

## VOICES FOR JUSTICE 2010 Speeches and motions in Parliament

### Senate Hansard, Tuesday 22 June 2010

Senator GUY BARNETT (Tasmania) [3:55 PM] —I move:

That the Senate—

- (a) welcomes the presence in Parliament House of more than 300 participants in the **Micah» «Challenge»** Voices for Justice event, representing churches, schools and community groups in more than 80 electorates and from every state and territory;
- (b) notes:
  - (i) the vital progress being made towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which aim to halve world poverty by 2015, seen through the reduction in child deaths from 12.5 million annually in 1990 to 8.8 million in 2008,
  - (ii) that while progress is being made, a number of the MDGs are still off track, particularly Goals 4 and 5, which relate to child and maternal health, and
  - (iii) the growing public support in the Australian community for the MDGs, demonstrated by more than 111 000 people who have signed the **«Micah»** call in support of the MDGs as part of the **«Micah» «Challenge»** campaign and an additional 40 000 people who recently signed the 'Act to End Poverty' with the Make Poverty History campaign;
- (c) reaffirms:
  - (i) the commitment to the MDGs as important benchmarks for the global community to fight poverty, and
  - (ii) that all eight MDGs are achievable with the political will of the global community;
- (d) recognises the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's call to world leaders to attend the MDGs Review Summit in New York in September 2010, and the importance of this global meeting to measure progress and develop a clear action plan to achieve these MDGs within the remaining 5 years; and
- (e) calls on the Government to make clear at the UN Summit, Australia's ongoing commitment to the achievement of the MDGs by 2015.

Question agreed to.

### House of Representatives Hansard, 23 June 2010

**Mr LUKE SIMPKINS** (Cowan) (9:48 AM) —Yesterday I met with representatives of **Micah» «Challenge»** here at Parliament House. I met with six of their representatives and I thank my constituent Joanna Elliot and also fellow Western Australians Jen Noonan, Matthew Bond and the State Director of Youth for World Vision, Ashleigh Williams. They were joined by Michelle Dobbs and Jenni Downes, who are from Sydney. I commend these **«Micah» «Challenge»** representatives for their forthright advocacy for the Millennium Development Goals. The Millennium Development Goals focus on the reduction of poverty with regard to the percentage of the population living on less than a US\$1.25 per day, the reduction of hunger in the world and the reduction of the proportion of those who are undernourished. There are goals relating to the net enrolment ratio in primary schools, the increase of female political representation and the reduction of child mortality and maternal mortality rates, as well as the reduction of the incidences of infectious diseases such as AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, which go hand-in-hand with the goal related to the need for safe water and improved sanitation.

As representatives of the parliament of an advanced nation, these are goals that we all seek to meet. We acknowledge our responsibilities and we know that through our commitment we can achieve advances for those in the developing world. It is important therefore that we seek to maximise the value for money to be achieved. Every possible dollar must be targeted to real action on the ground and not towards the middlemen or to projects that really have no part to play in the pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals. It is

therefore disappointing when we hear of megasalaries and private contracts detracting from our aid programs. It is also amazing when we hear of even the AFL being given \$307,843 for the promotion of football in Africa. I wonder what Millennium Development Goal that is targeting?

Contrast that to the great work being undertaken by the Mwika Hope Foundation in Tanzania, which is supported by local people in the electorate of Cowan. At the Mwika school in recent years they have built two classrooms for \$25,000 each. They also built a six-by-eight-metre dining room for AIDS orphans That cost just \$6,400, using local building stone and local labour. In this case, so much value has been achieved in one place. I therefore had no hesitation when I wrote to the government to highlight the work of the foundation and how they are certainly the sort of organisation that can achieve real gains for the Millennium Development Goals. The work of the Mwika Hope Foundation, particularly through their school project and their HIV programs supporting sufferers, advances many of the Millennium Development Goals.

The point is that progress towards the goals is best achieved through such high-quality organisations as the Mwika Hope Foundation. I applaud their efforts and I will advocate for them in the future. But, clearly, once you have super-NGOs, superbureaucracies and supercontracts you have superprices and supercosts. The one thing you do not have is super value for money. I wonder how much more could be achieved in the future with more money being sent to the right places, and that is what we should aim for.

Valedictory speech:

**Ms CAMPBELL** (Bass) (5.30 pm)— As I reflect on my time here I am further convinced of the importance of the work that is done in this place. It is important because the people of Bass are important, the people in Tasmania, Australia and indeed our global village are important. International trade, global financial markets and high-speed technologies have connected individuals and communities beyond the borders of their countries. There is a growing awareness with the realisation that individuals, communities, corporations and countries have obligations to one another that are global in reach.

In a world with much, it must continuously shock and disturb us that so many have so little. The fact is that we need to engineer opportunities for those who are economically underprivileged. The Millennium Development Goals paint a vision of a better world—a world where poverty is halved by the year 2015. I am proud to be part of a government that prioritises the poor and the Millennium Development Goals. This year's federal budget saw an increase of \$530 million in overseas aid and I look forward with anticipation to when our aid budget reaches 0.7 per cent, which will effectively result in 220,000 lives being saved every year.

The young people of Bass have been particularly inspiring concerning the MDGs. A young student from Launceston College, Laura Sykes, has recently lobbied the Launceston City Council to become a fair-trade certified council and succeeded. Young people understand the global injustices, question our belief in equality and justice and are active in raising a voice for those that have no voice. In doing so, the people of Bass demonstrate their decency and their belief in the fair go, not just for themselves as Australians but indeed for themselves as global citizens.

Together with my colleagues it has always been my intention to make a difference. I chose the Labor movement because of what it represents—a movement that has always sought to act with a moral seriousness, a commitment to social justice and an ideology that is on par with my principles and beliefs.”

May we together in this nation continue to wisely and courageously fight all that is against the ideas of global equality and justice.

**House of Representatives Hansard, 24 June 2010**

**Ms JILL HALL** (Shortland) (10:52 AM) —On Tuesday I was visited by four young people from my electorate and surrounding electorates who were representing **Micah** [«Challenge»](#). They visited me with the goal of improving the situation in global poverty. They pointed out to me that it was one of the most significant challenges facing our world today and that since 2000 there has been an international effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. They were placing particular emphasis on Millennium Development Goal 4.

They also lobbied me very strongly to increase the aid budget in the area of 2.7. I am very supportive of that increase and I think there are many members of this House who are also supportive of it.

When these young people came to visit me they asked me to make the Millennium Development Goals central to my policies and what I stand for. I am happy to do that. They asked me to sign the [«Micah Call](#) giant scroll. I did that, as did many of the other members of this House. They also asked me if I would be prepared to make a speech in parliament, and that is what I am doing today.

One of the churches in my electorate held a birthday party for Survive Past Five, which concentrates on Millennium Development Goal 4. At that birthday party they put together a card, which they delivered to me. The card emphasises that every child around the world should be able to enjoy a fifth birthday, which I think is something that all members of this House would agree with. The card points out how important Millennium Development Goal 4 is and that it aims to reduce child mortality by two-thirds from the 1990 levels by 2015. The young people went on to say that it saddens them that so many children in the 18 of the 29 developing countries in our region are not achieving this record.

Last year I visited PNG with the Standing Committee on Health and Ageing, with the specific goal of looking at health issues. PNG has the second worst outcomes in the areas of Millennium Development Goal 4 and Millennium Development Goal 5. I hope that we can work to help them achieve those goals. I seek leave to table birthday cards from young people in my electorate expressing their thoughts and sentiments in this area. Leave granted.

Valedictory speech

[Mr PAT FARMER](#) (Macarthur) (7:00 PM) —In the year 2000, not long after I finished my run around Australia for the Centenary of Federation, a run that took me 191 days, 14,964 kilometres, I received a phone call from John Howard, the then Prime Minister of Australia. Mr Howard asked me whether I would consider a political career. He said, 'Pat, if you would be prepared to run for the Liberal Party at the next federal election, I will give you my support and the support of cabinet ministers to get great things done for your electorate.' One thing about Mr Howard was that he knew how to press all the right buttons. He knew how I felt about the people in my electorate and he knew how I felt about actually getting things done. You see, I have this simple philosophy in my life. This philosophy is that opportunities come along—you either take those opportunities or you live on regrets. I have to say that I have absolutely no regrets about anything I have ever done with my life. That was in 2001, and I have since been here doing just that: serving the people of Macarthur. During my first campaign I remember one journalist saying to me: 'Pat, you're an Irish Catholic. You grew up in the western suburbs of Sydney. You're a motor mechanic by trade, not a lawyer.' Sorry about that, John. 'You seem like a typical Labor voter.' I said, 'Yeah, I am. But, you know what, I am also an athlete, and as an athlete I believe that if I train harder than anybody else I deserve to win.' And, do you know what, the rewards of hard work are what the Liberal Party stand for. That is what we are all about. It is about reward for effort. Just as Menzies said, we are lifters, not leaders. We support people who are prepared to get off their backsides and make a difference with their lives. It is important to note that hard work and reward for effort can make a real difference to the economic position of this country. It is not just those people who get off their backsides and do something with their lives, but it is most important that we do that when we can so that we can help those people who are less fortunate than ourselves who simply do not have the means or the ability to be able to do that.

This is why we need a good economic management policy, so that we can have money and prosperity to help those Australians that cannot help themselves. We need prosperity to be able to help Australia meet its [millennium»](#) goal of 0.07 per cent of gross national income so that we can support the poverty stricken people of this world. I believe that Australians are hard workers and what they need more than anything from government is for government to get out of the way—for them to get out of the way and for them to allow businesses to get on with the job of what they do best, without burdening them with bureaucratic bundles of forms and documents. What people need most is government support, not red tape.

I wish to thank all the people that work in this building in all areas that have supported me. I would like to thank the landscapers, the florists, the gym staff, the Comcar drivers, the security staff and everybody else in between. I would especially like to thank my electoral staff, who have worked tirelessly supporting me to help the people of Macarthur. I would like to thank my colleagues on both sides of this House. I want each and

everyone of you to know that I admire you and I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to work side by side with you. At this stage I would like to thank the Prime Minister and the ministers for making the time available on the occasions when I needed to speak with them about issues in my electorate.

I will dearly miss two of my running partners in this place. Of course I will miss everybody but especially my friend Greg Hunt and of course my favourite running partner Tony Abbott. He is the only one who came close to me running up and down Red Hill.

[Mr Hunt](#) —Oh, outrage!

[Mr FARMER](#) —Sorry, Greg. I acknowledge the negative publicity that I received moving house from Campbelltown to Mosman. This occurred in January, and it was obviously a slow month for the media. The media believed that in order to represent an area you must sleep in that area. Well, they may well be right. This may seem a little strange to everybody here in this House, but I would like to thank the local preselection panel. I would like to thank them for putting the people of Macarthur's needs first and for making sure that the preselected candidate for the next election lived in the area that they represented. I also believe that this is very important, but from time to time there are moments in my life when I have to represent my family first and foremost, and I make no excuses for putting my family first. I want to make it known to everybody in Macarthur that I wholeheartedly support and acknowledge Russell Matheson, the past Mayor of Campbelltown and Campbelltown councillor, as the best person to represent the people of Macarthur at this point in time. I want it known that they should feel very lucky to have somebody who is prepared to put up their hand and work tirelessly for that community, just as I have done.

Many years ago, when Brooke and Dillon were just little babies, the people of Macarthur banded together to support me through one of the toughest crises in my life, the loss of my wife, Lisa. For this reason, their lives a bond between myself and the people of Macarthur that I cannot expect anybody else to understand. That is why, no matter where I travel on this planet or no matter what I do with my life, I will never forget those people that were there for me when I needed them most. I am the sum of all of you and the influences that you have had on my life.

I made a simple promise to the people of Macarthur that I would bring Canberra to Macarthur and Macarthur to Canberra. The people of Camden, Picton and Campbelltown have had full access to all the ministers and the departmental staff through me, and there have never been so many visits by ministers and prime ministers to Macarthur prior to my election. I have delivered on that promise. I have also delivered close to half a billion dollars worth of infrastructure and services to the people of Macarthur and the surrounding regions. During my political career, I particularly enjoyed my role as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education, Science and Training, with special responsibilities for high schools, primary schools and transition-to-work programs. I loved working with the teachers and the kids and getting into the schools to motivate the kids. I love this job very, very much and I will never forget this part of my life. Also, I loved delivering the \$1.2 billion Investing in Our Schools Program. This program worked directly with schools to deliver what they needed most. Whether it was outdoor learning centres, computers, libraries or classrooms, the program delivered what the schools needed and wanted from the government.

I have spoken on this subject many times in the past but I once again want to draw to the attention of this House, in this my valedictory speech, the need to dispose of Badgerys Creek as an airport site and instead create a business park. My vision for Western Sydney is for the 1,700 hectares of land to become an economic centre, which would allow the peak-hour flow of traffic to be reversed. I believe that 1,000 hectares should be used for job creation and for commercial and industrial land. Further, 350 hectares should be used for quality housing to alleviate the housing crisis in Sydney and another 350 hectares could be used to create the lungs and recreational areas for Penrith, Campbelltown and the whole of south-west Sydney—similar to what Central Park is to New York. The advantage of this vision is that it would finally put an end to the 30-year controversy that has embroiled Badgerys Creek. It will not cost money. In fact, if it were sold with a covenant for job creation, it would fetch around \$500 million. This would improve the government's bottom line and help to pay off the massive debt that it has accumulated.

The people of Western Sydney are spending four hours of their lives each and every single day just travelling to and from work. This is causing many problems with the family unit, including the need for extended childcare

times and a reduction in the quality of family life. This can be fixed without any expense to the government. Badgerys Creek is an asset that, at the moment, only feeds and breeds rabbits. This asset has sat there for nearly 30 years and has prevented people in the surrounding areas from doing anything with their homes. It is bureaucracy at its worst. The federal government has said for years, after numerous inquiries, that it is not building a second airport at the Badgerys Creek site, yet the New South Wales state government has not rezoned the surrounding area. The only way to fix the massive congestion in our cities is to create jobs and recreational facilities for people where they live.

It is not just the big issues in Macarthur that are important to me; it is also the individuals who count. There are many people in the area who from time to time have needed my help in assisting them with immigration matters or getting their children into schools in the local area. There was one case in particular of a lady who came to my office. She had just two teeth in her mouth. She had missed a dental appointment earlier that year and consequently was put to the back of the queue. She had waited two years and still had another 12 months to go before she could get something done about her dental situation. She told me that she had not eaten anything solid for over two years. That afternoon I spoke to Sydney South West Area Health Service and arranged for this lady to be fitted with a set of dentures. One month later, this lady came into my office. She had a smile that started at one ear and finished at the other ear. She had tears rolling out of her eyes as she thanked me. I will never, ever forget the look on that lovely old lady's face. That is what this job is all about. I found housing for a lady who was living in a car in bushland in Kentlyn, in Campbelltown. She had been attacked several times. As well as her housing dilemma, she suffered from schizophrenia. After several phone calls, we managed to get her medical help and some accommodation. People who are suffering from mental illness need to be supported by the federal government. This is part of our everyday work, and because we want to make a difference to these people's lives, we get frustrated from time to time because we cannot help. That is when I am reminded of the words of my mother. My mother said to me—I should say, 'My mom always said to me' in my best Forrest Gump accent—'Rome was not built in a day but it was certainly started in one.' I think it is important that, when we feel disillusioned with this place, we remember those words and get started. We have to take the initial step needed to make a difference to people's lives.

I want to acknowledge my family and the sacrifices that they have made to support me in this career—in particular, my daughter, Brooke, and my son, Dillon, who are sitting here in the chamber. I want it to be known to everybody that I am incredibly proud of you two. Last year, we spent our holidays in an orphanage in Chang Mai, in Thailand, helping children suffering from AIDS. My daughter, Brooke, read books to the children and helped to feed and clothe the babies, while my son, Dillon, and I repaired playground equipment, worked on buildings and built bikes. The love that they showed these beautiful little children and the absolute desperation they felt about the situation they were in was something that any parent would be proud of. The year before, I travelled to India, Nepal, Egypt and Peru. I saw firsthand the work that the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent societies does. As I stood in the office of the Red Cross in Cairo with the Secretary-General, Professor Mamdouh Gabr, he took an urgent call. In that instance I saw his jaw drop and his eyes fill with anger as he was told that a school had been bombed in the Gaza Strip. It was a school that was being used by the Red Cross to provide aid to both sides of the front line. He recomposed himself and went about coming up with alternatives to get aid to those areas in the Gaza conflict. Later that night I asked him: 'How can you possibly help these people who cause so much pain and destruction to others? In some cases, they cause this pain and destruction to people who are close to you.' He told me: 'We are the Red Cross-Red Crescent. We cannot do our job any other way.' The people of the Red Cross go into war zones to brief soldiers on the Geneva convention. They provide a safe haven for people who are destitute. They provide food and shelter in times of cyclones, bushfires, floods, mudslides and tsunamis.

Two-thirds of the world's population do not have clean, sanitary conditions or fresh drinking water. I have seen firsthand the different levels of poverty in this world. I have visited communities in Cairo where people live in rubbish tips and have to scavenge beside the rats to find something they can sell in order to buy water just to survive. In these same communities I have seen young children take needles from medical syringes. When they have accumulated two kilograms worth of these needles they are paid one Egyptian pound. I met with a lady whose job was to collect plastic. She burnt this plastic waste and used a stick to lift up the molten plastic and put it into a metal tub. When 10 kilograms of solidified plastic had been accumulated she would earn the equivalent of two Egyptian pounds. Her face was covered in soot and her nostrils and ears oozed

black ash. One man told me that he can earn two Egyptian pounds for collecting rubbish from the city. If he earns less than that, he has to choose between feeding his donkey and feeding his children. Unfortunately, he is forced to choose the donkey, because it can earn him money the following day, and he and his children go without food that night. I have seen communities in the mountains of Nepal and Peru that are desperately poor, but they have water, and with water they can grow a little grain, feed chickens, boil up food and wash. They can stave off disease. They are poor, but they can survive because they have water.

I have been influenced by these things and so much more in my life. That is why I feel an absolute need to build wells and to raise the money needed to provide clean, sanitary conditions for the women and children of these communities. I encourage all Australians and world citizens to do the same and support me in my next endeavour. On 27 November I will embark on the greatest journey that I could ever possibly imagine. I have set a goal to raise \$100 million for this worthwhile endeavour. I will run from the South Pole to the edge of the ice in Argentina, then through South America, the United States of America and Canada, and then on to the North Pole before flying to the United Nations to present my findings—the places I have been, the people I have met and the things I have done along the way. I will run more than 21,000 kilometres through the extremes of every weather condition on this earth.

I have met with every high commissioner and ambassador of the countries I will be running through, and I am proud to say that I have their support and that they strongly support work to improve the lives of the severely poor of this world. I will present to the United Nations at the end of my journey all that I have seen and all that I have done. I will be asking the politicians to take a good, long look at themselves and to ask the question: if one man can do this, what can we all do if we work together as a nation? What can we do to help each and every nation meet the **«Millennium» «Development» «Goals** to alleviate the poverty crisis in our own backyards as well as around the world? I ask each and every one of you here in this House: why is it that we can put a man on the moon and yet still two-thirds of the world's population do not have clean drinking water or clean, sanitary conditions? Throughout my run, using the latest communications technology, I will beam into the boardrooms, the classrooms and the living rooms of people worldwide everything that I see and everything that I do. Hopefully, that will encourage people to follow my journey and to support me.

In finishing, if the people of this House remember nothing of the words that I have ever uttered in this place but they remember this last phrase, then my time here will have been worth while. So I say to each and every one of you that locked within each of us is the ability to achieve great things. I believe that the greatest force on this earth is our will. If we want to do something and we want to do it with all our heart, we can and we will find a way, but if we do not truly want to do it we will simply find an excuse. To all of you here in this House: please find a way to help all of humanity, and please, please, please, no excuses.

Valedictory speech:

**Mr DAVID HAWKER** (Wannon) (6:46 PM) —Mr Speaker, on indulgence: I rise tonight to give my valedictory speech as the member for Wannon. In doing so, I would like to emphasise how fortunate I have been to be elected to represent the people of Wannon for 27 years and to have had such wonderful support in that role and also how privileged I have been to have played a number of roles in public life, including that of Speaker of the Parliament, and to reflect on the many changes that have occurred and the changes that still need to occur.

Twenty-seven years ago Australia was coming out of the grip of another shocking drought. We had just seen the horrendous Ash Wednesday fires, with more than 50 lives lost but, on a more positive note, Australia II had won the America's Cup. Little did I know when I entered parliament that the next 13 years would be spent in opposition. While the Hawke-Keating governments followed the usual Labor pattern of running up massive public debt, their overspending pales into insignificance when compared to less than three years of the current Rudd government. But, having said that, the Hawke government did implement the banking reforms proposed by the Campbell committee. It also reduced tariffs and forced industries to become internationally competitive. While the Hawke government made many changes to the tax system, this was only after considerable consultation, and the government was notably supported by the opposition in most of these changes. What a contrast that is to Labor's blatant opposition to the GST reforms introduced by the Howard government. Compare that with the approach taken by the current government in attempting to ram down

the throat of the mining industry a massive new tax—a tax that will do serious damage not only to future investment in mining but to many other sectors across Australia. No wonder the miners are in open revolt. In 1983, I was sworn in by the then speaker, Dr Harry Jenkins—your father, Mr Speaker—a man for whom I had great respect. Looking at the chair now I am reminded of the old French saying: plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose. For the benefit of my colleagues, it means: the more things change, the more they stay the same. Back in those days, backbenchers shared offices in the Old Parliament House. There were no faxes, no emails, no internet and no mobile phones. Not only were the offices of members tiny, basic and without facilities, ministers were located amongst the backbenchers. This did have one advantage: as a backbencher, you would sometimes find yourself at the urinal at the same time as a minister. Being unable to escape, he had to listen to your plea for support for some constituent problem. While his eyes might glaze over, usually a call came shortly after that from his secretary, arranging an appointment for the next morning.

In 1988, parliament moved to occupy this wonderful building. While it has certainly removed the overcrowding, it has taken away much of the personal touch. Ministers can now hide behind a wall of minders in the ministerial wing. Sadly, security has also placed many barriers between members and the public. Kings Hall in the old parliament often saw ministers, as they hurried from one side of the parliament to the other, prepared to chat to visitors. The non-members bar, once a favourite haunt in the evenings and a source of much information, has been long closed in this new building.

With 27 years in parliament, I am able to lay claim to quite a few achievements but, while I can do that, it is for others to judge their worth. I mentioned the privilege of being elected as Speaker in 2004, but I will in passing indulge in a few other highlights from my time in parliament. Nowadays, the twice-yearly hearings between the House Economics Committee and the Reserve Bank of Australia Governor are eagerly awaited by markets, analysts and the wider community. As the committee chairman who developed this process, to see the hearings continue is a satisfying testimony. However serious the public hearings may be, sometimes there was a lighter side to them, like the time the hearing went to Warrnambool—in which electorate? Wannon—and the governor with his suitably serious banker's voice remarked to me that we continually reminded him of drought but, on driving into Warrnambool, the grass was so high that he could not see any sheep.

The economics committee continued its tradition of undertaking valuable work during my time as chairman. Two reports that I particularly wish to mention are those on regional banking and on local government funding. Both inquiries had a significant impact on public policy, and from the former the regions have seen a major reversal for the better in banking services for country people. Competition policy, tax office administration and financial regulation are a few of the other areas that we studied and reported on to parliament. My initiative that led to the introduction of the Australian Defence Force Parliamentary Program has proved its value with the ongoing support of both the MPs and the chiefs of the defence forces. Members, senators and the chiefs have repeatedly spoken of the benefits of the program. Given defence is such a major issue for the nation, I think having a better understanding of it within the parliament must lead to better decisions.

There are a number of committees I have been privileged to chair, but one I want to mention especially is the government's Firearms Consultative Committee. Following the dreadful shooting tragedy in Port Arthur in 1996, Prime Minister John Howard asked me to chair this committee at a particularly difficult time for the hundreds of thousands of responsible shooters in our community. Laws were tightened and since then the shooting associations have greatly strengthened their memberships and have played a very responsible role in teaching and promoting safe, responsible use of firearms. I was honoured to be made a patron of Field and Game Australia and a life member of the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia, the two biggest national associations. I note that shooting in Australia continues to have strong support and considerable effort is made by many to promote the safe and responsible use of firearms, particularly among juniors.

Locally in Wannon since 1983 we have seen improvements in many ways and in many parts of the electorate. To detail them would take far too long but a few of particular significance were the new Australian Technical College in Hamilton, a marvellous innovation to give secondary students the start to a full trades career, but regrettably the college has now been downgraded by the Labor governments; another was the all-weather athletics track at Brauer College in Warrnambool, giving young athletes in the region the chance to run on an Olympic-standard track; there is the new medical school at Deakin University, which includes Warrnambool campus, thereby training future doctors to go on to practise in the country; and, funds for any number of road

projects to help improve transport links, such as the multimillion-dollar upgrade of the Eurambeen to Streatham road commenced three years ago to handle transporting of the rapidly increasing local grain harvest. I was delighted to facilitate federal funding for Gum San Museum in Ararat. Ararat's unique heritage as Australia's only city founded by Chinese migrants is properly recorded in Gum San. Equally important, the future of our region looks particularly bright with over \$8 billion of new investment expected in the next five years. Having said that, Wannon is proud of its great agricultural industries, which generate billions of dollars for the region. However, with global hunger for the first time leading to more than one billion people being classed as undernourished, increasing food production should be a far higher priority in Australia. Yet astonishingly the federal government continues to reduce spending in agricultural research and **development** under the guise of drought-induced lower production. If this short-sighted policy is allowed to continue, any pretence of wanting to meet the **«millennium» «goals»** will be seen as very hollow. While I am indeed fortunate to be one of only 1,064 Australians to have been elected to the House of Representatives since Federation, to be chosen as the 25th Speaker of the House of Representatives was an absolute privilege. Through this, I came to see firsthand the extraordinary professionalism of so many people who work tirelessly here in Parliament House. Led by the clerks and the Secretary of the Department of Parliamentary Services, nearly 1,000 people keep this building operating with hardly a complaint. I cannot speak highly enough of their dedication. In particular, may I single out two clerks I worked with. Like their predecessors, Ian Harris and now Bernie Wright, both of whom are present tonight, continue a tradition which has served our parliament remarkably well. This brings me to a matter I feel very strongly about—the funding of the parliament.

To provide an effective balance between the executive, dominated of course by the cabinet, and the parliament, the parliament must be properly funded. To give just one comparison to show what I mean, since 2001 the budget for Treasury has been increased by over 100 per cent to \$146 million, while the House of Representatives budget increased by just 11 per cent over that period to \$22 million—which, I note, is little more than half the cost of the government's advertising proposed for the new mining tax. Similar figures are there for the rest of the parliament. In other words, in real terms the budget to run parliament has been cut while ministerial staff numbers have grown, departmental budgets have blossomed and the number and complexity of bills which parliament has to debate each year continues to rise. By any measure, this balance between parliament and the cabinet, as shown by the resourcing, is tilting unhealthily towards the cabinet of the day.

Proper accountability and scrutiny of government by parliament is a fundamental strength of parliamentary democracy. It is my considered view, after having worked closely with the officers of the parliament, that the method of funding needs a major revamp. While the officers work tirelessly to minimise the impact of continuing budget cuts, the fact is that it is inevitable that the support for parliament to function fully is now threatened. As I am not seeking re-election, my views, I trust, can be seen as objective and free of any vested interest. Fortunately, there are some excellent examples among other Commonwealth parliaments where the funding is determined independently from cabinet. Canada and New Zealand spring to mind. With proper checks and balances, accountability and transparency, such models ensure not only the financial independence of the parliament but also maintain a healthy balance between parliament and the cabinet. Earlier this year, I moved a private member's motion, seconded by the Deputy Speaker, the member for Chisholm, proposing just such a model for the House of Representatives. The challenge now is for both sides of the House to agree to this long-overdue reform.

I turn now to another challenge facing members and the community. It is always hard for members of parliament to hold the respect of the community. Some may say it is harder today than in the past but the future of our whole democracy depends on public confidence in our system of government. After all, it was less than 70 years ago, at a time of dire peril for much of the world, that there were only 12 countries with democratically elected governments. Today, more than 140 countries can claim some form of elections to their parliaments. Since the Second World War, democracy has underpinned the remarkable progress made in so many ways in so much of the world. But the advent of 24-hour news services, internet blogs, Twitter and text have multiplied the demand for and sources of political comment. There is a danger that with the proliferation of views and news the public will lose interest or become sidetracked from the importance of parliament and its role in the nation's future.

Australia can boast the fourth longest continuing democracy in the world. The challenge today is to encourage healthy scepticism rather than corrosive cynicism towards our elected representatives. Sometimes this can be a very big challenge, such as during the recent vehement debate between the government and the mining industry. While it may not be all-out war, I am reminded of the old adage: the first casualty when war comes is truth. When hearing the Prime Minister and the Treasurer it is hard not to believe the first casualty may indeed have fallen. Such a public brawl is hardly helping the local standing of our elected members of parliament but, unfortunately, in this case it can even go international.

In a recent editorial in the *Wall Street Journal* there was a scathing assessment of the new mining tax, saying: ... the larger issue at stake: Does Australia, a developed nation that has embraced liberal economic policies for three decades, want to philosophically go the way of free-market Hong Kong or socialist France?

Notwithstanding this particular issue, the value of public service remains as important as ever and listening to the two previous speeches I think that point was very strongly reinforced by the member for Denison and the member for Aston. To quote Australia's longest-serving Prime Minister, Sir Robert Menzies, on this issue: To discourage ambition, to envy success, to have achieved superiority, to distrust independent thought, to sneer at and impute false motives to public service—these are the maladies of modern democracy, and of Australian democracy in particular. Yet ambition, effort, thinking and readiness to serve are not only the design and objectives of self-government but are the essential conditions of its success.

All members of parliament rely on loyal support from many hardworking party members, friends and family. I have indeed been fortunate. My wife Penny and our four children—Peter, Melissa, Richard and James—have been absolutely fantastic in their support right throughout this time I have been elected. They have always been there to make a very welcome home, something that I have always greatly appreciated.

My office staff from the time I was first elected have done an outstanding job and have rightly earned an enviable reputation within the electorate for providing great service. I must single out one for special mention—Megan Campbell, who has been with me for more than 20 years. There is no other way to put it but to say that she does a truly outstanding job. Without the ongoing support of so many in the Liberal Party, I could not have got here. Marilyn Lyons, who has either been the electorate chairman or the electorate secretary for almost 27 years, was an incredible support. Teamed with Bayse Thomas who ran my campaigns in recent years they made a formidable team. Jim Dwyer, who was also electorate chairman for nine years, is another absolute stalwart. But of course there are hundreds of others and I say to all of them my heartfelt thanks.

The seat of Wannon has the remarkable record of having had just two members, both from the Liberal party, since 1955. With a federal election only a few months away it is my fervent hope that the outstanding candidate we have in Dan Tehan will continue to prove that the Liberal party can best serve Wannon. In my maiden speech in 1983 I concluded by saying:

The long-term «goals», the «goals» that the people of Wannon and the people of Australia should expect of governments are to have the opportunities and the freedom of choice to better their own future. It is the role of government to provide the sound basis on which to build the most important ingredient of which is a sound financial base.

Sadly it seems the current government is doing its best to undermine that base, so much so that Australians are rapidly concluding it is only by returning a Liberal-National coalition government that we can regain our confidence to truly better our own future. May I conclude by saying again it is an absolute privilege to be elected to serve one's community. To have been elected 10 times is indeed a rare privilege. I leave this place with many fond memories, a few scars and many good friends but confident our parliament will continue to play a central role in the future of our great nation.

Honourable members—Hear, hear!

Senate Hansard: 15 June 2010-06-24

Senator CLAIRE MOORE —Last week in Washington the second Women Deliver conference drew over 3,000 people from over 140 countries to come together to talk about one key theme: 'Delivering solutions for girls and women'. The plan was to ensure that the world, and most particularly the political leaders of the world, understood that the «Millennium» «Development» «Goals» cannot and will not be achieved without investing

in women and that there is just enough time—five years to go—before we have to deliver on our aim. We need to invest strongly.

We know from the Women Deliver conference—which I was very fortunate to attend—that women’s wellbeing determines a country’s wellbeing. You cannot have a strong and vibrant country or economy without strong, healthy women. Women drive economic [«development»](#). They operate the majority of small businesses and farms in developing countries. Women’s work makes everyone more productive. More of their own income goes on food, medicine, education and other family needs, and women contribute to economic growth. Their unpaid work at home and on farms equals about one-third of the world’s GDP. We know that when women survive, families thrive. Also we know through the number of contributions to the conference and by world awareness that there are tragic factors affecting the health of women.

In developing countries each year 215 million women who want to avoid pregnancy do not use effective methods of contraception. Pregnancy and childbirth complications are the leading cause of death and disability in young women. Nearly half of all pregnant women across the globe do not receive any skilled care. We know that over 20 million women have unsafe abortions and 10 to 15 million women suffer severe or long-lasting illnesses or disabilities caused by complications during pregnancy and childbirth. Maternal deaths are preventable—we know that. There is a global consensus on cost-effective solutions that include: effective family planning programs; skilled care for mothers and newborns before, during and after childbirth, including emergency obstetric care; and safe abortion when and where that is legal. Delivering these solutions to the world means that we must prioritise young people, strengthen national health systems that deliver for women and advance and protect human rights for girls and women.

Investing in women makes sense right now and is essential for our future. It was said and agreed that investing another \$12 billion a year, for a total of \$24 billion, would fulfil the unmet need for family planning and provide every woman with the recommended standard of maternal and newborn care. That investment would result in reducing unintended pregnancies by more than two-thirds, preventing 70 per cent of maternal deaths, averting 44 per cent of newborn deaths, reducing unsafe abortion by 73 per cent and cutting disability adjusted life years lost to pregnancy related illness and premature death by 66 per cent.

Investing in women brings positive returns. It would return as much as US\$15 billion in productivity which is now lost to maternal and newborn death. It would improve public health for all by developing strong, accessible health systems, preventing unintended pregnancies and reducing HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. It would empower girls and women with greater opportunity for education and employment. Most importantly, I think, it would ensure that we strengthen families, communities, economies, nations and the world. This was the goal that was determined by putting in place the [«Millennium» «Development» «Goals»](#)—to strengthen families, communities, economies, nations and the world by reducing poverty.

The conference focused most clearly on women and on maternal and child health, particularly [«millennium» «development»](#) goal No. 5, which is to improve maternal health. Target 5(a) was to reduce by three-quarters between 1990 and 2015 the maternal mortality ratio and target 5(b) was to achieve by 2015 universal access to reproductive health.

The horror is that more than half a million women die each year in pregnancy and childbirth. Most of them die simply because there is not enough skilled routine emergency care. We need to ensure that across our globe we reduce the horror that, in places such as sub-Saharan Africa, one in 22 women has the risk of dying during pregnancy or childbirth over their lifetime. This is compared to one in 8,000 women in the developed world. No-one can hear those stats and remain calm. No-one can hear those stats and remain less than angry. At the Women Deliver conference there was a great deal of professionalism, commitment, knowledge, frustration and anger, but overwhelmingly there was hope, because there is a chance for us to reverse this situation. There is a chance for us to work together to ensure that we can strengthen health systems and to ensure that women survive pregnancy and that children are able to be brought safely into the world.

[«Millennium» «development»](#) goal No. 5 was brought into focus most clearly I think through the last Women Deliver conference, which was two years ago in London. At that conference, which was subject to a great degree of debate and understanding, it was ensured that, by looking at the health of women and girls, we were in fact considering all the [«millennium» «development» «goals»](#) to which our nations had signed up, because you do not look at things in isolation. MDG5 is related to all the other MDGs. As maternal mortality

strongly affects newborn mortality, progress on MDG5 will also influence efforts to reduce child mortality, which is MDG4. Progress on MDG5 is also linked to MDG6, which aims to combat HIV-AIDS and malaria as these are important indirect causes of maternal death.

During the Women Deliver conference we heard a great deal about the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and we were fortunate a few months ago to have the leaders of the global fund here talking to our parliamentarians in this place to ensure that the horrors of HIV-AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis are being addressed effectively through a contribution by nations to the global fund. There has been an international call for donations to ensure that the global fund remains strong. One of the most impressive things about the global fund is that it looks most clearly at the effectiveness of the countries who are seeking the help. No money is given out unless there is effective planning, accountability and monitoring. We hear often the concern that giving money through the aid process is throwing money away, that there is no effective process to ensure that our money is well spent. Indeed, the global fund makes that assurance. One of the things that came out of the Women Deliver conference and the call to all nations who are in the position to be able to be donor nations is that we must continue to invest in the global fund.

Maternal mortality is a sensitive indicator of real inequality across the world. The only way that we can actually work together to make sure that we overcome poverty is to make sure that we have strong, effective women's health. We had the chance because, throughout this area, it is most clear that our nations have signed up to be part of international causes of the [«Millennium» «Development» «Goals»](#). At the Women Deliver conference one of the processes included a parliamentary forum. We had over 80 parliamentarians from across the world who had their own meetings. One of the frustrations of course was that there was so much on offer in the break-out groups and the various plenary sessions that it was very difficult to attend all the things you wished to. But the Women Deliver website will be providing information on the hundreds of workshops available for people to attend, all drawing together the best knowledge and the best professionalism and commitment to achieving real chances, allowing women to deliver.

The focus of the parliamentarians forum was on ensuring awareness raising but also on looking at movement forward. We know that the G8 and the G20 parliamentarians conferences and the G8-G20 summit of leaders of industrialised nations will be occurring in the next few weeks. In September world leaders gather for the UN high-level meeting to review the progress on the MDGs. The Women Deliver conference and also the complementary parliamentary forums were a chance to ensure that we had issues to hopefully be placed before the G8 and G20 but most importantly to put before the international high-level meeting in September to ensure that the call for action is heard and that it is clearly spoken. The parliamentarians at the Women Deliver conference committed to urging ministers across the globe—from developing countries and donor countries all together—to establish realistic, verifiable, annual action plans for reaching the individual MDG targets.

It is important also that donors and recipient countries alike target those MDGs which are falling most behind. To our shame, the MDG that is falling most behind is that to do with women's health. I have talked before in this place about putting real emphasis on this. We need to ensure that MDG5 is achieved; that means that there is a flow-on effect and that the other MDGs are achieved as well.

We call on governments to act upon the endorsed consensus on maternal, newborn and child health and we also want parliaments across the globe to have a priority setting on women's and girls' health at the local, national and global level. These issues should be debated freely so that they are not forgotten. We also talked about the need to speak out on women's and girls' health to raise awareness and to build knowledge. It is important that the facts that have been established are openly discussed and shared and that politicians—regardless of political parties, regardless of where they are meeting and regardless of whether they are from federal, state or local levels—all talk about our commitment as a country to facing the issues of poverty in our globe.

It is important that we actually engage in the debate and that we include young people in all countries, because consistently in the debate the issues around adolescence are raised. We need to ensure that adolescent health is strong and that young women and men understand their own health needs and work together to ensure that they make correct choices and have access to the support that they need, medically and socially, in their own communities.

We also have to ensure that the budget is strongly focused, that it is determined and that there is follow-through, particularly now. Post the global economic crisis concerns, some major donors from across our globe have been pulling back. It is very important that we share the responsibility and that we maintain the dedication and the effective funding of the processes that are going to be put in place to make sure that there is an effective aid program. As I said earlier, there is an understanding that there needs to be an additional \$12 billion a year invested in women and girls. That is a large amount, but it can be achieved. As part of a donor nation community, we accept this responsibility and we take up our share. When those world leaders gather together in September to look at how the MDGs are progressing, it is absolutely essential that there is an understanding of the financial responsibilities and commitments of these last five years. We are now in 2010 and the world made a commitment that by 2015 we would have an impact on poverty. We now have a five-year period to make sure this is achieved, and we have that chance. There is hope, but it will need an open commitment of funding, and not just by governments.

One of the really important aspects of the conference was the launching of the Joint Action Plan for Women's and Children's Health by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. It called upon nations of the world to come together to ensure that we address these issues—but also private enterprise. One of the exciting aspects of the Women Deliver conference was the leadership shown by the Gates foundation. Bill and Melinda Gates attended the conference and committed \$1.5 billion from their foundation as part of the world working together to achieve the aims to which we have committed. That once again gives hope, but it also means that there needs to be so much more commitment into the future.

In the parliamentary forum we talked most about the idea of creating laws and policies with and for women and girls and about legislative and policy responsibilities. One of the core aspects of the [«Millennium»](#) [«Development»](#) [«Goals»](#) is the empowerment of women. It is focused on education, and we heard this evening at another meeting upstairs in this place about a commitment to an education program in which we can all share.

But we also need the engagement of women and girls in the political process. Across the globe women have differing levels of direct involvement in the political process. When I was in Rwanda last year with Senator Humphries—I see him in the chamber—we were able to see the absolute joy that can be achieved when women are able to take up their role in parliament, supported by their own government. The Rwandan women, with the men in their parliament, have been able to prove that you can actually put in place local plans which actively engage women in the process. At the Women Deliver conference and also at the following parliamentary conference, parliamentarians from Rwanda were able to talk about the process they had put in place and how they expected that the greater involvement of women in their parliament would have a flow-on effect in terms of role modelling for women in communities and in ensuring that the economic wellbeing of the community was affected.

Consistently through the Women Deliver process we were looking at delivering solutions for girls and women. Part of that, of course, is engagement in political processes and working towards enforcing national laws to reduce gender inequality and gender based violence. One of the ongoing debates through this whole Women Deliver conference was the horror of the act of violence against women which permeates so many parts of our globe, and the way that we work together to ensure that women are safe, that women are healthy and that the political systems respect their rights. Their rights must be acknowledged as we work towards ensuring that women are part of the solution and are involved in the process of building, through their own strength, a greater future in our communities.

We also need to build alliances and coalitions amongst supportive members of parliament. I have certainly spoken before about the role of cross-parliamentary groups on population and [«development»](#). When politicians have the support of other politicians at the local level who share a passion on these issues it gives them a greater strength and, as I said earlier, it allows the debate to be more widely discussed so that these issues are not allowed to fall off the agenda.

So, across the globe we have various parliamentary groups on population [«development»](#) who share knowledge and who interchange ideas and who can give support and show where things have actually been successful. Through the parliamentary groups on population and [«development»](#) we can see where change has been achieved, and that can encourage others to move forward. We also have to ensure that the key issues—women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights, and access to family planning, emergency

obstetric care and safe abortion, where it is legal—are made regular agenda items during relevant bilateral, multilateral and international meetings and summits. It is essential that these issues of women's health are kept on the agenda and that where governments are meeting—where they are making decisions about aid allocation—it is never forgotten that the issues of women's health and women's strength are absolutely essential if we are going to have any chance of building a better, stronger world where poverty is reduced. The pledge by parliamentarians at the Women Deliver conference was to carry out these actions and to systematically and actively monitor the progress we are making in doing so. As a first step, parliamentarians committed to communicating the results achieved through working with our respective authorities and in close cooperation with civil society and other key stakeholders in setting up national action plans to be presented during the UN high-level review meeting in September. We, as parliamentarians, committed to reporting regularly on this progress through our parliamentary groups and our regional networks. I was part of that commitment. I was not representing the Australian government; I was there as part of a UN process. But as a parliamentarian I am making a commitment that we will continue focusing on this cause.

Senate motion 15 June 2010 (defeated)

Senator Scott Ludlam

Senator Ludlam, at the request of Senator Milne and pursuant to notice of motion not objected to as a formal motion, moved general business notice of motion no. 806—That the Senate—

(a) notes that:

- (i) the Rudd Government's current and promised overseas aid commitment fails to meet the agreed United Nations (UN) [«Millennium» «Development»](#) Goal of 0.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI),
- (ii) under the Copenhagen Accord, the Rudd Government undertook to contribute to US\$30 billion of 'fast start' financing for the period 2010 to 2012 and that this would be additional to existing aid funding,
- (iii) a fair contribution by Australia to the US\$30 billion financing is estimated at AU\$760 million,
- (iv) the climate aid related spending announced in the budget is not additional and is less than half of Australia's fair contribution, and
- (v) UN climate chief Yvo de Boer noted that, by pledging money that is not new and additional, some industrialised countries are beginning to 'climate-wash' and that this is not conducive to rebuilding trust in the international climate negotiations; and

(b) calls on the Government to:

- (i) provide overseas [«development](#) aid of 0.7 per cent of GNI,
- (ii) state precisely what it regards as a fair and equitable contribution to the US\$30 billion 'fast start' financing for climate mitigation and adaptation,
- (iii) make the climate funding additional to the overseas aid budget, and
- (iv) state when and how this funding will be provided.

Statement by leave: The Special Minister of State (Senator Ludwig), by leave, made a statement relating to the motion.

Question put.

The Senate divided—

AYES, 6

Senators—

Brown, Bob

Hanson-Young

Ludlam

Milne

Siewert (Teller)

Xenophon

NOES, 30

Senators—

Adams

Back  
Bilyk  
Bishop  
Boyce  
Brandis  
Brown, Carol  
Cameron  
Crossin  
Feeney  
Ferguson  
Fielding  
Forshaw  
Furner  
Hurley  
Joyce  
Ludwig  
Lundy  
Marshall  
McLucas  
Moore  
Nash  
O'Brien (Teller)  
Parry  
Pratt  
Scullion  
Stephens  
Troeth  
Williams  
Wortley  
Question negatived.