

the House like a startled gazelle while people here want to put their views about how we need a national plan for school improvement.

At the end of the day, all I can say is this: we will continue to work with education authorities to implement the National Plan for School Improvement to build a stronger, smarter and fairer Australia, and let that debate continue in this place.

Carbon Pricing

Mr IRONS (Swan) (15:07): My question is to the Prime Minister. Has the Prime Minister received any correspondence from the leader of the Labor Party in Western Australia, Mr McGowan, outlining his stated opposition to federal Labor's carbon tax?

Ms GILLARD (Lalor—Prime Minister) (15:07): Not to my knowledge. However, the leader of the opposition in Western Australia has made his position known publicly. He has made his position about a carbon tax known publicly. He has also made his position public that he supports an emissions trading scheme. Of course, the change that we have brought to our nation ensures that there will be an emissions trading scheme from 2015 and that, of course, was supported by the Leader of the Opposition as a minister in the Howard government in his book *Battlelines*, and on *Lateline*. An emissions trading scheme has been supported broadly by the opposition. Unfortunately for a negative fear campaign, the opposition traded in their position under the Howard government for negativity and they are still stuck there. However, as I understand it, Mr McGowan is in support of an emissions trading scheme. Pricing carbon is the right policy for our nation. Prime Minister Howard knew that. The Leader of the Opposition knew that when he sat around the cabinet table. They have replaced all of that, as you well know, with the cheap negativity we see today.

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Leader of the Opposition) (15:08): Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary question. How can the Prime Minister claim that no-one has noticed the carbon tax when her own West Australian leader is dead against it and is this why he has banned her from any appearance in the West Australian state campaign?

The SPEAKER: The Prime Minister has the call. The last part of the question has nothing to do with the previous question. The first part did.

Ms Julie Bishop interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition might be unwelcome in the chamber very shortly if she is not careful.

Ms GILLARD (Lalor—Prime Minister) (15:09): What we see is the Leader of the Opposition back to form on his negativity about carbon pricing. There are these things called facts. The Leader of the Opposition might not like it, but there are these things called facts.

If the Leader of the Opposition is in a position to, he should outline to the Australian people which one of his statements during his campaign of fear has come true. Just name one, one that has come true. A roast, \$100. No. Whyalla wiped off the map? No. Astronomical increases in the cost of living? No. Jobs growth being completely wiped off and millions of Australians thrown out of work? No. The Leader of the Opposition is exposed as having run the most mendacious fear campaign this nation has seen against a background of being a supporter of an emissions trading scheme. What I do thank the Leader of the Opposition for is that we knew that this pretence of being positive could not last and it has come shattering to the ground with that question today. Back to form, back to the usual Mr Negative, here he is.

Vocational Education and Training

Ms VAMVAKINO (Calwell) (15:10): My question is to the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and Research and Minister for Small Business. Minister, how is the government supporting jobs in our economy by investing in skills for Australians? Why is it important for all governments to provide training opportunities for working people?

Mr BOWEN (McMahon—Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and Research and Minister for Small Business) (15:11): I thank the member for Calwell for her question and her dedication to vocational education and training, and her support for the Kangan Institute of TAFE in her part of Melbourne. Vocational education qualifications are a passport to a better job, to a higher pay packet and to a secure future for so many Australians. Skills training is, of course, vital for our economy to ensure we have the skills we need. Of course TAFE is at the front line of this. The government are introducing reforms to create a more accessible and equitable training system, a more transparent vocational education system and a more efficient VET sector that responds to the needs of students, employers, and industry. We have invested at record levels to make this happen. We will invest more than \$15 billion over the next four years in skills and training, and that compares to \$9 billion for the last four years of the Howard government.

I have been asked by the honourable member about the importance of training and about the implications of cuts. This is not a hypothetical question. We are seeing the implications of cuts to vocational education right up and down the eastern seaboard of Australia. Victoria has cut \$300 million from the TAFE system. This will see campus closures, staff redundancies and course fees increase. The New South Wales government is sacking 800 TAFE teachers and students will be hit with a nine per cent TAFE fee increase. In Queensland, 13 campuses are being closed and Premier Newman is threatening to close 25 more TAFEs. These

cuts represent a real risk to our economy and are affecting thousands of people.

There are examples in the electorate of the member for Calwell and the member for Wills, who I know are very concerned about the threat of closing 52 courses at the Kangan Institute in areas like building, hospitality and business. To use just one example: the implications for Nadine, from the Member for Holt's electorate, a mother of twins from Cranbourne North who has had all her night classes cut in a diploma for community services. She now has to make the difficult decision about whether to work or study. These are the implications of the cuts. All members of this House should oppose these cuts and members on this side of the House do. But, alas, it is not the case for all members the House. The member for North Sydney has said Campbell Neman's cuts were 'pretty reasonable' and more power to his right arm. That shows you what will happen if he gets his hands on the purse strings. He has to find the \$70 billion from somewhere and he will have vocational education and training in his sights because that is what Liberals do.

Ms GILLARD (Lalor—Prime Minister) (15:13): I ask that further questions be placed on the *Notice Paper*.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Leader of the Opposition) (15:14): Madam Speaker, I seek to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: Does the Leader of the Opposition claim to be misrepresented?

Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Leader of the Opposition) (15:14): I do, Madam Speaker. The Minister for Families and Community Services claimed in question time today that I opposed a pension increase in cabinet. This is false. The only one who has done that is the Prime Minister and we know that on the authority of the member for Griffiths.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE:

ADDITIONAL ANSWERS

Minerals Resource Rent Tax

Mr SWAN (Lilley—Deputy Prime Minister and Treasurer) (15:14): by leave—during question time I said there were 53,000 additional jobs in mining. I was incorrect; it is 67,000 additional jobs in mining. During that time, since July 2010, 380,000 jobs have been created in Australia.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Manager of Opposition Business) (15:14): Speaker, I wish to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: Does the Manager of Opposition Business claim to have been misrepresented?

Mr PYNE: Yes, twice by the Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth. The minister for schools repeated the falsehood again in his answer that I would like to sack one in seven schoolteachers. I do not actually employ any schoolteachers, so it is quite impossible to sack any of them. He also said that I do not want to debate the National School Improvement Plan in the Australian Education Bill. That is false. There is no National School Improvement Plan in the Australian Education Bill.

Tim Munro

Mr CREAN (Hotham—Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government and Minister for the Arts) (15:15): Speaker, on indulgence: yesterday I had the pleasure to congratulate Gotye for three Grammy awards. Today I want to congratulate another standout Australian musician, Tim Munro, who took home two Grammys with his Chicago-based ensemble, Eighth Blackbird. Meanwhile, Tim Munro and his recording won a Grammy for the Best Chamber Music/Small Ensemble Performance and a Grammy for the Best Contemporary Composition.

Like Gotye, Tim also received an Australia Council grant of \$7,440, in 2009, to commission a new musical work for flute, *Lost Compass*. This premiered in Chicago in 2011.

This is another example of how investments in the arts do produce important dividends for this country. Tim and his ensemble, Eighth Blackbird, also play regularly in Australian performances and have included a collaboration with students of the Australian National Academy of Music, ANAM.

Tim himself studied at ANAM in the early stages of his career. Tim is also giving back to emerging Australian artists through his participation as an international music mentor with the Australia Council's JUMP program. I congratulate Tim Munro for his great achievement and also for his contribution to Australian music.

BILLS

Marine Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessel) National Law Amendment Bill 2013

Reference to Federation Chamber

Mr FITZGIBBON (Hunter—Chief Government Whip) (15:17): by leave—I move:

That the Marine Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessel) National Law Amendment Bill 2013 be referred to the Federation Chamber for further consideration.

Question agreed to.