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THE REYNOLDS REPORT

FEBRUARY 2015

Getting on with the job of good government

THE year is well underway with the latest round of Senate estimates starting yesterday. Despite a challenging start to 2015 for the Government, the Coalition team remains focused on tackling important national and state issues. We are working hard to put in place the long-term structural reform necessary to grow and diversify our economy and to fix Labor's legacy of debt and deficit disaster. Although the budget is under pressure, economic and employment signals are increasingly positive. The economy is growing at a rate of 2.7 per cent annually, the number of job advertisements climbed 13.6 per cent in 2014 and an addition 213,000 jobs were created.

The new Senate has certainly presented challenges for the Government, blocking almost $30 billion in essential budget reforms savings, but it's important to recognise how much progress the Coalition has already delivered. Key government achievements

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include:

- Scrapped the mining tax;

- Stopped the boats;

- Delivered a $50 billion infrastructure package

- Major projects worth $1 trillion have been given environmental approval; and

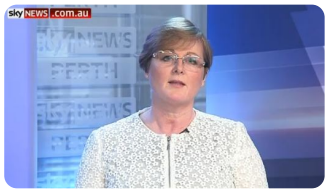
- Three free trade agreements delivered.

Committee work has kept the early part of 2015 exceptionally busy, particularly my involvement in a number issues ranging from younger Australians in aged care to agricultural levies. I am looking forward to planned visits out and about right across WA over the next few months.

Until next time,

Younger Australians in aged care

UPON entering the Senate last year I made it my mission to draw national attention to the plight of more than 6000 younger Australians living in aged care. Last November, I sponsored a Senate inquiry into the adequacy of existing residential care arrangements for younger Australians with physical, mental and intellectual disabilities. Nursing homes are no place for a young person. I recently met with two remarkable individuals, Kirby Littley and Kirrily Hayward in Geelong. I was grateful to hear the insights and personal experiences of both women, who have each made submissions to the Senate inquiry. The inquiry has held public hearings in Perth and Sydney last week. In Perth the committee heard heart wrenching testimony from some of the 530 younger Western Australians living in nursing homes. Additional hearings are scheduled for Melbourne and



In the media:

PM Agenda Sky News with Laura Jayes

Wake Up Australia 2GB Sydney with Michael McLaren

Fairfax Media article '18 and in aged care, they are too young to be forgotten' by Latika Bourke.

Darwin next month. While each testimony was unique, the messages conveyed were powerful and consistent. It is important we as a society do all we can to ensure young people with disabilities have access to the appropriate care, support and services required to match their needs.

Research, development and marketing levies in the Agricultural Sector

LAST year I co-sponsored a Senate inquiry into compulsory marketing and research levies in the agricultural sector through the Senate Standing Committee on Rural Regional Affairs and Transport. Agricultural Levies are a compulsory payment contributed by primary producers to fund marketing and research and development organisations. I initiated the inquiry after hearing the concerns of WA growers about the perceived lack of accountability and transparency in the process. It is important growers across all commodities have their say about how agricultural levies are collected and spent, and it's vital industry research, development and marketing bodies are accountable to both growers and the tax payer. The Committee heard consistent evidence during hearings in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra as to the flaws in the current systems and their impacts on growers. The latest hearing was held in Perth last week which reinforced systemic governance and accountability issues which need to be addressed in the sector.

Dame Elizabeth Couchman Scholarship

I WAS honoured to present the 2014 Dame Elizabeth Couchman Scholarship on behalf of the Victorian Liberal Women's Council this month. It was a delight to give my perspective on gender equality to such an inspiration group of women. Congratulations to Dr Mimmie Watts on being named award recipient. The prestigious Dame Elizabeth Couchman award celebrates the great tradition of political participation and contribution of Liberal women to the Australian political landscape. The scholarship also provides assistance for women to develop leadership opportunities and to undertake research and study towards the benefit of the Liberal party and women. Dr Watts will use the scholarship to identify, engage and support women from multicultural backgrounds to ensure they become part of the political voice in Australia through the Liberal Party. In my address, I called on the Liberal Party in our 70th anniversary year, to take fresh inspiration from Dame Elizabeth's leadership, to refocus ourselves on the role and contributions of women in our party. Dame Elizabeth was Sir Robert Menzies' adviser and confident. Her skills of oratory, persuasion and leadership were such that she would have excelled at any point in Australian political history.

***"Not all wisdom resides under the hats of men"* - Dame Elizabeth Couchman**

Intework Visit

IT was a humbling visit to Intework's Balcatta office last month which set the scene for my work on the NDIS committee. Intework is a Western Australian organisation helping people with disabilities to achieve their potential and participate in their communities. I enjoyed meeting with many of Intework's inspirational assisted employees during the visit. It was also great to catch up with Intework CEO Fiona Beermier and her fabulous team. I look forward to working with Intework throughout this year. You can find out more about Intework here.

Delivering real outcomes

The Prime Minister gave a major address to the National Press Club in Canberra, where he set forth the Government's key priorities for 2015. You can read his speech here.

This week the Government announced a raft of new counter terrorism measures following the release of the Review of Australia's Counter-Terrorism Machinery. The review found Australia has entered a new, long-term era of heightened terrorism threat, with a more significant 'home grown' element. The new measures will include the appointment of a new National Counter Terrorism Coordinator, the development of a new national counter-terrorism strategy to counter violent extremism and build community cohesion, and a simpler and clearer Public Alert system for terrorism.

The Abbott Coalition successfully secured another important Budget saving with the passage of amendment to the Tax Laws Amendment (Research and Development) Bill 2013 through the Senate. This demonstrates that although the challenges in the Senate are real, the Government is getting on with business and can work constructively with the Senate to achieve important outcomes.

The government improved the scrutiny of foreign land purchases on agricultural land by reducing the screening threshold from $252 million to $15 million; these changes will take effect from March 1 this year. The Government also revealed its plans to establish a foreign ownership register of agricultural land to strengthen reporting requirements and provide a transparent picture of foreign investment.

Senate estimates are underway this week, you can follow proceedings here.

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