were worse in the group that were vaccinated. Despite all these safety signals, the TGA still refused to pull the vaccines.

Let me conclude: it is time to stop the vaccine rollout. It is time to stop the mandates. It is time to stop the vaccine discrimination, and it is time that governments stop the tyrannical overreach in the name of COVID.

Human Rights

Senator RICE (Victoria—Deputy Australian Greens Whip) (21:58): Like so many around the world, the Greens are devastated by and condemn Russia's horrific invasion of Ukraine, and we are deeply moved by the heartbreaking stories coming out of Ukraine—the lives lost, the families devastated, the communities torn apart, the buildings turned to craters and the cities turned to concrete wastes. Clearly, there has been a massive human toll in this war.

We welcome the Australian government's urgency in responding and the fact that this suffering on the other side of the world has generated a rapid and genuine response. We support the targeted sanctions that have been imposed on oligarchs with direct links to Putin's regime and to the suffering and devastation that's been inflicted in Ukraine. We welcome the restrictions in Australia on importing Russian fuel, and we welcome the steps taken by the Future Fund to divest from Russian investments. These are all important steps, and the Greens support them.

Beyond that, we think, however, there is more that the Australian government can do. In particular, we think that, globally, cancelling Ukraine's national debt is a clear step that the international community could take, and we urge the Australian government to be advocating multilaterally towards that end. We welcome the immigration policy changes made to support Ukrainians fleeing the conflict, but we think that more can be done. The Greens call on Australia to provide an additional 20,000 humanitarian places above Australia's existing annual humanitarian quota, specifically for Ukrainian nationals fleeing conflict and/or persecution. We would like to see the fast-tracking of any outstanding visa applications by Ukraine nationals. We think we should offer permanent visas to Ukraine nationals on temporary visas in Australia, grant family reunion visas to applicant families of Ukrainian Australians and revoke any visa cancellation decisions for any Ukraine nationals held in detention.

For a long time, the Australian Greens, of course, have called for an urgent energy transition to address the climate emergency. The invasion of Ukraine and the way Putin's war machine has been funded by fossil fuels shows how urgent this transition is. Exports of oil and gas are worth \$120 billion to Russia every year. They are fuelling the Russian war machine, and they have to be brought to an end while Russia is waging war on its neighbour. We need to work multilaterally to support other countries, particularly in Europe, to urgently shift from Russian oil and gas. We need to act at emergency speed to safeguard our future, from both the climate emergency and the potential outbreak of World War III. And, if you want to know what's in Australia's national interests, this is a massive opportunity for Australia to use government investment to drive new export industries in green hydrogen and minerals processing, ensuring that Australia becomes a renewable energy superpower.

Let me be clear: we support the Australian government responding urgently to the crisis in Ukraine, but there is a lot more that we think could be done. More broadly, I urge the Australian government to act urgently to uphold human rights wherever serious violations occur and not just where it is geopolitically convenient to do so. Without that, sadly, there's a real risk that the Australian government's response is seen through the lens of hypocrisy and racism, serving to highlight the many instances when the Australian government has refused to act despite desperate pleas from diaspora communities and human rights advocacy groups.

The simple truth is that we, the Australian Greens, believe that universal human rights are fundamental and must be respected and protected in all countries and for all people. Our commitment to this is reflected in my efforts over the course of this parliament to raise the issue of serious human rights violations that occur around the world. I want to particularly mention Myanmar and the actions of the military junta there. For over a year, we have been calling for the Australian government to meet with the National Unity Government and to impose targeted sanctions on the key generals who have led the coup and who have been responsible for the most appalling atrocities against the people of Myanmar. Sadly, we have not seen that happen. The foreign minister, to the best of my knowledge, has not met with the National Unity Government, so I urge her to do so. I hope that it will happen. We again urge the Australian government not just to meet with the National Unity Government at the highest levels but to recognise the National Unity Government. Sadly, instead, what we've seen so far is Minister Dutton legitimising the junta through ASEAN defence ministers meetings. I really do want to thank the many community members here in Australia and around the world for their advocacy and for the work that they've done to be working for justice in Myanmar.

I do now actually want to congratulate the government in the unexpected but very positive announcement of 16,000 visas for refugees from Afghanistan over the next four years. For me, as a Green, this was by far the best news of the budget tonight, in a sea of climate denialism and massive handouts to fossil fuel companies and projects. But it was not before time. Just last week, the Taliban announced that they are banning schooling for girls who were

previously attending school. Today the news came through that they are banning the broadcast of foreign news reports and banning women from flying domestically or internationally without an approved mahram—a male relative—accompanying them. It is absolutely horrifying.

There is much more that the Australian government could be doing to support refugees from Afghanistan, and they should be acting with urgency. The plan for 16,000 visas is great news, but it's urgent for people to get out. We could and should be issuing people with emergency visas and doing everything we can to facilitate getting them out of the country. We should be issuing permanent visas to the thousands of Afghans here on temporary visas, who don't have rights to access health care, to go to university or to apply for visas for their partners or other immediate family members.

We should be resettling Afghans who have been living in limbo in Indonesia for over a decade. There is a lot more that we can be doing about human rights abuses that have been perpetrated by a whole range of other governments—often against their own citizens, including vulnerable minority groups. I urge the Australian government to do more in relation to human rights violations wherever they occur, including through the use of targeted sanctions, using our Magnitsky legislation. For example, we should be acting on the actions of the Philippines government, who are basically waging war against their own citizens, targeting environmental, labour and human rights activists. We should be acting on the actions of the Indian government against a range of minority groups in India and in Kashmir, particularly Muslims, who have been targeted by the RSS, with Hindu nationalism absolutely flourishing under the Modi government. There have been Hindu extremist groups actively calling for mass killings of Muslims.

We should be doing more about the actions of the Chinese government, with their attacks on the human rights of their own citizens and their attacks on Tibetans, Uighurs and Hongkongers. We should be doing more about the actions of the Israeli government for their ongoing, brutal occupation of Palestine, which has been assessed by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch as apartheid.

In relation to Ethiopia, we have consistently called for greater action to address the humanitarian crisis in Tigray, in particular, where millions are facing starvation from a government blockade. I've spoken in this place previously about the actions of the Sri Lankan government and the serious human rights violations faced by Muslim communities there also. I've called for action to respond to the attacks by the Sudanese military on protesters in response to the violent coup that occurred there a year ago and that has resulted in the deaths of hundreds if not thousands of people.

And then there are the human rights violations committed by our ally the US, over many years—the invasion of Iraq, the imprisonment of Julian Assange or the horrific border policies of the Trump administration—but, throughout, the Australian government has remained silent. We need an independent foreign policy, not an unthinking alignment with the US.

So, to conclude, we welcome the urgency of the Australian government's response to the invasion of Ukraine, but we want to see an urgent response that advocates for human rights wherever human rights violations occur—not just where it's geopolitically convenient. I and the Greens will continue to speak out for the protection of human rights wherever in the world they are under attack. *(Time expired)*

Tasmania: Child Abuse

Senator LAMBIE (Tasmania) (22:08): Last year an eight-year-old Tasmanian girl was allegedly sexually abused, repeatedly, by a boy she knew at school. The abuse happened on school property where the teachers wouldn't see it. The girl has intellectual disabilities, which made her especially vulnerable.

Here's the thing. We say to our young people in Australia: 'If you've been abused, speak out, tell an adult and trust a grown-up, because we're here to protect you.' This little girl—and I'm going to call her Rose, to protect her identity—she did that. She spoke up. After months of abuse, she worked up the courage to tell her mum what was happening. She did the right thing.

Her mum, who I'll call Elaine, did the right thing too. When she found out what happened, she did everything possible to keep Rose and her brother safe. She raised the allegations with the school, with state police, with state and federal Labor members, with the former state education minister and the current education minister, and with the Deputy Premier and the Premier of Tasmania. Literally, she has gone to everyone she can possibly think of, asking for help. What a mother lion! Honestly, you could not find a mum who does a better job of fiercely advocating for her children.

There's nothing more that Elaine could possibly do to fix this situation for Rose and her brother. Elaine needs the people in the government to stand up and do something. She has known that for months. She has told them she needs them to step up and do something, but here we are 12 months later, and Elaine and her kids are homeless. They are couch-surfing. They have no stability and no safety. Elaine is sleeping on the floor so the kids can have a

bed. She had to quit her job to homeschool her children. She's living on a carer's payment from Centrelink. They have nothing. They are completely stuck. This is what we do to our victims in Tasmania. This is how we treat them. This is what the police and the government people do. The schools sit in denial, saying there's no abuse going on in their schools. Elaine can't get bond together to get a private rental. Even if she could, she's not working and isn't going to get approval for a lease. She can't go back to work until the kids have a school to go to, and they are not going back to a school where Rose was abused. That is completely unacceptable. They can't go to school because until they find a house they don't know what school they're going to be going to. They've got to have the house before they can put the kids into school, because they've already gone through enough trauma.

Elaine and her family are stuck in a classic catch-22, and the only people who can help them are in the state government. But for 12 months now there has been absolutely nothing from the Liberal state government. I'm talking about a young lady who has been abused in a public school in Tasmania, and politicians down there know what's going on. I watch you fighting with each other in state parliament over abuse matters, but apparently you couldn't give a stuff about this young girl. You don't give a stuff about her. How bloody shameful it is of the state parliament in Tasmania today! You are shameful.

While Elaine's kids wait, their mental health is going down the drain. They've had years of disruption. The kids are having nightmares. They check the locks every night before they go to sleep. No child in Australia should feel that they need to do that. No child should be going to sleep wondering if they are safe. Don't get me wrong: Elaine's daughter, Rose, is bloody brave and bloody strong. But we're asking too much of a girl who hasn't even hit her teens. We never should have made her wait this long to get to a safe place to live.

I've got to be honest: I'm at my wits' end. I cannot believe we're talking about all this abuse going on with kids and the sexual abuse going on up here, and they're fighting over it and throwing abuse at each other down in state parliament, but nobody seems to give a stuff about this young lady—this young girl who has been abused at a public school in the state of Tasmania. I've been talking on this for months now. I'm banging my head up against a brick wall. Everywhere are roadblocks, bureaucracy, government cover-up and government incompetence at its best, over abuse. I cannot tell you, Premier Gutwein—from one person to another, as someone I had so much respect for—how disappointed I am in you today. Frankly, I find you bloody shameful.

I am asking for Elaine and her kids. All they need is a house. All they need is a safe place to live so they can move on with their lives. This is how bad things are with social housing in this country: a kid gets raped at school, and the state government can't stop the family from becoming homeless. It's not good enough. The victim gets punished and the boy who raped the girl is running around, with no questions asked. God only knows if anybody else has been raped at this school, because we're all playing cover-up in Tasmania, aren't we? Have there been any more at that school? As a mother, I'm this far from naming that school. My worry is this: if my children were going to that school, I would want to know whether one of them had been raped—God forbid—while you were playing cover-up.

I've been told the department of housing doesn't have a single spare property in Tasmania to put them into—not one. And this has been going on for months. It just goes to show how bad things have become in our state. You can be travelling along as a normal family, working hard and trying to do the right thing, and all it takes is one horrible thing to up-end your life—one person who takes advantage of your children, one person who is filth, and everything turns upside down.

It's up to the state government to protect people when they're down on their luck. That's how things are done in Australia. We expect everyone to get on and work hard and give back to their neighbourhood, but, when someone falls on tough times, there has to be a net to catch them. We don't let people fall through the cracks through no fault of their own. That's not the Australian way.

I don't know why the Tasmanian government doesn't get that, but quite frankly, I find you appalling. You've known about this, housing commissioner and housing minister. Once again, it's an appalling effort from both of you. You are shameful. Every one of you has said, 'Not my problem, Jacqui.' Well, it's your bloody problem now. You don't want me back up here in August starting to name a few things, a few people and that school. This is your warning. You get this fixed, because the next time I stand up in here I'm going to let loose. I'll use my privilege for this family. It is enough. I will use it as a mother, knowing that, if my children went to that school, I would want to know if this was going on. I would want to know that my children had not been touched either, or raped. This is a cover-up of the worst, and it is disgusting.

The new education minister told me he couldn't say anything substantial about the matter because it was with the police. Here's a flash for you, Minister: get your story right, because the police aren't investigating, mate. They're not investigating. Where's the police minister? Go and put a boot up your police officers' butts. Something is wrong here. When are you going to do it? When I start naming and shaming? By then it's all going to be too late. I'm telling

you: I'm not going to let this go. The most basic job of politicians, both state and federal, is to look after Australian kids. It is the most fundamental, basic thing, and we have a responsibility to protect our children. The Tasmanian government has failed to get the job done, and you are shameful. You have about six weeks to two months, before I get back up here, to get this fixed.

National Security

Senator PATRICK (South Australia) (22:18): Two themes of my work as a senator have been national security and campaigning for better transparency and accountability in government and in the parliament. Against the background of my service with the Royal Australian Navy, I've often spoken in the Senate about defence and security issues, including the rise of Chinese military power. In the years ahead, Australia will face new strategic challenges of a scale we have not experienced for decades. This emerging state of affairs has been highlighted this week by China's diplomatic manoeuvres to gain a military foothold in the Solomon Islands. To ensure Australian security, we will need to significantly boost the capabilities of the Australian Defence Force, much sooner than on the 20-year-long time frame contemplated by the present government.

Recent experience shows that Australia must be prepared to rely on our own resources—military and civilian—to a much greater extent than in the past. Sovereign capabilities and greater self-reliance will be vital for our future security. In particular, our critical infrastructure—especially telecommunications—must be completely secure from foreign interference and possible sabotage. Our vital defence industries, including naval construction, aerospace surveillance and electronic warfare capabilities in South Australia, must be fully safeguarded from espionage.

Anyone who seeks to represent our state in this parliament must be fully cognisant of these threats from the Chinese state and free from entanglement that might compromise their preparedness to act without reservation in Australia's national interest. In this regard, while I acknowledge former senator Nick Xenophon's political skills and past record as a representative of South Australia, I am strongly of the view, now that he has put his hand up to return to this place, that he must be completely transparent about his dealings with the Chinese telecommunications giant, Huawei.

This is a corporation closely aligned with the Chinese state and the Chinese Communist Party, and which has been implicated in Chinese state espionage. Huawei has also aided the internal surveillance activities of Chinese state security, especially the oppression of the Uighur people in Xinjiang. After his resignation from the Senate and failed 2018 political campaign to re-enter the South Australia parliament, Mr Xenophon undertook, through a new partnership with former journalist Mark Davis, to represent Huawei as its so-called 'strategic counsel'. At that time, in December 2019, Huawei had already been banned by the federal government. Since then, security concerns about Huawei have only grown.

For example, in February 2020 the US government disclosed that Huawei covertly exploited backdoors in carrier equipment supplied to law enforcement agencies. In October 2020, the British parliament's defence committee released a report detailing evidence of the close links and cooperation between Huawei, the Chinese state and the Chinese Communist Party. In December last year it was revealed, further, that as early as 2012 Australian intelligence detected a sophisticated penetration into our telecommunications system, an intrusion that began with a software update from Huawei that delivered malicious code.

While working for Huawei, Mr Xenophon did not register it with the Australian Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme. In this, he appears to have relied on the exemption for persons providing legal advice to foreign organisations and a claim that he was not directly lobbying government ministers. However, the work that Xenophon Davis did for Huawei appears to have been largely in the public relations field and directed towards influencing the federal government to reopen the door for Huawei to infiltrate Australia's 5G telecommunications network. That is of course one of 14 demands the Chinese government has made before they will reconsider their current hostile stance towards Australia.

Mr Xenophon declared that Huawei was an 'underdog'. I'm not sure how a vast Chinese conglomerate with global networks backed by the Chinese state could ever be described as an underdog, but that was his description. This was all a misjudgement on Mr Xenophon's part. He was entitled, as a private individual, to work for whoever he wished. But the choice he made was akin to someone choosing to do PR work for the German companies Krupp or Messerschmitt in 1938. Mr Xenophon now says that he has not worked for Huawei for some time, though we don't know when he ceased. He now claims to support the Australian government's 5G ban on Huawei. As a declared Senate candidate, he should now, in the interests of transparency and accountability, disclose the full details of his contractual relationship with Huawei. He should disclose the terms, conditions and duration of his contract; what instructions he accepted from Huawei; and precisely what services he and Mr Davis were paid for.

Speaking in 2016 about another former senator who took a controversial position in a business, then Senator Xenophon said:

... whether you're a minister or not. I think it's not unreasonable to disclose how much you're getting paid and how much lobbyists are getting paid for particular jobs.

Mr Xenophon chose not to make such a disclosure when he began working for Huawei. He hasn't done so since.

It has always been my view that if Mr Xenophon were to again be a candidate for public office he would need to be fully transparent about his work for Huawei. We have to be very clear about the nature of the company that he has been engaged with. It's a huge Chinese corporation, intimately connected with the CCP, which supports Chinese state espionage and which, according to documents published in the *Washington Post* in December last year, has helped Chinese authorities create the surveillance network that targets that country's Uighur minority.

There can't be any compromise when it comes to Australian national security, nor can there be compromises on human rights. Mr Xenophon has declared his political candidacy. In the interests of accountability and transparency, he should make an immediate disclosure of all the details of his work for Huawei. I urge him to do so. Voters can then make their own judgement.

Wentworth Electorate: Federal Election

Senator McGRATH (Queensland—Deputy Government Whip in the Senate) (22:26): Allegra Spender's candidacy in Wentworth has the appearance of another GetUp/350.org.au dodgy scam with serious implications for policy on Israel. Recently, Independent candidate for Wentworth Allegra Spender met with David Adler, president of the Australian Jewish Association. Spender said, 'It was really valuable to hear about the current BDS boycott and anti-Semitism.' She also said: 'I oppose the BDS boycott. It is counterproductive to building peace and I'll continue to speak out against it.' Meanwhile, a spokesperson for Spender told the *Australian Jewish News* that former 350.org.au CEO Blair Palese, who retweeted a post from Sydney Festival boycott organiser Fahad Ali praising the artists who had pulled out, does not work and has never worked on Spender's campaign. But the thing is that Spender's tilt for Wentworth is being orchestrated by a group linked to organisations that are increasingly targeting Israel, the main one being GetUp.

GetUp is founded on the fundamentally false claim that it is independent. Since its inception, GetUp has set out to deceive voters. In 2007, the Electoral Commission warned that GetUp's vote generator, which put coalition candidates last, was misleading and deceptive. In 2016, GetUp claimed the coalition was cutting hospital funding and backed Labor and the Greens—a lie. Worse, GetUp's campaign was premised on a sham survey of its members. GetUp then misled the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters about this survey.

Also in 2016, GetUp and 350.org.au ran a dirty tricks operation against five coalition MPs, buying web addresses likely to be found while searching for them on the net and populating these pages with disparaging content. These sites were authorised by Christina McPhail from a 'Dodgy brothers' GetUp address in Collingwood. McPhail started at 350.org.au in 2015. In 2019, GetUp telephoned voters, telling them lies about coalition candidates, and, worryingly, dispatched goons to bird-dog Liberal MPs. The only seat where GetUp was successful was Warringah, where a small group with links to GetUp and 350.org.au had selected the so-called Independent candidate.

In January 2018, Ray Yoshida, a former 350.org.au employee, supposedly took a three-month break from GetUp to lay the groundwork for the North Shore Environmental Stewards. McPhail also helped set up this group, formed to infiltrate Liberal branches and create fake defections. Mosman businessman Rob Grant became its president and Julie Giannesini joined in August 2018. The instigator of the Warringah Independent movement, Louise Hislop, also had links to the North Shore Environmental Stewards and GetUp. By Hislop's account, what she calls 'Small Cow'—standing for 'coalition of the willing' and comprising herself, Grant and Giannesini, along with others—selected Zali Steggall.

Something similar is now occurring in Wentworth, where a clique with left-wing links has selected their chosen candidate. By all accounts, Lyndell and Daniel Droga are the prime movers of Wentworth Independents Proprietary Limited. They were quickly joined by Blair Palese from 350.org.au. Lyndell Droga is credited with convincing Spender to stand. Daniel Droga is a shorts dealer and typical of the financial spivs—like vulture capitalist Damien Hodgkinson—who are now backing Independents. The Drogas have supported GetUp for at least 15 years, giving \$20,000 in 2019, and Daniel giving \$20,000 in 2007. GetUp's 2010 election report thanked them for their support. GetUp's 2006-07 annual report also thanked Daniel Droga.

Voices of Wentworth is still pretending to be uncommitted but will no doubt have a campaign that will put the Liberals last. Inevitably, GetUp will also publicly back Spender, as it did Kerry Phelps. Recently, GetUp organiser Tracey Hamilton was spotted working for the Spender campaign. Spender is also using campaigners calling themselves the Populares Agency, comprising former GetUp and Labor campaigners. The people of Wentworth need to know that GetUp is increasingly anti-Israel. GetUp board member Sara Saleh co-organised the recent BDS boycott of Sydney Festival. Last year, GetUp posted a video in which Saleh accused Israel of wanting to erase the

Palestinian presence from all over Palestine. It used the false 'ethnic cleansing' claim and, bizarrely, even charged Australia with direct complicity. Boss of GetUp Paul Oosting defended it. He said:

We are proud to platform our board director Sara Saleh ...

... ..

GetUp has joined with civil society groups across the world in a growing global movement of solidarity and hope, as people everywhere speak out for justice in Palestine.

Executive Council of Australian Jewry co-CEO Alex Ryvchin said it was 'another example of an organisation being manipulated into becoming a mouthpiece for the anti-Israel movement'. Anti-Defamation Commission chairman Dvir Abramovich said that GetUp had 'lost its moral compass'. Regrettably, an anti-Israel stance has been in GetUp's DNA since inception and nowadays is increasingly strident.

In 2016, hacked documents from George Soros's Open Society Foundations shed light on Soros's support of groups promoting the Palestinian cause and BDS actions targeting Israel. In 2004, Soros Fund Management gave \$150,000 to Win Back Respect, a US campaign started by Jeremy Heimans and David Madden, who founded GetUp a year later. In 2007 Heimans and Madden launched Avaaz, a New York based global online activist platform. In 2008-09, Avaaz received \$850,000 from Soros's Open Society Institute via Res Publica. Among the hacked OSF documents is a 2010 memo to Soros, which notes Avaaz is already an Open Society grantee and close collaborator. The OSF documents confirmed its extensive activities in supporting an ugly anti-Israel agenda. They detail numerous grants to organisations advocating for BDS and worse. And—surprise, surprise—Avaaz is at the forefront of anti-Israel campaigns, in particular BDS. Avaaz vows it will keep pushing until all companies financing the occupation of Palestine withdraw their investments. Avaaz has given GetUp \$340,000 over recent years, and in Australia GetUp has edged closer to advocating for Palestinian causes and the BDS campaign.

In 2009, Anthony Lowenstein blogged how he was contacted by GetUp to begin an online debate on Israel and Palestine as a way for the group to dip its toe into the problem. In 2016 activist Sara Saleh joined GetUp's board, months later proclaiming, 'We must force Israel into a perennial state of existential anxiety.' We've had GetUp's video demonising Israel, and now Saleh's organising of the Sydney Festival boycott. Speaking of which, the claim by a spokesperson for Allegra Spender that Blair Palese—who retweeted the post from the Sydney Festival boycott organiser, Fahad Ali—does not and never has worked on a campaign doesn't wash. In fact, it's a lie—another lie from Spender's campaign. Palese may not have literally worked on Spender's campaign, but she certainly is a key figure on it. She is a key founder of Voices of Wentworth. Palese spoke at the first Voices of Wentworth virtual town hall. She was at Spender's campaign launch in a Spender shirt and regularly boosts Spender on her social media. Can the people of Wentworth trust a candidate who has been installed by a long-term GetUp supporter and 350.org.au figure, and whose campaign relies on senior GetUp operatives? Allegra Spender can say she opposes BDS, and she may do, but she is the cat's paw for forces who support it.

Senate adjourned at 22:35