



Senator Claire Moore

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Sunshine Coast Nambour Show stall 16 – 18 June 2017

THIS WEEK

"In October 2016, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) tasked the Chief Scientist, Dr Alan Finkel to conduct an independent review of the national electricity market to take stock of the current security and reliability and to provide advice to government s on a coordinated, national reform blueprint. This was after the blackout in South Australia, and in the midst of heavy debate about energy supply, use of renewables, and the rising costs to business and community.

On the 9 June [the report](#), and made public [see below for links to the report and its elements. Over 200 pages, with key recommendations, including the development of a Clean energy Target, better system planning, better data, cyber threat awareness and work force preparation.

The initial response across business, unions, and community groups, including ACOSS, has been preparedness to consider the recommendations and work through the process carefully. There is agreement that we do have a problem.

Mark Butler and Bill Shorten have made it clear that we will be part of a collective response, acknowledging the professional and collective work of Dr Finkel and the team. Malcolm Turnbull has defended the government's record, while George Brandis has praised the diversity of thought within the coalition, and agreed to listen to the science.

The need for the solid defence of diversity was the outburst of criticism from members of the LNP from the moment that the report was released. Tony Abbot led the response, comparing the Finkel report to the Magic Pudding, Eric Abetz questioned the modelling and the LNP caucus room required extra meetings to develop a position, as yet unknown, though there will be listening to the science.

No report will be universally agreed, but we now have challenge and an expectation from the community that the wasteful and vicious climate wars will be ended and that the Blueprint will be considered.

[[Blueprint](#) 212pages [Snapshot](#) 16 pages [Executive Summary](#) 2 pages [Recommendations](#) 2 pages]

It was great to meet with the dedicated people advocating for fair negotiation with East Timor. There is a special relationship between our countries, and the maritime border negotiation in unfinished business. Our party has established policy to respect the international tribunal process, and to work to a fair result ...we have the responsibility to East Timor and their loyal supporters"

SENATOR CLAIRE MOORE, LABOR SENATOR FOR QUEENSLAND

CLAIRE'S WEEKLY UPDATE NEWSLETTER

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WHAT'S BEING SAID ...



THE FINKEL REVIEW – SHORTEN

"The Labor Party is prepared to carefully consider the Finkel report, and we are prepared to put the national interest and even compromise on some of the gold-standard changes we think need to be made just so we can stop arguing about climate change and do something to restore investor certainty for jobs, and doing something about the wholesale electricity prices. But in return for bipartisan support, Mr Turnbull is going to have to be fair dinkum. He is going to have to stand up to the cave dwellers of the right wing of his party and face them down. But I am prepared to work with him constructively upon seeing the report to make sure that at last, we can exert downward pressure on electricity prices. That we can do something about carbon pollution, that we can provide investor certainty so that people can make investments in our energy market going forward. And all of this is going to help business and consumers.

THE FINKEL REVIEW – MARK BUTLER

"You can't have a clean energy target that boosts coal-fired power production. It's simply an oxymoron, it's a contradiction in terms and I am concerned that Barnaby Joyce and Tony Abbott appear to be setting that as a pre-condition for the Government adopting the recommendations of Dr Finkel. You simply can't have coal-fired powered defined as clean energy. It just makes a nonsense of a scheme. The International Energy Agency (IEA) defines that [high-efficiency, low-emission coal technology] as coal-fired power that puts out about 740 to 800 kilograms of carbon per megawatt hour. Under no-one's definition is that clean energy."

THE FINKEL REVIEW – ALBANESE

HOST: *Is the danger that if Malcolm Turnbull ends up sort of making enough concessions to conservatives within his party and comes up with a proposal that is so far from Finkel that it bears no resemblance to what was recommended last week, that Labor will withdraw that offer of consensus?*

ALBANESE: *Well it's not a blank cheque, obviously. What Christopher [Pyne] continues to do to an audience playing there in Adelaide is to pretend that this is a South Australian issue. **The fact is there is a national energy problem.** Prices are going up right around the country. NSW, which relies upon coal, had outages for industry and for homes just a couple of months ago. What everyone is saying in terms of the experts, be it Dr Finkel as a scientist, be it the energy providers, be it economists are saying, is that you need a market-based response, you need that certainty there in the system so that people can invest.*

*That is what is required. Now there is a responsibility on both sides of politics to do what we can to achieve an outcome that has cross-party support. Now that's important because part of the problem here is that when governments have changed, policies have changed and people have made big promises. **The Coalition said when they got rid of the carbon price that prices would go down. That was four years ago. Prices have gone up. Wholesale prices have doubled and you haven't had the investment that's required.***

So I think it is reasonable what Christopher says about his party room having a mature debate about it. I don't think they should be expected to come out with an immediate response. There is obviously push back from some of the more conservative elements of the Liberal Party and the National Party about this but they have a responsibility. They can't continue to blame someone else and what we've said is that Finkel provides a framework. It's not our ideal position; we think it should be an emissions intensity scheme, but nonetheless if you get to the same destination in a different way then that's a good thing. And that destination is lower emissions, lower prices, and more stability.

THE FINKEL REVIEW – DR ALAN FINKEL

"Security and reliability have been compromised by poorly integrated variable renewable energy generators including wind and solar."

INTERMENT OF MUSLIMS – LEIGH

"I thought that internment was a shorthand way of referring to the problems of the past. Don't forget that after the United States interned more than 100,000 people, it paid reparations and issued an apology. And I don't think people look back to our internment of Japanese Australians in the 1940s as the way forward. What is critical, in countering Islamic extremism, that we recognise the vast majority of Australian Muslims are of good faith. There's half a million Muslims in Australia, contributing strongly to our multiethnic, multiracial society and, as David Irvine pointed out in his outgoing address as head of ASIO, they shouldn't be made to pay for the sins of a couple of hundred of aberrant souls."

CITIZENSHIP CHANGES – LEIGH

"Improving the English language standards for migrants is unexceptional. I don't mind the idea that the typical new citizen should have to speak English better than Barnaby Joyce. But let's not pretend that that best way of fighting violent extremism is through good grammar. When we see the detail of this, we'll work it through. But I think Peter Dutton is largely interested in his own power plays and less interested in details of legislation. If he wasn't, he'd be public about the consultations and he would have given Labor a copy of the legislation weeks ago."

PENALTY RATES – O'CONNOR

"I just wanted to touch on the efforts today by Labor to bring on an amendment to the Fair Work Act which would ensure the penalty rates decision handed down in February to cut up to 700,000 workers' wages would be quashed and there would be no provision for the Fair Work Commission to make similar orders about other awards. Well, certainly if you are a Government and you have only got hollow slogans, and you treat the electorate with contempt, you will suffer the same indignities that the Tories [in England] have suffered.

But we have a government here that has hollow slogans. We have a Government here who does not understand the growing divide between the rich and the poor. We have a Government here that is doing nothing to confront the challenges of inequality in this country. We have a Government here that is out of touch with ordinary Australians, and I have to say that I can draw parallels between the Government here and the Tory Government in Britain.

So there are always parallels, and things that you can draw from other countries – not entirely, but certainly I think that starting with the Government treating the electorate with contempt and being out of touch with ordinary voters – there's certainly a parallel between the two conservative parties, both over in Britain and here."

PENSION CONCESSION CARDS AND THE ENERGY ASSISTANCE PAYMENT - MACKLIN

*"Pensioner Concession Card will be reinstated to former pensioners who lost their pension as a result of the changes to the assets test which began on 1 January 2017. Recipients do not need to do anything to receive their card – it will be re-issued automatically around **9 October 2017**. At the beginning of this year, affected Pensioner Concession Card holders were automatically issued with a Low Income Health Care Card (HCC), and if over age pension age, a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card (CSHC).*

Following the reissue of the Pensioner Concession Card, the HCCs that were received will be redundant and deactivated. For those that also received a CSHC, this card will remain active and be retained.

Energy Assistance Payment is a one-off payment to Age Pensioners, Disability Support Pensioners, recipients of Parenting Payment Single and Veterans Affairs clients. **For singles, the payment is \$75. For each member of a couple, the payment is \$62.50 (\$125 in total).**

To receive the payment, recipients must be currently receiving one of the qualifying payments and be residing in Australia on 20 June 2017. The payment will be made automatically through either Centrelink or the Department of Veterans Affairs – there is no need to do anything.

*The Government anticipate that the **majority of recipients will receive the payment by 30 June 2017.**"*

GOVERNMENT CHANGES TO SUPERANNUATION FOR VETERANS - RISHWORTH

"I understand veteran's frustration about applying to have their invalidity pension treated as a lump sum for taxation purposes but then being subsequently advised that this taxation treatment will no longer be available.

*Labor Senators asked the Government and the **Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation (CSC)** about this issue in a Senate Estimates Committee hearing on 24 May 2017.*

The testimony provided to the Committee was that the change is to apply to all superannuation members, not just those under the CSC or military super schemes. The Government said that the change was an integrity measure announced as a part of the 2016/17 federal budget in order to close down a loophole. It also advised that there were no military pensioners taking their pensions as a lump sum at the time the change was announced last year. A transcript of the discussion and the evidence provided by the CSC is available [HERE](#).

[TREASURY LAWS AMENDMENT (FAIR AND SUSTAINABLE SUPERANNUATION) REGULATIONS 2017 – TREATMENT OF VETERANS INVALIDITY PENSION]

AUSTRALIAN HAIRDRESSING COUNCIL CONFERENCE – CAMERON

"As a young man in Glasgow and later .. in Australia.. I was able to realistically believe in communities that, in the aftermath of our brush with totalitarianism in the Second World War, shared a commitment to collectivism and democratic values embodied in ideas like if we all pay our fair share of taxes, we would all benefit from the high-quality services that the state should provide. One of the developments of the past two decades that is no accident, and its consequences not unintended, is the decline of vocational education and training system. It has been a result of the obsession with "small government"; an obsession that has run its course. It is clear ... that Australians don't buy the small government myth that has taken such a foothold in places like the United States. Australians want their governments to work on their behalf." Apprenticeships have retained their reputation as the gold standard of skills training – but they have not been immune to the broader problems in the VET system – and their reputation, their quality and their reach is at risk. Quality apprenticeships are in decline or in stasis – employer investment is going backwards. A third of employers are underpaying their trade apprentices."

ASPIRATIONS FOR AGRICULTURE SECTOR – FITZGIBBON

"Agriculture policy must be comprehensive, covering a diversity of issues including: market access; supply chain efficiency and productivity; natural resource management; workforce; energy; RD&E and taxation. But if we are to fully realise our aspirations for the agriculture sector three areas of policy will be absolutely critical.

The first is biosecurity. Our key competitive advantage as a nation is our reputation as a producer of quality, clean, green and safe product. The loss of that reputation would be devastating for the sector. **The second policy area is the pursuit of greater value capture.** We must do all we can to ensure our limited natural, human and financial resources are being allocated to the products which secure premium prices. In other words, while volume will remain important, it's value that matters most.

The third policy is natural resource management. Our farmers are custodians of the land they work and no one understands the value of sustainable practices better than they do. But to achieve continuous improvement, they rely on the work of government: its investment in science and research; its management of invasive pests and weeds; and the health of the waterways farmers so heavily rely on. [This piece was first published online at [AustralianFarmers](#).]

LOW EMISSIONS TARGET /CLEAN ENERGY TARGET – MARK BUTLER

"Barnaby Joyce was out this morning saying that a Clean Energy Target must accommodate the building of new coal-fired power stations. That is nonsense, and we need to be honest about that in a way that the electricity industry itself has been honest about that. A Clean Energy Target that accommodates new coal-fired power stations is an oxymoron; it is a contradiction in terms.

You can't have a Clean Energy Target that defines clean energy to include coal-fired power. Australia already has one of the highest shares of coal-fired power in its electricity system of any nation on the face of the earth. That's why we produce about twice as much pollution in our electricity system, as America does or as the OECD average. Our challenge is to reduce our reliance on coal-fired power, not to increase it."

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CITIZENSHIP CHANGES – TONY BURKE INTERVIEW

BURKE: “I want to say a few words about where the debate in the Chamber and everything is up to with respect to Citizenship. I’ve read some amusing accounts today of the Government believing that somehow Peter Dutton is putting pressure on Labor over citizenship changes. Can I make a few things clear? First of all, I’m not sure I’ve ever felt less pressure in my life.

Peter Dutton walks into the Parliament and demands Labor support a document he has not yet written. And he does it day after day. And I presume this week again he will stand up and demand that Labor support a document that he has not yet written and unsurprisingly Labor will say “**show us a copy of the proposal.**”

The other thing though, is Peter Dutton in the last couple of days has taken a step which ordinarily doesn’t happen which he has decided to go on the record claiming that Labor should have a particular position based on briefings. Now I was given a briefing on the 8 May. In the ordinary course I don’t talk about the briefings that we are given by the Government. But Peter Dutton, for reason known only to himself, which is true of most of the things he does, has decided to put that briefing on the record. So if it’s on the record let’s have a talk about what happened at that briefing.

First of all was I briefed on the issues of the citizenship changes that were in the papers on the weekend? No, not at all. That’s all new. None of that existed as part of the proposal at the time of the briefing. When I was asked which parts of what I was being briefed on the Government was committed to, the answer was none.

When I asked what the evidence base was, if I could be provided with the evidence base for the changes, I was told it didn’t exist.

When I asked for, for example on the English language test, how many people who currently apply for citizenship would pass the test, the Government didn’t know.

When I asked how many Australians would pass the test at a University level, the Government didn’t know.

When I then asked about, with the English test, how many people who have completed the English language training course the AMEP (Adult Migrant English Program) would be able to pass this test, the Government did not have a clue.

This proposal so far has been incoherent. Today I see in the papers, a claim that it is somehow linked to national security. Now, let’s unpick this.

If it’s about national security how can it be that it only applies to people who are permanent residents all of whom are already here?

If it’s a national security issue how can it be applying to people who are already here and if they are a national security problem, why are they permanently living here?

We then have the argument from the Government, ‘**it’s about national security because they want people to take a formal pledge of allegiance**’ and yet the other part of their proposal delays how long people live here before they make that pledge. The proposal so far has been incoherent.

When it’s tabled in the Parliament maybe we will get something that makes more sense. But every time I hear the claim from Peter Dutton that somehow there are divisions within Labor all I know is there are divisions within Peter Dutton’s head.

One part of this policy is inconsistent and contradictory to the rhetoric that accompanies it. If Peter Dutton wants Labor to support a change, he should put forward something that is in the interests of national unity. He should stop behaving like a dill demanding that people support a document that has not even been written.

JOURNALIST: Specifically on the administrative appeals tribunal overall powers what’s your position currently?

BURKE: Well I don’t even know what the Government’s proposal is on this. Once again, we’ve got changes here that have appeared in the paper that weren’t part of the briefing, that weren’t part of the Government’s original proposal, that now they’re changing.

They don’t know where they stand. All the divisions in this proposal have been a process of ongoing chaos from Peter Dutton. Now we’ve done the unsurprising thing, put it in writing, let us know what your proposal is, and we’ll have a look at it. That’s not an unreasonable position.

The weird position is what Peter Dutton has gone down where he puts everything out by media release, the arguments contradict the proposal that he has put, he claims Labor have been given a briefing and yet what he is now talking about wasn’t something that Labor was briefed on.

Then he claims in a different article over the weekend that he hopes that Labor will wait until they see the fully written proposal before they make a final decision. I don’t know what’s going on in this man’s mind. But it’s nothing to do with logic.

JOURNALIST: I take it then you would like to see the submissions made public? There are talks that they won’t be.

BURKE: It’s no surprise that the Government is wanting to hide and suppress these submissions.

If Peter Dutton was confident of his arguments he’d be willing to make all of those submissions public. **The reason you don’t want the submissions public is if you’ve been humiliated by them.**

I was briefed on the 8 May. There were still three full weeks to go of public submissions. **At that time I was told 1,700 submissions had been received. I don’t know how many have been received by now.** I don’t know what they say.

But you can guarantee if they were supportive of where the Government was at they’d be releasing them, they’d be publishing them, they’d be all over it.



BANK TAX INQUIRY CONFIRMS REVENUE SHORTFALL - Bowen

Evidence before the Senate Economics Committee today has *confirmed a \$2 billion Budget black hole* in the Government's Major Bank Levy. Macquarie Bank has given testimony before the bank tax inquiry that the new tax will have a \$65m-\$70m pre-tax impact and a \$50m post-tax impact. The big four banks have already reported to the stock exchange an accumulated \$965 million after tax. They are obliged under the Corporations Act to be accurate.

The Treasurer trumpeted on Budget night his **\$6.2 billion** bank tax. Macquarie Bank's disclosure on Friday shows that the five banks that are hit by the tax will pay just over **\$1 billion in 2017-18**.

	CBA	NAB	Westpac	ANZ	Total (big 4)	Macquarie	Total
Pre-Tax	315	350	370	345	1,380	70	1,450
Post-Tax	220	245	260	240	965	50	1,015

The Government has flatly refused to release any Treasury modelling or assumptions on how they calculated the \$6.2 billion in revenue. The design of the Government's bank tax leaves substantial power in the hands of the Treasurer to modify the bank tax liability base to extract additional revenue. Friday's revelations suggest it's just a matter of time before the Treasurer's bank tax bungle sees him use these powers to extract more revenue.

TURNBULL GOVERNMENT HITS HALF-A-TRILLION DOLLARS IN DEBT – Bowen/Chalmers

Gross debt has crashed through half-a-trillion dollars on the Turnbull Government's watch for the first time in Australia's history. The Australian Office of Financial Management today held an \$800 million bond tender, pushing up gross debt to a record \$500.1 billion.

This embarrassing milestone comes despite Malcolm Turnbull claiming in Opposition that up to \$300 billion in *projected* debt was "*frightening*", "*gigantic*" and "*an almost inconceivable level of debt*".

Hypocrisy aside, Friday's milestone is even more astonishing when you consider just how quickly the Liberals hit it. The Abbott-Turnbull Government has racked up gross debt \$1.66 billion a month quicker than the previous Labor Government and net debt \$511 million a month quicker – with no Global Financial Crisis to point to.

Turnbull, Morrison and Cormann have no one else to blame but themselves for their own fiscal failures. Turnbull and his ministers promised to pay down debt, but instead they've blown it out at an even faster rate.

Gross debt shows no sign of slowing down, with the Government's Budget papers expecting it to hit \$725 billion in 2027-28 with no peak in sight. Net debt is also projected to hit record levels over the next three years and the coming year's deficit is 10 times higher than was predicted in the Liberals' first Budget in 2014. **Better economic managers? Don't think so.**

THE TURNBULL GOVERNMENT'S INCREDIBLE DEBT PROBLEM - Chalmers

Malcolm Turnbull posed in front of a "debt truck" in 2009 when projected debt was around \$300 billion; now it's a truckload of debt at half-a-trillion dollars and growing every year for 10 years and beyond. Think the Liberals are better economic managers? Don't think so. Turnbull and his Government now have the dubious honour of presiding over half-a-trillion dollars in gross debt for the first time ever in this country's history. That less-than-stellar achievement says enough on its own to call into question their claims to superior economic management.

That milestone is even more remarkable when you consider just how quickly the Abbott/Turnbull Government got there. In addition to the total debt, the numbers which detail how quickly that debt has grown – the pace of accumulation – in recent years tell a fascinating definitive story. They reveal that both net and gross debt is growing much faster under Abbott and Turnbull than it did during the Rudd-Gillard years.

To be more precise, the Coalition is racking up gross debt \$1.66 billion a month faster than Labor and, when it comes to net debt, \$511 million a month quicker. These numbers come from comparing the level of debt from 2007 to 2013 under Labor, and from 2013 to now under the Coalition. Under Rudd-Gillard, gross debt grew by \$226 billion in 69 months; under Abbott-Turnbull almost as much (\$220 billion) was added in less than two-thirds of the time (44-and-a-half months).

No matter which way you carve it, the numbers don't lie. Gross debt has grown \$381.7 million a week or \$54.5 million a day quicker under the Liberals. And the net debt blowout has been \$118.2 million a week or \$16.9 million a day faster on the Abbott-Turnbull Government's watch. These comparisons hold up even when adjusting for inflation. They make a mockery of the Coalition's discarded rhetoric about "debt and deficit disasters" and their claim to superior management of the nation's finances.

That's especially true when you consider the prevailing global economic conditions during both periods. There's no arguing that debt didn't increase under Labor; it did. But it's also a fact that Labor's time in Government coincided with the Global Financial Crisis – the sharpest synchronised downturn in the global economy since the Great Depression. No developed country was immune from the worldwide devastation that smashed our budgets and made stimulus necessary – to avoid a recession and to keep people in work.

Our targeted response to the crisis prompted the economist and Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz to describe Labor's policies as "*probably, the best designed stimulus package of any of the countries, advanced industrial countries, both in size and in design, timing and how it was spent*".

The Coalition has had no such seismic global event to deal with or to rationalise the pace with which they are racking up debt. The global economy is not just stronger than it was during the GFC, but generally in good shape. The International Monetary Fund has forecast a relatively healthy global growth rate of 3.5 per cent for this year and 3.6 per cent in 2018 – up from 3.1 per cent last year.

Macroeconomic pressures on commodity exporters have improved, including a partial recovery in prices, while growth is expected to remain strong in China and other countries hungry for imported goods and materials.

At the same time, advanced economies like Australia are expected to benefit from higher projected growth in the United States. Even the Treasurer himself remarked in his Budget speech that **“the signs of an improving global economy are there to see”**. But despite these more accommodating global conditions, debt has piled up faster and bigger under the Abbott-Turnbull Government than its Labor predecessors. They like to pretend they’re the Budget messiahs, that they have all the answers when it comes to debt. But the numbers in their own Budget papers tell a very, very different story. The debt ceiling has had to be lifted to make room for the record debt which is made worse by their Budget centrepiece – the \$65 billion big business tax cut.

Conservative calculations show that it will cost Australians \$5.4 billion in extra interest for the Government to borrow the money required to pay for its huge tax handout – the equivalent of \$220 for every man, woman and child in the country. When it comes to debt, the Coalition Government’s fixation on that unaffordable tax cut and other measures that pander to the top end of town show Turnbull and Co are part of the problem, not part of the solution. [*This opinion piece was first published by [Crikey](#)*]

SUKKAR ADMITS TO “TRUCKLOAD OF DEBT” UNDER LIBERALS - Chalmers

The Turnbull Government is just one day away from crashing through half-a-trillion dollars in gross debt for the first time ever in Australia’s history. Treasurer Scott Morrison’s own Assistant Minister, Michael Sukkar, on Friday described that debt under the Liberals as:

“A truckload of debt.” [Michael Sukkar, Federation Chamber, 15 June 2017]

“An extraordinary, an absolutely extraordinary, amount of debt.” [Michael Sukkar, Federation Chamber, 15 June 2017]

Malcolm Turnbull posed in front of a “debt truck” in 2009 when projected debt was around \$300 billion; now it’s a truckload of debt at half-a-trillion dollars and growing every year for 10 years and beyond. **Think the Liberals are better economic managers? Don’t think so.**



NBN ADMITS CUSTOMERS LEFT IN THE DARK ABOUT CONNECTION OBSTACLES - Jones

NBN has admitted that it does not tell customers who are being left behind in NBN’s “too hard basket” that their premises has technical obstacles that prevent their connection to the network. Shadow Minister for Regional Services, Stephen Jones MP says that for some time he has been aware of customers being left behind and often without a clue as to the reason.

These customers are getting bounced between their Retail Service Provider and NBN often turn to MPs and Senators in despair and frustration. They are desperate to understand why their neighbours have been connected to the NBN but they haven’t. In Senate Estimates, NBN CEO Mr Bill Morrow said that NBN doesn’t tell customers about this but relies on customers using their website’s address checker. As a result, nobody is taking responsibility for being honest with these customers and telling them that they are in a different situation that requires detailed work.

These customers, known to NBN as **“Service Class 0”** are growing in number and this month there are around 200,000 premises left behind. **As the rollout speeds up, this number will only escalate.** NBN has admitted that around 20% of these customers will wait more than a year to get connected – and often they can be the only premises in their street without a service.

This is an issue that as the network builder, NBN has unique oversight and control over, but it takes no responsibility for informing customers of their situation. While NBN spends thousands on spin doctors, it can’t be bothered to write to these customers. This is one of the many areas where customers are getting caught in the black hole between NBN and RSPs.

Only the Communications Minister can fix this impasse – but will he? Customers are waiting.

NBN’S SPIN MOVES FROM BAD TO WORSE - Rowland

[NBNC’s latest announcement](#), entitled ‘NBN moves from build to run’, should be more accurately described as ‘NBN’s spin moves from bad to worse’. This is merely the latest smokescreen for the Turnbull Government’s failings in customer experience and the flawed technology decisions which have undermined the economics and capability of the network. The reshuffle of the Chief Customer Officer is clear evidence the Turnbull NBN is failing consumers.

Further, NBNC’s declaration that its organisational model needs to ultimately “evolve” to have a far greater emphasis on customers is more than three years too late. Senate Estimates has also revealed the company **[spent \\$7.8 million of taxpayers’ money](#)** on the **[gen nbn media](#)** campaign.

“If only NBNC spent as much energy on consumers as they do on their misguided media strategies,” Ms Rowland said.

This comes after a week where the company again fell over backwards **[to talk about 1Gbps speeds](#)** to distract from the fact its FTTN network can’t even deliver 75Mbps on average. And then there is the awkward topic of upload speeds ... but of course you never hear Malcolm Turnbull talk about that.

Unfortunately these changes will provide no comfort for residents and businesses across the country that are stuck with Malcolm Turnbull’s second-rate copper NBN.



NO MORE EXCUSES FOR MALCOLM ON FOREIGN INTERFERENCE - Farrell

Labor on Thursday secured Senate support for a motion calling on the Prime Minister to back a Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security inquiry into how Australia can best safeguard against foreign interference in our electoral and political processes.

Despite the Government voting against Labor’s motion, the Senate voted to support Labor’s move to consider tougher measures to protect our democratic system from foreign interference.

Turnbull claims he’s serious about dealing with this issue but he’s all talk. Last November, Labor introduced legislation to the Parliament to ban foreign donations. Senator Brandis revealed in Question Time on Wednesday that the Government hopes to get around to it later this year.

There are no more excuses – it’s well past time Turnbull supported Labor’s important reforms to address concerns about political donations and the risks of foreign interference.



THE CASE FOR A ROYAL COMMISSION REMAINS URGENT - Gallagher

The Senate has acted where the Prime Minister has been too weak to act by passing legislation that would establish a Commission of Inquiry into Australia's Banking and Financial Services. In the House of Representatives on Thursday afternoon, Government members blocked the progress of this legislation. Shamefully, the Member for Dawson George Christensen – who claims to support an inquiry into the banks – sided with the Government.

Christensen talks a big game in Queensland, but as soon as he's in Canberra he does whatever Turnbull tells him to do. Turnbull has Christensen on a short leash – it's so short, he can't even cross the floor of the parliament to support a commission of inquiry into Australia's banks. When Christensen returns to Mackay this weekend, he should explain to his constituents why he did the exact opposite of what he promised.

Labor maintains our position that the Turnbull Government should establish a Royal Commission into Australia's banks but we have supported this legislation due to the complete failure of leadership from the Prime Minister to establish one. Labor will continue to do everything we can to get to the bottom of the systemic failures and cultural issues within financial services sector, ensure that consumers are protected from the rip-offs and scandals of the past and that Australians banking and financial system remains strong, profitable and well led.

Under Turnbull the big banks will get a tax cut but under Labor they will get a Royal Commission. On the Turnbull's watch the list of scandals and investigations into the banks continues to grow. In the past year more than \$300 million has been coughed up by the big banks in fines or compensation for fraud, misleading conduct, illegal conduct or breaching consumer protections. In the last month we have learnt that;

- **The Banking Executive Accountability regime will not protect consumers as it will be limited to poor prudential outcomes only – these new powers would not have prevented the scandals that have ruined so many people's lives in the past and it won't protect them going forward.**
- **The Government's new 'one-stop-shop' complaints authority will not have any new or additional powers that existing disputes resolution bodies don't already have.**
- **The banks are not adhering to unfair contracts terms legislation, with the Small Business Ombudsman finding that not one small business loan written by the big banks since November is compliant with these laws.**
- **The Small Business Ombudsman is now investigating potential systemic issues in relation to the takeover of Bankwest.**
- **ASIC has concerns about the delays in reporting potential breaches to the regulator by the banks**
- **ASIC has launched a special investigation into loan fraud.**
- **ASIC is investigating insurers for false and unconscionable conduct in relation to add-on insurance products.**
- **The Government is dragging its feet on new penalties and rules for bank bill swap rate rigging and looks set to miss the 2017 winter sittings timeframe for introduction set by the RBA, Treasury, APRA and ASIC.**
- **Other legislation has been delayed including reforms to Small Amount Credit Contracts (Payday Loans) an ASIC product intervention power, and much needed credit card reforms**
- **The Government has failed to update and finalise the ASIC Statement of Expectations which now hasn't been updated since 2014.**

TURNBULL GOVERNMENT REFUSAL TO ESTABLISH BANKING ROYAL COMMISSION – GALLAGHER

In regard to the Turnbull Government's refusal to hold a royal commission into Australia's banking and financial sector. Yesterday the Senate acted where the Prime Minister continues to fail to act by agreeing to establish a Commission of Inquiry into Australia's banks and financial system. That passed the Senate on the voice because the government knew they would lose that vote in the Senate and it was supported by the Senate.

When it went to the House of course and the opportunity was there for those who speak in favour of a royal commission, particularly when they are talking tough in their own electorates, when the opportunity was provided, particularly the Member for Dawson, George Christensen, he squibbed it and unfortunately that vote didn't go to establishing that Commission of Inquiry. We will not stop arguing for a royal commission into the banks.

People continue to contact Labor with stories of loss their business, loss their home, loss their farm, irresponsible lending practices going on, fraudulent activity, unethical conduct. It hasn't changed. We will continue to argue for a royal commission and we will continue to press this government to do what it needs to do, what it should do, to make sure that Australia's banking system is strong profitable and well led and acts in the interests of Australian consumers.

In relation to the Senate inquiry into the major bank levy, what we have heard is Macquarie confirming the impact of the major bank levy on their operations and prior to that the four major banks had already announced the impact on their operations. What we can tell from that is the \$6.2 billion that the government has been crowing about, that this bank levy will raise, is going to fall well short. On our figures, based on the information, that is going to fall short by about \$2 billion. We think the government should release their modelling because we need to see why this difference is there. They have refused to do so. We asked them in Estimates and they refused to do it there, we asked them to take it on notice and the government replied this week that they won't be releasing their modelling.

We don't know what they have got to hide. This is a levy that Labor supports but we want to fully understand the figures that underpin it. Now, if the government is saying that it raises over \$6 billion and the banks are saying themselves that it raises much less than that - in the order of \$4 billion then who is telling the truth? Is the government of the view that the banks are not telling the truth? They have had to under continuous disclosure, of course, report that to the ASX or are the government's numbers dodgy? It has to be one or the other. This hearing has been supported by Labor so we can get to the bottom of that but for some reason the government is withholding important information that would either support the numbers in the budget or at least provide the information of how they have come to those figures.

The banks have talked about the three pronged approach that they want. They want a sunset clause, they want a two year review and they want foreign banks included. Obviously it has been a pretty rushed process from the government. The banks have complained about that process themselves. In relation to the sunset clause, Chris Bowen was pretty clear on budget night that this is a levy we support and that didn't contain a sunset clause. But in relation to those other areas we want to finish these hearings and consider the evidence that has been given before finalising our position.

The government has bungled this from the beginning. It hasn't been clear about what the reason for what the policy rationale is behind this budget repair, competition, its raised a number of those claims. We believe the banks should contribute to budget repair. We think it is important, we think it is a modest contribution for them considering the state of the budget but I certainly have some sympathy for the banks in relation to the rushed process, the lack of consultation and the way that the government has kept secret a lot of the information about this levy.

INDUSTRY

ARRIUM SALE - Carr

Labor welcomes KordaMentha's announcement that Newlake Alliance and JB Asset Management with support from the POSCO company has been named as the preferred bidder in the sale process of steel maker Arrium. The Administrators will move to finalise the sale contract pending approval by the Foreign Investment Review Board.

Newlake now enters into discussions with the Commonwealth and South Australian Governments concerning future investments around the Whyalla steelworks and other assets. Newlake has made commitments to rebuild the Whyalla steelworks using cutting edge *FINEX* technology. We wish them well in their new venture. This decision is an important step towards ending the uncertainty for the region of Whyalla and the many Australians employed at the steelworks and related Arrium enterprises. The successful rebuilding of the Whyalla steelworks is in the national interest and the interest of the workers and their families.

Labor knows that further industry-wide reforms will be required to maintain Australia's steelmaking capabilities and will work with the Turnbull Government in a bipartisan manner to secure the industry's future.

Abuse of authority?

MINISTERS DEFENDED ON THE TAXPAYER DOLLAR - Dreyfus

Attorney-General George Brandis's revelation in Senate Question Time last Thursday that he personally authorised the use of taxpayer dollars to defend three government ministers in court on a contempt matter is shocking. The three ministers – Greg Hunt, Alan Tudge and Michael Sukkar – made comments to a newspaper on a matter that had nothing to do with their respective portfolios. There is absolutely no justification for the Solicitor-General to be made available to defend them in court at no personal cost.

In particular, there is a rich irony in Alan Tudge – the minister currently trying to claw back welfare payments from desperate people in the name of "*fiscal responsibility*" – looking to the taxpayer to pay his legal costs. Thanks to this government's cuts, it is difficult for Australians in the most dire need to get any kind of legal representation paid by the taxpayer, even if they cannot afford it themselves. But Senator Brandis has no qualms in offering the government's most senior barrister for free to MPs who earn well over \$200,000 a year.

The cost to the public purse in deploying the Solicitor-General to the Supreme Court of Victoria tomorrow will no doubt be upwards of ten thousand dollars. No doubt Mr Stephen Donaghue SC and his team will require flights and accommodation, as well as the assistance of the Australian Government Solicitor in the matter.

Senator Brandis should know better. But then, he had no qualms about employing a senior silk and junior barrister on the taxpayer dollar to pursue his failed appeal to keep his diary secret. Senator Brandis should be defending the judiciary rather than authorising the use of taxpayer dollars to defend those who attack it.

FINKEL REVIEW

BUSINESS AS USUAL WILL RESULT IN CONTINUED ENERGY CRISIS – Mark Butler

Almost a week after the release of Chief Scientist Alan Finkel's Review into the Future Security of the National Electricity Market, the clear message from business to the Turnbull Government is; doing nothing is not an option.

Government Members of Parliament need to give the Finkel Review the full and fair consideration it deserves. This is exactly what Labor has pledged to do, and working with stakeholders, it is exactly what we're doing.

This week's Government division regarding the Finkel Review needs to be overcome in the interests of our economic prosperity, security and our climate.

Like Labor, business leaders are rightfully wary of these divisions and have reiterated the fact that the status quo policy vacuum isn't acceptable. All inaction does is lead to investment strikes, rising prices, falling security and growing pollution.

This message was provided by the Finance Minister, Mathias Cormann on Wednesday, when he stated: "***If the status quo were to continue, energy prices will continue to go up and up and the stability in the system would continue to be at risk.***"

It's time all Coalition Members of Parliament hear this message, as well as the messages from Australia's business leaders:

"If not a Clean Energy Target, what's the alternative? If we continue to do nothing then we will continue to pay higher prices and have a less secure electricity supply." [Jennifer Westacott, Business Council of Australia]

"Doing nothing means higher prices and less reliable energy for all customers." [Mark Collette, EnergyAustralia]

"The energy policy vacuum would cost consumers and businesses more. The alternative is higher power bills, a patchwork of different state energy policies and an increasingly out of date and unstable network." [Kane Thorton, Clean Energy Council]

"The nation could not afford policy failure and years more of uncertainty." [Paul O'Malley, Bluescope]

Guided by the work of the Chief Scientist, Labor stands ready to work with the Government to solve our energy crisis. **Australia's industry, jobs and prosperity are on the line.**

LABOR WELCOMES THE FINKEL REVIEW - Mark Butler

Labor welcomes the release of Chief Scientist, Dr Alan Finkel's review into the Future Security of the National Electricity Market. Labor is committed to finding a solution to the energy crisis that has engulfed the country under this Government.

Wholesale power prices have doubled under the Turnbull Government as a result of an investment strike in new generation caused by policy paralysis. Under Turnbull power prices are up, pollution is up and jobs are down.

Labor will carefully consider the recommendations of the report and will engage with businesses and other stakeholders to work towards an energy policy that will deliver for all Australians.

We need a plan for cheaper, cleaner and more secure power – and that must mean more renewables. We're pleased the Finkel Review makes it unequivocally clear the best way to deliver cheaper, cleaner and more secure power is through renewable energy.

The pressure is now on Malcolm Turnbull to sign up to a market-based mechanism that supports investment in renewables and jobs. Malcolm Turnbull needs to stare down Tony Abbott and the climate change deniers in the Liberal Party and back a plan for more renewables.



INEQUALITY BELONGS ON THE PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION'S AGENDA – Bowen/McAllister

Federal Labor will introduce a Bill on Wednesday to require the Productivity Commission to consider inequality in its work. The Bill will be introduced by Senator Jenny McAllister and builds on a proposal by Chris Bowen that the Productivity Commission regularly report on how we are tracking as a nation in improving equality of opportunity and social mobility. Chris Bowen announced this approach in his "Case for Opportunity" speech last year.

"This is the key challenge for our generation. Inequality is at a near seventy five year high. The three richest Australians own more than the million poorest put together," Senator McAllister said.

"We need to retool our institutions to address the alarming level of disparity in wealth and income between Australians. Inequality needs to be a regular conversation for Australia."

Mr Bowen said: *"Properly measuring and tackling inequality is not simply a matter of social justice, as important as that is, it's good for productivity and the economy."*

"You can't improve something unless you have the data to measure your progress, so having the Productivity Commission examine and measure inequality is essential."

The OECD has estimated that from 1985 to 2005 inequality reduced growth amongst member states by almost five percent. IMF Chief Christine Lagarde warned leaders at the World Economic Forum recently that economic growth could only be sustained if it was equitable. The Bill would add inequality to the list of issues the Productivity Commission must have regard to in undertaking its work. It would also require the Commission to produce an Inequality Report every five years, aligned with the Intergenerational Report, which would assess:

- the effects of economic inequality on intergenerational mobility and access to opportunity
- economic inequality in Australia's regions and cities, and its impact on both individuals and the performance of the Australian economy
- the extent to which current Government policies affect economic inequality.

"The Productivity Commission is highly regarded and influential. They are already required to consider factors like as the ecological sustainability of industry. Inequality should be part of their core concern," said Senator McAllister.

LABOR WELCOMES IMPLEMENTATION OF MARRAKESH TREATY – Dreyfus/Brown

It has been a long time coming, but today the government has finally acted to implement the Marrakesh Treaty – an international agreement which improves access to thousands of printed works for people with disability under Copyright Law.

The Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works to Visually Impaired Persons and Persons with Print Disabilities was signed by the Labor Government in 2013. It allows for printed works to be translated into accessible formats, such as braille, without breaching Copyright Law.

Previously, blind and visually impaired people in Australia had been denied access to many books and other works that were readily available in accessible forms in other countries. Today, with the passage of the Copyright Amendment (Disability Access and Other Measures) Bill through the Senate, this so-called "book famine" has finally ended.

Labor has pressured the government since 2013 to get on and implement the treaty, in order to end the uncertainty in the disability sector. It has taken the government an inexplicable length of time – four years – to get this done. But we are glad it has.

DISABILITY MINISTERS MUST SUPPORT ROYAL COMMISSION – Macklin/Brown

Labor has called on the meeting of the Disability Reform Council to support a Royal Commission into violence and abuse against people with disability. We have written to Ministers after leaders agreed at the last meeting of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) on Friday 9 June, that the Disability Reform Council (DRC) would consider issues of the treatment of people with disability in residential settings and report back to COAG at its next meeting.

Federal Labor has carefully considered this issue. We have announced that a Shorten Labor Government will establish a Royal Commission into violence and abuse against people with disability. It is deeply disappointing to see that the Turnbull Government has ruled this out.

A Royal Commission has been recommended by both the Senate Community Affairs References Committee Inquiry into violence, abuse and neglect against people with disability and the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into abuse in disability services.

People with disability, their families and advocates have been urging the Government to act. We need a Royal Commission to bring about systemic change to ensure that this horrific abuse never happens again.

We urge Ministers to impress upon the Turnbull Government the need to reverse their position and begin the work to establish a Royal Commission. It is also vitally important that the scope and terms of reference for the Royal Commission are developed in close consultation with the disability community. The scope should be broader than abuse in residential settings alone.

The Government must begin the work now to establish a Royal Commission into violence and abuse against people with disability.

WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY - Julie Collins/Polley

On World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) Labor reaffirms our commitment to the rights of older people to live with dignity, free from all forms of abuse. The World Health Organisation has reported prevalence rates of elder abuse of up to 10 per cent of older people. Devastatingly, elder abuse appears to continue to be primarily perpetrated by family members.

In marking WEAAD, Labor welcomes Wednesday's release of the [Australian Law Reform Commission Report on Elder Abuse](#). We particularly acknowledge the Report's focus on financial exploitation, which is the theme of the 2017 WEAAD and continues to be the most common form of abuse experienced by elderly people.

Labor Leader wrote to Prime Minister Turnbull in February seeking his assurance that the Government will respond to the recommendations of this report as a matter of priority. Labor again calls on the Turnbull Government to take this report seriously, and act quickly in the interests of all older Australians.

In the context of an ageing population in Australia, a failure to tackle elder abuse will have a devastating impact on the future of our country. The mistreatment of older Australians is simply not acceptable and Labor stands ready to work with governments at all levels to stamp out elder abuse.

LABOR ACTS SWIFTLY TO ADDRESS PAPER BILLS RORT – Hammond/Urquhart

Labor has acted with urgency to successfully pass a motion in both houses of the Federal Parliament drawing attention to the growing practice of utilities, banks and telcos charging pensioners for the dubious privilege of continuing to receive their bills in the mail. Labor's swift and decisive action on this issue is a big step toward making a real difference in the lives of people who simply cannot afford to pay extra to receive bills they should be receiving for free.

After being debated in the House of Representatives on 29 May the motion was passed the Senate on Wednesday.

Labor has clearly called for the Government to bring forward legislation that will give consumers the right to receive communications from companies by post for no extra fee as a matter of urgency.

The burden of these fees weighs most heavily on those on the wrong side of the digital divide – pensioners, low income families who cannot afford computers, and people in the bush with poor access to internet connectivity. The average fee charged by companies to send documents by post is about \$2.50 and in some cases we are aware it is as high as \$6.75.

The cost of sending such a document to a consumer (including printing, stuffing and postage) is between \$0.94 and \$1.11.

Tim Hammond's speech to the House of Representatives is available here: <https://www.timhammondmp.com/consumer-affairs-and-resources/2017/5/29/speech-private-members-motion-charging-fees-for-paper-bills-house-of-representatives>



ONE NATION INSULTS ALL VICTIMS OF BLACK LUNG DISEASE – O'Connor/Watt

Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party have confirmed that, for all their talk, they don't care about Australian workers. Speaking in the Australian Senate today, One Nation Senator Malcolm Roberts made disgraceful comments insulting all coal miners suffering from the devastating black lung disease. Senator Roberts said:

But black lung is no longer a problem where coalmines have ventilated properly. The answer to black lung is the regulations in Queensland not being enforced, the CFMEU not doing its job, some coal operators not fulfilling their responsibilities. Black lung is not an inherent problem when it is managed properly.

According to Pauline Hanson's One Nation, the deadly black lung disease is ***“not an inherent problem”***. Tell that to the coal miners in Queensland and around the country that have been diagnosed with this deadly disease. Instead of going after the big businesses that don't look out for their workers, One Nation blames miners and their union for the re-emergence of black lung disease.

Pauline Hanson's One Nation don't care about Queensland and other coal miners. They're just in it for themselves.

A WIN FOR DYING AUSTRALIANS - King

Dying Australians will have easier access to much-needed pain relief to ease their suffering after the Senate voted to give people with a terminal illness better access to medicinal cannabis. This is a win for dying Australians, who have been facing extensive barriers to access medicinal cannabis under the Turnbull Government.

As a result of Tuesday's vote, a doctor is able to prescribe medicinal cannabis to people with a terminal illness if it is clinically appropriate under Category A of the Special Access Scheme – as they can with other restricted drugs. Eligibility to Category A is tightly restricted to:

“Persons who are seriously ill with a condition from which death is reasonably likely to occur within a matter of months, or from which premature death is reasonably likely to occur in the absence of early treatment”.

Tuesday's vote will result in fewer barriers and more efficient access to medicinal cannabis, for the people who need it most.

We now hope the Government gets on with the job of implementing a national scheme and stop scaremongering and stigmatising the people who are trying to access medicinal cannabis. The Government needs to do much more to ensure a consistent supply of regulated and affordable product, and to drive consistency across states on the legal treatment of people currently accessing medicinal cannabis.

Labor has been calling on the Government to do more to improve access to regulated medicinal cannabis, with the Government being slow to act and leaving families in limbo for too long. Bill Shorten has written to Malcolm Turnbull three times urging action and offering support, but patients have seen no change.

With too many cruel empty promises from the Government, it was up to the Parliament to do the right thing and deliver relief for the dying people who need it.

THE CASE FOR ACTION ON INEQUALITY – Chris Bowen - Extracts

Throughout the developed world, the twentieth century was a period of great advance for a better, fairer society. It was not inevitably the case. The aftermath of the industrial revolution saw ordinary people thrown into horrible workplaces for a pittance of a wage while a small number of owners of capital amassed great wealth. Not for nothing was it known as the gilded age: gilded for a few.

But then, governments acted. Unions were formed. Workplace laws were introduced. Taxes were made progressive. A welfare safety net was introduced. The emergence of strong labour and social democratic parties were essential drivers of this change.

But now, after a century of progress, it is no exaggeration or hyperbole to say many of those gains are at risk in developed countries. In the United States, in 1915 the richest 1% of the population received 18% of the national income. Government action and union organisation saw this figure reduce over the 20th century. But the late 20th century and early 21st century saw an attack on organised unionism and a retreat from active government. And, a new industrial revolution saw a massive rise in automation and hollowing out of middle income jobs.

And now, in the United States, the richest 1% receive 24% of the national income. Now every country is different. And Australia has got a lot of things right. But even here in Australia we have seen wealth grow more quickly at the top.

Andrew Leigh has shown that since the late 1970s, the wealth share of the top 1 percent has risen from 7 percent in 1978 to 11 percent in 2010. While we can talk about the varying degrees everywhere, the trend is the same.

This matters. If we care about the advancement of the greater good, the maximisation of happiness and dignity for as many as possible, this matters. If we care about a sense of society, of the majority benefiting from progress, this matters. And if we care about avoiding a sense of disillusion, of disenfranchisement which sees people who are missing out turning to the simplistic solutions of populism and closed borders, this matters.

Over the course of the last twelve months, I've made a series of speeches about matters important to me as alternative Treasurer, as I go about thinking about and laying out the economic plans of the next Labor Government.:

"The Case for Openness", "The Case for The Middle Class", "The Case for Innovation", "The Case for Australia and Indonesia". And today I want to build on the themes of some of these earlier speeches and make **"The Case for Action on Inequality"**.

I want to make the case for an activist policy to counter rising inequality. This isn't easy. It will be controversial. But hand-wringing and glib one liners about all Australians being in it together won't cut it when Australians know that the current situation isn't working and is getting worse.

I also want to outline some principles which should underpin policy action on countering inequality. Action should be bold but carefully designed. We don't face a choice between growth and equality. Properly designed policies which promote fairness also can engender growth.

As the IMF has said: **"We find that increasing the income share of the poor and the middle class actually increases growth while a rising income share of the top 20 percent results in lower growth—that is, when the rich get richer, benefits do not trickle down"**.

However poorly designed policies can inhibit growth and be counterproductive to enhancing growth. They can have unintended consequences. And, when policies which promote fairness backfire with unintended consequences, it puts the progressive cause backwards, not forwards. Let me deal with four principles do deal with policy action to tackle inequality.

First: Do no harm. Secondly: Make tax more progressive. Thirdly: Care about geographic disadvantage. And Finally: Education, education, education. Let me deal with each of these in turn.

First, do no harm. - With inequality on the rise, the first duty of Government is not to make inequality worse. This might appear to be given, a motherhood statement which doesn't need to be made. I wish it was so. Because policies that are being pursued by the Government as we speak will make inequality worse. Of course, it was only until very recently that the Government was pursuing harsh cuts to family payments, stripping unemployed people of any living allowance and cuts the aged pension.

It's hard to think of other policies that would just further entrench poverty and disadvantage in areas around the country. **But the most current striking example is penalty rates.** Wages growth in Australia is at record lows. And living standards or real net disposable income per capita has fallen for four years consecutively through to 2016, the longest prolonged fall since records began in the 1970s.

And the Government thinks the answer to this problem is....cutting wages. Now, yes, cutting penalty rates was recommended by the Fair Work Commission. And overturning Commission rulings should not be done lightly. It isn't done lightly by Labor.

But let's be clear. Governments can and do overturn court and commission decisions when the government of the day feels strongly enough. This Government is seeking, as we speak, to overturn a **Federal Court decision on Native Title**, because it doesn't like it.

The same Government overturned a decision of the **Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal** when it didn't like it.

The problem is, the Government is comfortable with the decision to reduce penalty rates. Well, we are not. People who are on penalty rates in the hospitality and retail sectors are low income earners.

This isn't a trade-off, where workers get a higher base rate or some other compensation in return for more flexibility. It is a pay cut. A pay cut for low income earners. It will make inequality worse. It should be reversed. A Labor Government will reverse it.

A similar point can be made about the minimum wage. Some want the minimum wage abolished. We only have to look back at the Liberal Government's Commission of Audit which recommended indexing the minimum wage at less than CPI. To put in another way, they want an Australian working poor. **Of course, the minimum wage should be maintained.**

If we want to ensure we stave off a complete hollowing out of the middle class like we've seen in the United States, we need to defend Australia's minimum wage with passion. But we also must recognise that people reliant on the minimum wage have been sharing less in the nation's prosperity. **Twenty years ago the minimum wage was 63% of the median wage. Now it is 53%.** The decline in the minimum wage, relative to the wage of a typical worker, has no doubt been a driver of the increase in inequality in Australia.

From 1975 to 2014, real wages increased by 72% for the top 10% of income earners, but by just 23% for the bottom 10% of income earners. Over the last decade Australia is one of only four OECD nations in which the minimum wage relative to the average wage has declined and our decline is the largest in the OECD.

And while the most recent decision of the Fair Work Commission to increase the minimum wage above inflation is welcome, minimum wage increases have generally not kept pace with productivity increases and penalty rates are being cut. In fact, new OECD analysis shows that the gap between productivity and worker pay in Australia is one of the widest amongst all advanced economies. If we want people to work harder, we need to ensure they share in the economic gains.

This brings me to my second point, the progressivity of the tax system. Of course, Australia has a progressive taxation system. In the face of the increasing inequality of incomes, making the tax system less progressive would be a backwards step. And improving the fairness of the tax system should be a key priority.

One of the most important things we can do is carefully and systematically reduce tax concessions in the system which are no longer fit for purpose and are regressive. That's exactly the approach we've taken in Opposition and will take in Government.

50% of the benefit of negative gearing goes to the top 10% of income earners. 70% of the benefit of the capital gains tax concession goes to the top 10% of income earners. 30% of the benefit of the superannuation concession goes to the top 10% of income earners. All have been regressive elements of Australia's tax system for some time, in some circumstances allowing people on higher incomes to reduce their taxable incomes to zero. **It is hard to believe that a government faced with a deficit 10 times as large as it forecast in its 2014 budget that it has left many of these concessions largely untouched.**

On its own, the capital gains tax discount is expected to grow by 18% over the forward estimates to total \$13 billion in annual revenue forgone by 2020-21. This leaves ordinary PAYG workers to shoulder more of the burden of budget repair. Which is why all of these will be reformed by a Shorten Labor Government.

In 2015, forty-eight Australians with an income of more than one million dollars reduced their taxable incomes to zero. Nineteen of these people used the deduction of managing their tax affairs as the primary method of reducing their taxable income to zero. There is something particularly galling about using payments as accountants and lawyers to minimise tax as a deduction in of itself to minimise tax ... The average tax deduction for managing tax affairs is \$378. **Which is why our policy to cap the tax deductibility of managing tax affairs at \$3000 will affect less than 1% of taxpayers ...** high income people can pay as much as they want to accountants and lawyers to manage their tax affairs. But only the first \$3000 a year will be subsidised by other tax payers. This is fair.

This brings me to tax rates. Under the Abbott/Turnbull Government, our tax system is less, not more progressive. They talk about lower personal tax Let's take a quick look at their record. **Their first act in personal tax was to cancel the plans of the previous Labor Government to lift the tax-free threshold from \$18,200 to \$19,200.** Then, last year they provided tax relief to Australians earning more than \$80,000. This year, they took this tax cut back with their proposal to increase the Medicare levy.

Last year's tax cuts cost the budget \$4 billion. This year's tax rise will make \$8 billion. But of course, we are talking about different people. When the Turnbull Government was delivering tax cuts they targeted people earning more than \$80,000. But when they deliver tax rises they target people earning more than \$21,000.

And then there is the deficit levy. It is striking that all the measures in the 2014 budget that targeted low income earners were permanent. The cuts to the pension, making unemployed people wait for Newstart, cuts to Family Payments. All were permanent.

The Government didn't say to low and middle income earners, listen times are tough, but so we need you to make a contribution until we are back in surplus, and then we'll restore these cuts. The only temporary measure in the 2014 budget was the only one that impacted on high income earners. So it's not enough for the Government to shrug its shoulders and say the deficit levy is coming off because it was temporary.

The budget deficit now is ten times bigger than it was projected to be when the deficit levy came in. The deficit levy shouldn't be the only budget consolidation measure that is temporary. Lifting of the deficit levy will rob the budget of \$6 billion over the next four years. On its own it provides a \$16,400 a year tax cut to someone earning a million dollars on the 1 July this year, while up to 700,000 workers have their penalty rates cut the very next day. And yet the government wants to make someone earning just \$60,000 pay \$300 more a year. The contrast is clear.

Both sides of politics will now go to the next election promising increases in personal tax. But here is the difference: The Government's tax increase will apply to all Australians earning more than \$21,000. Labor's will apply to Australians earning more than \$87,000.

The Government wants to make the tax system less progressive. Labor wants to make it more progressive. The Government's plan also has the effect of taking more money off people that typically spend a higher proportion of their post-tax incomes. This has the potential to act as more of a drag on consumption and the broader macroeconomy. [These are extracts from Chris Bowen's speech to a Per capita conference on Friday 9 June the entire speech is [HERE](#)]

ENVIRONMENT

DON'T LET ONE NATION DESTROY THE BASIN - Burke

Wednesday's media conference between One Nation and Murray Irrigation should send alarm bells to anyone who cares about the Murray-Darling Basin. Barnaby Joyce is now on notice about the dangers of unpicking the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. There is no way of implementing the Plan without implementing all of it. Barnaby Joyce has been trying to pretend he that he can deliver the Plan and not produce the extra 450GL of water through infrastructure projects.

The 450GL is an essential part of the Plan and an essential part of restoring the basin to health. Acquiring that water through infrastructure expenditure is an important way of alleviating the pressure on irrigators themselves as the transition takes place.

Barnaby Joyce only has two options here. Side with Labor and defend all of the Plan, or go down the One Nation path and bring back the conflict that had been raging across the basin for more than one hundred years.

TONY ABBOTT ESCALATES LIBERAL PARTY CIVIL WAR ON CLIMATE CHANGE - Mark Butler

Tony Abbott's extraordinary outburst on morning radio today is the tip of the iceberg when it comes to division within the coalition on climate change policy. Turnbull and Frydenberg have consistently said there is no cost in Dr Finkel's proposal for a Clean Energy Target.

On Monday, Mr Abbott said the proposal was '**effectively a tax on coal**'.

This is shaping up as Turnbull's biggest test - will he act to end the climate wars and take meaningful action on climate change, or will he roll over for Abbott and the hard right again? Under Turnbull power prices are up, pollution is up and jobs are down. We need a plan for cheaper, cleaner and more secure power – and that must mean more renewables.

Turnbull can start by telling the truth that Dr Finkel's proposal for a Clean Energy Target is effectively a price on pollution. It's a market mechanism which will provide a price signal to drive investment in renewables.

Turnbull needs to stare down Abbott and the climate change deniers in the Liberal Party and back a plan for more renewables.

WORKERS & PENALTY RATES

LABOUR FORCE FIGURES – O'Connor

Labor welcomes the figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics but note this month's data does not reveal the true picture of the labour market. While we welcome the result, including the unemployment rate dropping to 5.5 per cent, this is not a time for government complacency, the result needs to be sustained.

Labor notes that the unemployment rate at 5.5 per cent is comparable to that at the peak of the Global Financial Crisis.

The Government shouldn't be taking too much credit for these figures, it remains clear it has no jobs plan and is merely benefitting from an uptick in business and consumer confidence. It is important to note there are still serious underlying problems in the labour market that need to be addressed and which are not being addressed by the Turnbull Government.

Wages growth is a record lows and the Government has no plan to address people's stagnating wages. In fact, it has a plan to further cut people's real income by supporting the decision to cut penalty rates. Underemployment remains at record highs with more than 1.1 million Australians wanting more work but not being able to find it – there are 1.8 million of our fellow Australians who are either unemployed or underemployed.

Despite the rise in hours worked this month, hours worked per capita is at levels not seen since the mid-1990s, which emphasises the growth in part-time employment. While part-time employment is good for some, it's not the ideal.

Work in this country is becoming more insecure. People are feeling increasingly casualised and precarious at work. The Government should be getting on with addressing these sorts of issues rather than providing a tax cut to millionaires.

TURNBULL GOVERNMENT MUST SUPPORT TELSTRA WORKERS – O'Connor/Rowland/Husic

The Turnbull Government must take action in response to at least 1400 job losses announced by Telstra on Wednesday. Labor acknowledges that this is a tough and upsetting day for the affected workers, their families and the community. Telstra workers across the country are now facing the imminent prospect of unemployment.

We acknowledge that Telstra has said that it is committed to supporting employees throughout this process, through available and suitable options, but we call on the Government to take appropriate action to support these workers.

With so many people who will lose their jobs, the Turnbull Government must immediately provide affected workers with the intensive and tailored support they need to transition to new employment and, where required, provide training and case management services.

We need the Turnbull Government to have a plan for Australian jobs, rather than a plan to give big business and millionaires a tax cut.

TURNBULL GOVERNMENT VOTES TO SUPPORT CUTTING PENALTY RATES CUTS – O'Connor

The Turnbull Government on Tuesday voted in support of cutting penalty rates. Despite Labor handing the Government an opportunity to stop the cuts to penalty rates by supporting the Fair Work Amendment (Protecting Take-Home Pay) Bill 2017, which has already passed the Senate – they refused. The actions of the Turnbull Government show how out of touch this Government is.

Make no mistake, Malcolm supports cuts to penalty rates. He owns them. The Members of his government are just as weak - we've recently seen recently the Member for Dawson, George Christensen, and the Member for Gilmore, Anne Sudmalis, say they want to protect penalty rates, however when given the chance, they have shown their words are hollow.

Christensen has often threatened to the cross the floor but has never done so – including on Tuesday. In fact on the day, Christensen was too gutless to even show up for the vote. If he really supports penalty rates he should have the courage to turn up to the vote and sit with Labor.

We're all sick of the pretence, George but most of all your constituents are sick of it. At a time when wages are declining in real terms, there could not be a worse time to cut the wages for up to 700,000 Australian workers.

People's real income will be cut as of 1 July and Mr Turnbull and his Liberals have done nothing to stop this devastating blow to low income workers. This is a Government that is happy to see on July 1 a tax cut of \$16,400 for millionaires, and on July 2 a pay cut for low paid workers.

WAGES SHARE OF GDP NEVER BEEN WEAKER – O'Connor

New [research](#) from the Australia Institute Centre for Future Work supports Labor's serious concerns about low wages growth and challenges the Government's reliance on fairy tale forecasts to bring the Budget back to balance. The report shows that the proportion of national economic output that is paid to workers has reached the lowest level since the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) published quarterly income statistics in 1959, falling to 46.2 per cent.

According to the new research, adjusted for inflation, labour productivity has grown by almost 20 per cent over the last decade, yet real wages have grown by only 6 per cent over the same period, leading to the outcome that:

"The link between GDP expansion and workers' incomes has never been weaker." [The Australian Institute & Centre for Future Work, Labour Share of Australian GSP Hits All-Time Record Low, 13 Jun 2017]

While increases in GDP are not delivering for workers, private corporations have benefited significantly. Yet, this is a Government that wants to cut penalty rates of low and middle income Australians, while giving big business a tax cut.

Just how out of touch can this Government get? It is completely unsurprising that under this Government wages are now falling in real terms, while cost of living pressures are rising and workers are struggling to make ends meet.



INFRASTRUCTURE

GOVERNMENT COVER UP ON \$5 BILLION FUND - Clare

The Turnbull Government is covering up conflicts of interest of a board member managing a \$5 billion development fund for Northern Australia – the NAIF. For the second time, the Government has refused to answer questions regarding the Minister for Northern Australia's friend and NAIF board member Karla Way McPhail. It has been revealed that Ms Way McPhail:

- Is a personal friend of the Minister for Northern Australia
- Was recommended for appointment to the board by the Minister for Northern Australia
- Regularly attends LNP fundraisers
- Is the CEO of two companies and the director of a third that could stand to benefit from funding approved by the board of which she is a member
- Refused to say if she has participated in discussions on funding applications for which she has a conflict of interest.

The NAIF's conflicts of interest policy requires Board Members to declare their interests and recuse themselves from discussions if there is a conflict of interest.

In Estimates two weeks ago, Labor asked if Ms McPhail had declared conflicts of interest and if she had recused herself from board discussions where a potential conflict of interest may arise. The Government refused to answer those questions. On Wednesday, Labor asked those questions again and again the Government refused to answer.

What is the Government hiding? This is \$5 billion of taxpayers' money and they deserve to know what is going on. This is not good governance. This is a cover-up. To get to the bottom of this and to make the NAIF operate better, Labor has:

- Asked the Australian National Audit Office to investigate the NAIF
- Set up a Senate Inquiry into the NAIF's governance, its processes and how it manages conflicts of interest.

The Government voted to try and stop the Senate Inquiry going ahead. What does Malcolm Turnbull have to hide?

GOVT REFUSES TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT FUNDING FOR ROCKY FLOOD LEVEE – Clare/Watt

The Turnbull Government on Wednesday refused to say when or if it would provide funding to build the South Rockhampton Flood Levee. Rockhampton has flooded five times in the past decade – in 2008, 2011, 2013, 2015 and 2017. This levee would protect 1,500 homes and businesses from floodwaters.

Yet, in Parliament, the Minister representing the Minister for Northern Australia was asked when the Turnbull Government would provide the funding to build the levee. **The Minister refused to answer.** This is despite the majority of the local community supporting the idea and a promise by Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce to the Rockhampton Regional Council that:

"Your project looks it has a strong case and ... I will ensure that it receives strong consideration from the Coalition." (Barnaby Joyce, letter to the Rockhampton Mayor 3 July 2013).

Only a Shorten Labor Government will provide the \$25 million needed to build the levee to protect local homes and businesses. Michelle Landry should hang her head in shame for refusing to provide much-needed protection for 1,500 homes and businesses in her electorate.

TURNBULL'S RAIL FUND A SHAM – Albanese

Malcolm Turnbull has confirmed his National Rail Fund is a sham that will not produce a dollar of new investment for public transport until well after the next Federal election. The Prime Minister's admission came on Tuesday after the Queensland Government was forced to go it alone in funding the Cross River Rail project in Brisbane in its 2017 Budget because Mr Turnbull has refused to support the project.

Turnbull likes taking selfies on trains, tram and buses. But he refuses to invest in trains, trams or buses despite repeated warnings that traffic congestion is acting as a hand brake on the nation's economic development.

Cross River Rail is urgently needed to provide a second rail crossing of the Brisbane River in the city's CBD because the existing Merivale Bridge is reaching full capacity. Continued delay in commencing the project will inhibit economic growth in Brisbane and right across south-east Queensland.

In last month's Budget Turnbull created a \$10 billion National Rail Fund which he says could be used to invest in Cross River Rail as well as other public transport projects like the Melbourne Metro and the ADELlink light rail project. In Question Time on Tuesday the question was asked:

"Is the Prime Minister aware that under the so-called National Rail Program, not a single dollar is available for building rail in this entire term of Parliament? Nothing this year, nothing next year and nothing the year after that? Isn't the National Rail Program the new NAIF – the No Actual Infrastructure Fund?"

Turnbull ignored the specifics of the question.

Cross River Rail was approved by Infrastructure Australia in 2012 and was ready to commence in 2013 under a deal between the former Labor Government and the former Coalition Queensland Government. But it was cancelled by the incoming Federal Coalition Government, which has subsequently not provided a single dollar of new investment for public transport.

LABOR OPPOSES AMENDMENTS TO CEFC – Mark Butler/Chalmers

The Turnbull Government's amendments to allow the Clean Energy Finance Corporation to invest in Carbon Capture Storage technology are nothing but a hollow gesture to appease Government extreme right MPs. As such, Labor will oppose the bill.

In 2011 Labor announced the investment of \$1.7 billion in the Carbon Capture and Storage Flagships program to bring this technology forward. Those funds were intended to support research and development in this emerging technology.

But in 2014, the Liberal Government abolished all the uncommitted funds in the CEFC flagships program - \$460 million – removing any new support for research and development.

In its submission to the Finkel review, the CEFC noted CCS: *“is unlikely to play a significant role in reducing Australia’s electricity sector emissions in time to meet our 2030 Paris Agreement commitments”*.

The Government is unable to point to any CCS projects that would meet the strict commercial investment mandate of the CEFC – which can only invest in projects that pay a commercial return. If the Turnbull Government was serious about seeing CCS technology deployed commercially, they would first reinstate the research and development funds they previously cut.

The Government is more interested in symbolism than finding real solutions to our energy crisis.

COMMUNICATIONS

STATEMENT ON TEN NETWORK HOLDINGS ANNOUNCEMENT - Rowland

On Wednesday Australia’s laziest Communications Minister has disgraced himself by attempting to use Network Ten’s decision to enter voluntary administration for cheap political gain. Fifield’s claim that Labor is delaying and frustrating the media package is utterly misleading:

- Minister Fifield has not even released a Bill, despite having announced his second attempt at media reform with great fanfare over four weeks ago.
- To date, Labor’s Shadow Communications Minister has not received a briefing on the substantive measures, because the detail simply isn’t available. The only information Labor has ascertained has been through the Senate Estimates process – and even then the Minister was incapable of answering several fundamental points.
- Labor has made it clear that it supports the majority of the Government’s proposed measures in principle, primarily because Labor proposed them in the first place.
- Minister Fifield arrogantly rejected Labor’s offer to support the repeal of the 75 per cent reach rule last year, and Labor shares industry’s frustration that this long-overdue reform is yet to be realised.

Labor’s position on the two out of three rule has been crystal clear since November 2016 and is evidence-based. There is no gamesmanship in Labor standing up for the public interest, and our democracy, by limiting the ability of dominant media voices to consolidate even further in Australia’s already heavily concentrated media market. Not once in over a year has Mitch Fifield consulted with Labor on concerns about repeal of the two out of three rule.

A complex series of factors are cited in the statement from Ten Network Holdings today, including licence fee relief. Labor has long-supported licence fee relief and has indicated its in principle support for their abolition. It is notable that it was the Labor Government that commenced the rollback of broadcast licence fees, yet this Government has taken almost four years in office to even propose a new spectrum usage charge.

Unfortunately Ten notes that its business strategy has not been successful to date, despite making significant progress. The result has been its decision to enter voluntary administration. This Government has been in office for almost four years and has done absolutely nothing in this space. Now it tries to blame Labor.

Two weeks ago, Minister Fifield dragged every media executive to Canberra and was lauded as the industry’s ‘Golden Boy’. Golden Boy is yet to introduce a legislative package into Parliament. Now he seeks to prey on the anxiety that will be felt by all workers at Network Ten. **This Minister has no class.**

On Wednesday it was also announced that 1,400 Telstra workers would lose their jobs as a result of decisions by the company. You don’t see Labor blaming the Communications Minister for this outcome.

ASYLUM SEEKERS & REFUGEES

PETER DUTTON CONTINUES TO SHIFT BLAME FOR HIS OWN FAILURES - Neumann



Peter Dutton is a tick-and-flick Minister who fails to be across the detail of his portfolio and constantly seeks to blame others for his own failures. While Labor won’t comment on the legal proceedings before the Supreme Court of Victoria, it’s clear Peter Dutton has performed incompetently as Immigration Minister.

Asylum seekers have languished in detention for four years since the Abbott-Turnbull Government came to power in 2013, with Dutton as the Immigration Minister since December 2014. Manus Island and Nauru were set up as regional transit processing facilities but have become places of indefinite detention because of the inaction of the Abbott-Turnbull Government and their failure to find other third country resettlement arrangements.

Labor strongly supports the US refugee resettlement agreement, but the Turnbull Government has put all its eggs in one basket and confirmed they are no longer seeking other third country resettlement arrangements. There are potentially hundreds of genuine refugees who will miss out on the opportunity to be resettled in the United States and could be left to languish in Regional Processing Centres as a result of Peter Dutton’s inaction.

Dutton’s management of offshore processing arrangements has been woefully incompetent and resulted in Labor initiating a Senate Inquiry after he failed to act on serious allegations of harm, abuse and mistreatment of asylum seekers outlined in the Nauru Files. It beggars belief that Dutton is yet again seeking to blame Labor for his own inability to manage his department and simply just do his job.

An Australian National Audit Office report recently found that on the consolidation of contracts in Nauru and on Manus Island in 2013-14, under the Coalition Government, the department spent over \$1 billion without appropriate authorisation and had no ability to demonstrate appropriate risk management or even deliver the Australian public value for money.

It’s time for Dutton to stop blaming everyone else for his own failures as Immigration Minister. He needs to concentrate on his current job rather than any future job he aspires to achieve. **He may fancy himself a future Prime Minister but he can’t even do the job he’s got now.**



NDIS

NDIS 'ON TRACK' BUT PORTER MUST GET ROLLOUT RIGHT - Macklin

Labor welcomes the release of the Productivity Commission's position paper on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The Productivity Commission has found that the NDIS is '**broadly on track**' and if implemented well, will substantially improve the wellbeing of people with disability.

Labor shares the Productivity Commission's concerns about problems with the planning process including the quality of the plans, rushed planning conversations and the need for more specialised training for planners. Labor has consistently expressed concerns about problems with the rollout of the scheme including problems with the IT system and the need to stop over the phone planning.

There is a clear need to continuously improve the processes of the **National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)** to ensure the quality of the planning process. Federal Labor does not believe that a delay in the current rollout of the scheme is the right approach. People with disability have been waiting their whole lives for the NDIS – they shouldn't be asked to wait any longer.

Labor is fully committed to the rollout of the NDIS. Labor created the NDIS. We know how important the NDIS is to improving the lives of people with disability. We look forward to seeing the recommendations of the Productivity Commission's final report when it is released in September.

LABOR IS FULLY COMMITTED TO THE NDIS – Shorten/Macklin

Labor will always support the National Disability Insurance Scheme. We created it, we fully funded it and we will always protect it. Labor will continue to fully fund the NDIS and any suggestion to the contrary is simply a lie.

No one is more committed to the successful rollout of the NDIS than Labor. Establishing it took years of campaigning and years of work, alongside the disability community.

Labor has a plan that is better and fairer for the Budget, and raises \$4.5 billion more over 10 years.

We want to increase the Medicare Levy for people earning above \$87,000 and keep the Deficit Levy on those income earners earning more than \$180,000. There is a debate about how best to raise revenue for the Budget, but there is no debate about the future of the NDIS. The Australian Federation of Disability Organisations has said:

"The Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO) welcomes Opposition Leader Bill Shorten's commitment in tonight's Budget reply to fully fund the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)." [The Australian Federation of Disability Organisations, Media Release, 12 May 2017]

The future of the NDIS secure. The disability sector knows that Labor supports the NDIS. We call on the Government to back Labor's fairer plan that secures the NDIS, improves the Budget and protects millions of working Australians from another tax increase. The Turnbull Government should get on with the job of ensuring we get the best possible NDIS.

YET ANOTHER TURNBULL GOVERNMENT REVIEW FOR THE NDIS - Macklin

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) has today announced yet another pricing review into the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). This is the third pricing review in the last two years. Many disability service providers are already struggling to make ends meet within the current pricing model.

Disability service providers don't want more endless reviews - they want the Turnbull Government to make decisions about the pricing of the NDIS. Providers need certainty around pricing so they can get on with the job of delivering supports to people with disability. Many providers went unpaid for extended periods last year because of the botched management of the scheme's IT system.

Disability service providers have also been demanding urgent improvements to the NDIS following [concerns about poor-quality plans](#). It's time for the Minister for Social Services, Christian Porter to start taking responsibility of the problems with the rollout of the NDIS.

Why do we need yet another review, especially when the Productivity Commission is already undertaking its own review?

How much will this review by McKinsey & Company cost? How much has been spent on previous pricing reviews?

Why are there no increases to therapy prices in the 2017-18 price outcomes?

Mr Porter should be listening to the concerns that have already been raised by disability service providers and start taking action. It's time to get on with the job of ensuring we get the best possible NDIS.

VISIT TO TIMOR-LESTE - Wong

"I leave Australia today [Wednesday 14 June] for a visit to Timor-Leste to strengthen ties with one of our closest neighbours, and assure the Timorese people of Labor's continuing support for a fair and just resolution of our maritime boundary dispute.

Over the next two days I will be meeting with President Francisco "Lu-Olo" Guterres, Prime Minister Dr Rui Maria de Araujo and senior ministers.

All Australians are rightly proud of the role we played in supporting the Timorese people to claim their place as one of the world's newest and proudest democracies. However, our bilateral relations have been strained by the maritime boundary dispute.

There has now been more than 40 years of uncertainty over this maritime border and Labor committed in February last year to reaching a binding international resolution with Timor-Leste, either through bilateral negotiation or international arbitration.

I will also be visiting Australian development assistance projects, meeting with a number of our aid partners and attending a dinner with young Timorese women leaders."

FAMILY & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

EIGHT MONTHS AFTER THE FANFARE, WHERE'S THE MONEY, MINISTER PORTER? – Terri Butler

Minister Porter has confirmed that after almost eight months, none of the \$20 million the Turnbull government allocated for family violence prevention and early intervention programs has been spent. The government [announced](#) the commitment on 28 October last year - almost eight months ago.

Shadow Assistant Minister for Preventing Family Violence Terri Butler MP asked the Minister about the funding "**commitment**" during consideration of the Budget on Wednesday. Minister Porter was long on excuses but short on delivery, as always. This funding is important. It was intended to be spent on a national workforce agenda, education and resources for new fathers, new ways of working with men with complex needs, resources for women and girls, and other measures.

Last year, under questioning, the Minister admitted only 1.5 per cent of a \$12 million family violence measure announced back in 2015 had been spent in the year that had passed since. **Wednesday's admission that 0% of this newer \$20 million announcement had been spent in eight months is even worse. It is not enough to make announcements about family violence. Delivery is what counts.**

EDUCATION

NT PUBLIC SCHOOLS HIT HARD BY LIBERALS' SCHOOLS POLICY - Plibersek

It is reported that under Malcolm Turnbull's schools policy, 151 Northern Territory public schools are classified as 'overfunded', and will lose money. The Liberals must be the only people in Australia who think Northern Territory public schools, on average the nation's most disadvantaged, are 'overfunded.'

How is it fair that Northern Territory public schools get a funding cut, while some elite private schools get millions of dollars extra? Turnbull's policy will see Lauriston Girls' School in Melbourne, with fees of around \$27,000 per year, get seven times more help than Anula Primary School, a public school in suburban Darwin. No wonder the Liberals have been trying to keep these details secret. Turnbull's schools funding policy isn't fair - it's a fraud.

TURNBULL'S UNI FUNDING CUTS WILL HIT JOBS AND GROWTH – Terri Butler

The Prime Minister's \$3.8 billion dollars in cuts to universities over four years will have serious impacts on one of South Australia's biggest employers, public universities.

"Today I met with Professor Colin Stirling, Chair of Innovative Research Universities, to discuss the impacts to the workforce that these cuts will have," Shadow Assistant Minister for Universities Terri Butler said.

"Also as Vice-Chancellor of Flinders University in South Australia that provides substantial job opportunities to people in the region, Professor Stirling is concerned that these cuts may make a serious dent in the opportunities available."

"These cuts will hinder all universities abilities to invest in quality infrastructure and increase or even retain staff, two essential elements of jobs and growth."

"If Australia is to have a strong, high productivity economy, we should be investing in education, not cutting it like the Liberals are doing," Ms Butler said.

NATIONAL TAFE DAY – Ellis

On National TAFE Day, Labor has a clear message for students and teachers across the country – we back public TAFE. For generations, TAFE has been a proven pathway to new and better jobs. Only Labor will [make sure](#) this is still the case in the future, by:

- Investing an additional \$637.6 million into TAFE and vocational education – reversing Malcolm Turnbull's budget cuts in full.
- Guaranteeing at least two thirds of public vocational education funding for TAFE.
- Investing in a new \$100 million Building TAFE for the Future Fund – to re-establish TAFE facilities in regional communities, meet local industry needs and support teaching for the digital economy.

In our fast-changing economy, students, teachers and the employers needs a strong and future-focused TAFE system more than ever. After years of deliberately undermining TAFE, it's time the Liberals dropped their cuts and joined Labor in making a clear commitment to the future of our quality public provider.

VET REVIEW MUST BOOST QUALITY TRAINING - Ellis

The Government's announcement of a review of VET regulation is long overdue – and Labor is calling on Malcolm Turnbull to ensure it leads to real improvements in the sector. Labor welcomes the appointment of Professor Valerie Braithwaite, a respected expert, to lead the review.

It's essential this is a genuine, credible attempt to retrieve the reputation of the VET system, which in recent years has been trashed by unethical practices and systematic rorting. The review must go beyond a shallow assessment of the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA). The Government must make sure the terms of reference address ways the structure and regulation of the system can be improved so that only the highest quality providers can deliver services and get access to public funding.

We need a system that drives excellence, not merely compliance. We need a regulator that is strong enough to make sure that every single qualification is recognised and valued by industry, and to get rid of dodgy low-quality providers once and for all. This review comes after ASQA itself identified that in key sectors like early childhood and aged care the competitive training market has become a "race to the bottom". Students and the community deserve better.

That is why Labor will reverse Malcolm Turnbull's cuts to VET funding and guarantee at least two-thirds of public funding for TAFE – the most trusted VET provider in the country.

NATIVE TITLE

LABOR RETURNS CERTAINTY TO NATIVE TITLE SYSTEM – Dreyfus/Dodson

Labor, on Wednesday, voted in favour of legislation that will restore certainty to the native title system in Australia, after extensive consultation with Indigenous groups. The government has stuffed up the handling of this bill from the start. Its attempts to rush these changes through Parliament without proper consultation were disgraceful – Labor had to drag the government to the table to talk to the Indigenous groups who would be most directly affected.

It was only because of these consultations that significant issues with the bill were discovered, resulting in a number of last-minute amendments by the government. Labor has always supported the intent of this bill, but objected to the government's woeful handling. Senator Brandis's incompetence has delayed the passage of this bill, not Labor.

Labor recognises that the Indigenous community is not united in its support for this bill. But the overwhelming message Labor has received through its consultation is that the consensus is in favour of certainty being returned to the native title system.

Labor will always put Indigenous people first, and will continue to push the government to treat native title as an issue that requires respectful treatment, and adequate consultation.

GOVERNMENT & LEGISLATION

PARLIAMENT HAS TO STEP IN TO FIX SLOMO'S GST PARCELS MESS – Bowen/Leigh

The Parliament has no choice but to step in and give the affected stakeholders, the Government and Parliament another chance to fix Scott Morrison's mishandling of the GST Low Value Threshold legislation. Federal Labor this week flagged it will move amendments in the Senate that *delay the commencement of the legislation by 12 months, while requiring the Productivity Commission conduct a short inquiry on implementation and other GST collection models*, giving the Government and Parliament the opportunity to consider legislative amendments before the new 1 July 2018 start date.

Federal Labor has expressed in-principle support for applying GST to parcels valued below \$1,000 for quite some time now. It's this context which makes the Treasurer's mishandling of this policy matter all the more disappointing.

The [Senate Economics Legislation Committee report](#) detailed a litany of complaints and concern with everything ranging from the competence of Government consultations, the lack of a Regulatory Impact Statement, through to the low forecast compliance rates and concern with the viability of the Government's preferred '*vendor-based*' model.

There was clearly a level of bipartisan concern with this legislation, *with even Government senators formally recommending a 12 month delay in the commencement of the legislation.*

The Productivity Commission is well acquainted with the GST Low Value Threshold and is well placed to hold a short inquiry into implementation concerns around the current model and to examine alternative GST collection models. A Productivity Commission inquiry will allow stakeholders an opportunity for an independent hearing into their concerns and the merits or otherwise of other collection models.

It is important that the Parliament consider and pass this legislation with Labor's amendments. It's important for certainty for Australian retailers in search of a level playing field with offshore retailers, for States and Territories who've budgeted for the additional GST dollars, and for affected stakeholders who will have a final opportunity for an independent hearing into sensible amendments to the GST collection regime ahead of a 1 July 2018 start-date.

TURNBULL GOVERNMENT MUST STOP FIGHTING AUSTRALIA'S CHARITIES - Leigh

Australia's charity sector now fears that the Turnbull Government will back to waging war on the charity commission, with more than 100 charity heads signing an open letter to Prime Minister Turnbull.

It was only a year ago that the Coalition ended its failed five-year campaign to scrap the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission. Now, rookie minister Michael Sukkar has reignited concerns about the Turnbull Government's willingness to support the commission. We've seen reactionary forces in the Coalition wrest control of policies from same-sex marriage to climate change. Now, it looks like they may be attempting to take charities regulation back to the dark ages.

Charities have strongly backed the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission ever since it was established by Labor in 2011. They have better things to do than to keep fighting for it. A government that truly cared about charities would be getting on with fixing fundraising, removing duplicate reporting requirements, and strengthening the charities commission.

Michael Sukkar is the fifth Coalition minister responsible for the charities commission in less than four years of Coalition government. It's clear that charities don't trust him. It's time Malcolm Turnbull put the Visigoths back in their box, and started supporting our charities.

SENATE COMMITTEE WANTS A STOP ON APVMA PORK BARREL - Fitzgibbon

The Senate's Finance and Public Administration Committee has recommended Barnaby Joyce's forced relocation of the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) be stopped in its tracks. Over the course of the Committee's hearings, experts and stakeholders alike lined up to voice their serious concerns about the adverse impacts of Barnaby Joyce's pork barrelling exercise. The Committee heard the damage of the proposed move from Canberra to Armidale is already being done; a mass exodus of scientists and other staff has forced a collapse in the Authority's work performance.

Further, evidence presented to the Senate Committee suggests the Finance Minister failed to properly assess and scrutinise the Policy Order (GPO). Indeed under Senate questioning, the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Finance said:

"We support the Minister in the making of the GPO. There was a decision made by government that there be a GPO. We supported the Minister and he signed it – because he is the only one who can – and that is about it."

The Prime Minister's silence over this shocking waste of tens of millions of taxpayers' money has been deafening.

CURRENT SENATE INQUIRIES

Community Affairs Legislation Committee

- **New** [National Disability Insurance Scheme Amendment \(Quality and Safeguards Commission and Other Measures\) Bill 2017](#)
- **New** [Social Services Legislation Amendment \(Ending Carbon Tax Compensation\) Bill 2017](#)
- **New** [Social Services Legislation Amendment \(Queensland Commission Income Management Regime\) Bill 2017](#)
- [Industrial Chemicals Bill 2017 and related Bills](#)

Community Affairs References Committee

- **New** [Effectiveness of the Aged Care Quality Assessment and accreditation framework for protecting residents from abuse and poor practices, and ensuring proper clinical and medical care standards are maintained and practised](#)
- [Value and affordability of private health insurance and out-of-pocket medical costs](#)
- [Number of women in Australia who have had transvaginal mesh implants and related matters](#)
- [Design, scope, cost-benefit analysis, contracts awarded and implementation associated with the Better Management of the Social Welfare System initiative](#)
- [Delivery of outcomes under the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 to build inclusive and accessible communities](#)
- [Future of Australia's aged care sector workforce](#)

Economics Legislation Committee

- **New** [Treasury Laws Amendment \(2017 Enterprise Incentives No. 2\) Bill](#)
- **New** [Major Bank Levy Bill 2017](#)
- [Treasury Laws Amendment \(Foreign Resident Capital Gains Withholding Payments\) Bill 2017](#)

Economics References Committee

- **New** [Operations of existing and proposed toll roads in Australia](#)
- **New** [The governance and operation of the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility \(NAIF\)](#)
- [Consumer protection in the banking, insurance and financial sector](#)
- [Australia's general insurance industry](#)
- [Scrutiny of financial advice](#)
- [Future of Australia's Steel Industry](#)
- [Future of Australia's naval shipbuilding industry](#)
- [Corporate Tax Avoidance](#)
- [Foreign bribery](#)
- [Non-conforming building products](#)
- [Dairy industry](#)

Education and Employment Legislation Committee

- [Higher Education Support Legislation Amendment \(A More Sustainable, Responsive and Transparent Higher Education System\) Bill 2017](#)
- [Australian Education Amendment Bill 2017](#)
- [Fair Work Amendment \(Pay Protection\) Bill 2017](#)

Education and Employment References Committee

- [Corporate Avoidance of the Fair Work Act](#)

Environment and Communications Legislation Committee

- [Australian Broadcasting Corporation Amendment \(Restoring Shortwave Radio\) Bill 2017](#)

Environment and Communications References Committee

- **New** [Participation of Australians in online poker](#)
- [Current and future impacts of climate change on housing, buildings and infrastructure](#)
- [Rehabilitation of mining and resources projects as it relates to Commonwealth responsibilities](#)
- [Protection of Aboriginal rock art of the Burrup Peninsula](#)
- [Shark mitigation and deterrent measures](#)
- [Current and future impacts of climate change on marine fisheries and biodiversity](#)

Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

- **New** [Government Procurement \(Judicial Review\) Bill 2017 \[provisions\]](#)

Finance and Public Administration References Committee

- [The appropriateness and effectiveness of the objectives, design, implementation and evaluation of the Community Development Program \(CDP\)](#)

Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee

- [Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment \(Omnibus\) Bill 2017 \[provisions\]](#)
- [Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment \(Budget Measures\) Bill 2017](#)

Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee

- **New** [Implications of climate change for Australia's national security](#)
- **New** [Australia's trade and investment relationships with the countries of Africa](#)
- [Impact of Defence training activities and facilities on rural and regional communities](#)
- [Matters raised by NSW Police Strike Force CIVET](#)
- [Suicide by veterans and ex-service personnel](#)

Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee

- [Crimes Legislation Amendment \(Powers, Offences and Other Measures\) Bill 2017 \[Provisions\]](#)
- [Criminal Code Amendment \(Protecting Minors Online\) Bill 2017](#)

Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee

- [Nature and scope of any agreement reached by the Commonwealth and Western Australian governments in relation to the distribution of proceeds of the liquidation of, and litigation concerning, the Bell Group of companies \(the proceeds\)](#)

Red Tape Committee

- [The effect of red tape on tobacco retail](#)
- [The effect of red tape on environmental assessment and approvals](#)

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

- [Airports Amendment Bill 2016 \[Provisions\]](#)

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee

- [Biosecurity risks associated with the importation of seafood and seafood products \(including uncooked prawns and uncooked prawn meat\) into Australia](#)
- [Regulatory requirements that impact on the safe use of Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems, Unmanned Aerial Systems and associated systems.](#)
- [Australia's rail industry](#)
- [The effect of market consolidation on the red meat processing sector](#)
- [Aspects of road safety in Australia](#)
- [Increasing use of so-called Flag of Convenience shipping in Australia](#)

Select Committee into Funding for Research into Cancers with Low Survival Rates

- [Funding for Research into Cancers with Low Survival Rates](#)

Select Committee on a National Integrity Commission

- [Select Committee on a National Integrity Commission](#)

Select Committee on Lending to Primary Production Customers

- [Select Committee on Lending to Primary Production Customers](#)

Select Committee on Strengthening Multiculturalism

- [Strengthening Multiculturalism](#)

Select Committee on the Future of Public Interest Journalism

- [Future of Public Interest Journalism](#)

Standing Committee of Privileges

- [Possible improper influence of a witness before the Environment and Communications References Committee](#)
- [Parliamentary privilege and the use of intrusive powers](#)

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DIG DEEPER

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- [Journals of the Senate](#) The official record (minutes) of the Senate and the most authoritative source of information about activities and decisions
 - [Hansard](#) Official transcript of proceedings
 - [ParlView](#) Video record of proceedings

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