**Ideas and Society Program**

**What Will the Abbott Government Do?**

**Wednesday 2 October 2013**

**Robert Manne**

I'm Robert Manne and I convene Ideas and Society. Our aim is to discuss critical Australian and world questions and to give them greater depth than happens in the media but also to give them more general resonance than happens often in particular departments of universities. I thought it would be a good idea to think about what the next three years are going to be like. I then had a sort of vision of my dream team of people in policy areas that I most admire and luckily, three people of my dream team have arrived today in the areas that I think are at least amongst the three most important policy areas – climate change, asylum seeker policy and the economy.

In the age of Google, I don’t believe in long introductions. You can all do that, you can all find out about the speakers. So I want to say something slightly less formal about all three. We’re going to have the talks in alphabetical order of the names, so first will be John Connor, who’s been a really important voice as the CEO of the Climate Institute, which in the last few years has made I think a very big difference to the discussion, and I think John has done fantastic work in the Institute, but also in public, in the media, in often being the face that puts the case about what’s happening. I discovered actually, because I did my Googling, I discovered something that I didn’t know before that John is on the ... I don’t know what it’s called, but the body of the AYCC, the Australian Youth Climate Coalition, for which I have a particular affection. My daughter is one of the directors of it, so ...

The second speaker will be Mary Crock, who’s been an extremely important and scholarly and impassioned voice in the area of asylum seeker policy. Mary is the Professor of Law at the University of Sydney and has written wonderfully in the area of asylum seeker policy for very many years and again I discovered something by Googling that I didn’t know, that Mary established the Refugee Immigration Legal Centre which my nephew is in charge of, so I'm beginning to feel that a terrible act of family favouritism is going on. But it was entirely accidental but I'm anyhow very pleased that Mary’s come down from Sydney for today.

Finally, John Daley who I met earlier this year, who’s running I think something extremely rare in Australia, which is a truly independent think tank, not as it were covertly supporting one or another ideology but rather trying to think through public policy freshly. John, partly a very distinguished academic career in his early days, has been involved in business with ANZ, some area of stockmarket business, has studied in law at a very high level and is an independent and superbly eloquent economist and runs the Grattan Institute which is at Melbourne University and which I think is going to, and has already made a very big difference in the idea of think tanks in Australia.

So I'm not going to say any more but if you could welcome our three speakers.

**John Connor**

Thank you very much Robert. Yes, I'm the governator, one of the governators of the Australian Youth Climate Coalition, which has an ominous ring to someone called John Connor. I'll let you work that out, Terminator movies is a hint.

Okay, so thank you very much for the invitation to come here and thank you all for coming. I've been asked to talk about the climate change policies of the Coalition, what they’re likely to do. What are some of the consequences for Australia and our international role, and if I've got time I want to just reflect a bit on some lessons from the experience of the last few years and also what can be done.

For those of you who don’t know, the Climate Institute is an independent think tank and research organisation. We’re primarily funded privately. We’ve got a vision for a resilient Australia that’s prospering in a zero carbon global economy but also doing its full and fair share in the international solutions.

For the election, we set three tests for policies of all the parties, the first of which was cutting pollution, having the ability to cut our emissions of 2000 levels by 2020 by at least 25%, having the ability to go deeper, faster after that – 60% by 2030, a pathway we think is a fair share towards avoiding two degrees warming, to ratify the Kyoto International Agreement as part of participation in the international solutions and including with that, having some contributions both from public but also innovative private sources towards the financing of developing countries, the poorest of those, which is a crucial part of the global agreement which is going to be part of the global solution, and I'll come back to some of the details on that later.

The second test was to accelerate low carbon investment, and in that, having a very clear signal of a carbon price or a penalty to help put responsibility on companies for the emissions they create, but also to drive sustained decarbonisation. To have policy stability in renewable energy and in particular we want to keep at least the legislated target which is the 41,000 gigawatt hours for renewables. There’s been a lot of uncertainty in the renewables sector. We’re keen for that which has actually led to a bit of investment strike, or certainly investment stall, to end.

There’s been not enough focus on energy efficiency in some of the debate of late, and so we are ... I was involved in various groups, including a Prime Minister’s Task Group on Energy Efficiency, but energy productivity, energy efficiency, is something which has been underdone and we’re keen for a step change there. It’s an area ... Obama’s talked about doubling energy productivity by 2030. We were talking about having a 30% improvement by 2020, off 2010 levels, which is roughly on that same path. Energy and carbon productivity are the kind of poor cousins in the productivity debate, but I actually think they’re very important members of the family when you come to serious talks about productivity in the 21st century.

Finally, we wanted to focus on preparing for impacts, and this is the first time in an election analysis and indicators that we’ve done, this one, partly because there’s been a bit of uneasiness about talking about adaptation and whether it sort of gets you away from the main game. The problem is now, we are faced with unavoidable impacts, and so the challenge is to manage the unavoidable while we also try to avoid the unmanageable. And in particular we want to see people face up to the risks, face up to the very likely risks that are there and we have the world’s countries agreeing that we need to avoid two degrees warming. Their commitments get us to four degrees warming at best, and so we think in applying risk management, like you might do in workplace health and safety, just to mind concentrating on the risks, that there should be clear scenarios there for government approvals in funding and planning and other infrastructure, of what does two and four degrees scenarios mean for the infrastructure and for the other investments there.

So they’re the three tests that we put out there more broadly, and on our website we’ve got a star rating that we had for each of the various parties. We saw the government get about two and a half stars, the Coalition went up from one to one and a half stars – this is out of five – and so generally pretty poor performance.

The other key thing that we did and do in elections past is I think all the pollutometer. You’re familiar with the spinometer that happens around election times. We did a pollutometer and did this analysis with Monash University and Sinclair Knight Merz about the actual abatement reduction potential of the parties and in particular on the Coalition policies. I'll come back to the results of that shortly , because it’s part of what I've been asked to talk about.

But what is the climate policy of the now Abbott government? One of the problems is that actually there’s no formal climate policy that was actually announced during the election campaign and quietly during the course of the campaign, the 2010 Direct Action Plan was actually taken off the web. However, it still is to form the basis of the policies to which Greg Hunt and the government spoke, and so there are some key elements of that. They’re about to go into a consultation phase. There may be a directions paper released as early as next week. They have some pretty extraordinary timelines. If they think they can get stuff up and running by 1 July 2014, but the guts of their policy is centred around an emissions reduction fund and this is about 1.55 billion over three years. Still a little bit unclear about how long it goes for the Direct Action Plan in 2010, it talked about a 10 billion fund, which is a voluntary scheme they’ve talked about. They tried to characterise that as a market-based because ... and a reverse auction. There’s been some improvement in the rules that Greg Hunt has spoken to how that might be administered, but we’re still to see the full details of that, but it is in no way the requirement upon polluters to take responsibility – it’s a voluntary-based scheme to those who may wish to contribute.

They had a large element of their potential reductions relating to soil carbon in the scheme when it was launched in 2010. There’s been a broadening of the talk about that – a broader green carbon and again we need to have a look at that. Soil carbon has great potential but still it’s a very difficult thing to measure and measure with improvements and to be clear that it’s sustainable. And whilst it is enabled to be now under changes under international negotiations, it’s now able to be picked up and recognised under things like the Kyoto Protocol. We still haven’t got approved methodology here.

As I said, there’s a reverse auction process. They set that budget constraint there and Tony Abbott famously said that they won’t spend a cent more, but still think that they can get to that target, and so we have a budget constraint, not an emissions constraint, which is what we do have when we have an emissions trading scheme. A lot of focus has been on the fact that we’ve got a carbon price, but having a trading scheme also puts a limit, not just a price on pollution, and for us this is actually one of the big achievements because you can actually be clear about the outcomes from the atmosphere’s perspective. So, it was important and there was actually a default declining cap of 12 million tons a year, that’s in the current legislation. These are important in our view.

In terms of their emissions reduction fund, they have said they want to buy it all domestically, and that’s a key element of their policy and also a key constraint financially.

Another element of which they’ve talked is what they call a baseline approach so that there would be a carbon penalty, a carbon price actually there because there would be a baseline approach where companies that do worse than a business-as-usual would face some sort of a penalty. Now there are various schemes around the world that have tried this sort of baseline and credit type approach and there are problems, it’s very complex to administer and there’s been some mixed results worldwide. However that’s part of their policy. Quite how the baselines are set, how they will be ... whether they might decline over the future, the level of the penalty, or these things are still unknown and to be determined.

They do talk about supporting the 20% renewable energy target but the 20% renewable energy target legislation had that 41,000 gigawatt hours in legislation. They’ve been a bit cagey about that and in particular supporting a review early next year, which is in the legislation, in their defence, but many have tried to say should be removed, including ourselves, because we just had a review that ended at the end of last year and that’s driving uncertainty because we’re not quite clear what the government policy will be in the process.

They have some other ancillary policies including a million solar rooves, which is probably going to get achieved just by itself, but they talk about a low income support package to enable that. Good policy but also not going to drive a massive amount of abatement.

Two other things I just wanted to raise in terms of the Coalition. It’s in our view important to hold them to their official statements that they do accept the science. I had some involvement in getting this re-asked of Tony Abbott in the first of the leader debates, and he reaffirmed that they believe now as we did back in 2007, that climate change is real, that humanity does make a contribution and that you need a strong and effective policy to deal with it. And in our view that’s now the test – what’s strong and effective policy and absolutely must be able to get up to 25%. And that’s actually important because hidden in the debate and often ignored by many, is that both the parties actually have a commitment to reduce emissions by 5 to 25 % by 2020 – the focus has just been under 5, which is unconditional targets.

The conditions for that, in our view, are getting to 25% are part of a global agreement that’s going to be quite significant and we’ve continued to do work and analysis of where we’re up to with that. It looks like about 10 to 15% on the conditions that are there. The Climate Change Authority, an independent body set up under the laws is going to be giving some views on that in actually, next month, and so I think that’s important to bear in mind, but also critically important that that is a commitment made here and internationally. Greg Hunt’s made it clear both before and after the election, that’s still the case, and he reaffirmed that in yesterday’s *Financial Review* so I think people need to hold them to that 25% more than they do.

They also do support the two degrees as being in our national interest. Again, not very well explored and stuff that we all need to drive out more, and of course last week’s IPCC report has just drawn out how challenging that is to get to that. It is still possible, but the consequences for Australia, let alone the rest of the world, are very significant. We’ve done, as others have done, in terms of the impacts for Australia of getting beyond two degrees. There’s four to five times increases in extreme bushfire weather danger. We’ve potentially become a net importer of wheat. Wheat is up to 50% of irrigated agriculture in the Murray Darling Basin, just to name a few of the impacts. So holding them to that is important.

What are they likely to do with those policies? Well, look, we reviewed a range of other reviews, there’s plenty of other reviews out there, trying to understand the Coalition’s policy. There’s no other independent or publicly available review which shows that they can achieve even the 5% reductions, let alone up to 25%. And if you look at experience around the world, from Alberta, in New South Wales, based on a credit scheme, to the other funding experiences including the Howard government’s greenhouse gas abatement program, there are real challenges in getting such significant reductions.

In the pollutometer analysis that we did with Monash Uni, we tried a number of scenarios to actually try applying different baselines, having a higher renewable energy target and the like, and in a number of assumptions we were very generous in fact, to the Coalition, but we couldn’t do any better than 8 to 10% above 2000 levels, let alone the 5% below. So if they are serious about getting to that 5% or even to the 25%, and only doing that through extra purchase of domestic reductions, then that would be 4 billion or 15 billion dollars extra hit on the budget to get there. Much cheaper if you get international permits, by the way.

Importantly, an important finding with that as well, because this is something that the Coalition is making a very big deal about, you know, the former government’s policies would still see domestic emissions rising, well, that’s true, because there would still be enabling international offsets, international reductions, but and as I said, the atmosphere doesn’t actually mind where those reductions come from, but in our analysis actually the former government’s policies actually drove 40% more reductions on domestic emissions off the baseline levels. So they still have a great deal to go before the government ... before they can convince people in reality that they’re doing more domestically.

The other elements ... I probably won’t go into great detail in the time, but one element of which was there is actually an impact on the renewable energy target. Having the carbon price there is actually important because it does ... it supports the renewable energy target, and taking that away actually makes it more attractive for companies to pay a penalty that’s underneath the renewable energy scheme, rather than actually make the investment. So it turns the renewable energy legislation into a penalty machine rather than an investment machine, which is a problem. And if, and for the target projections, if other countries followed our path, our assessment was, you’d have 4½ to 6½ degrees warming under the Coalition’s policy by 2100, and under the ALP was 2 to 4½ degrees – pretty sobering stuff.

So, the consequences then for Australia, one of the core challenges there for the Coalition, is that we will see increasing emissions unless there are significant changes. There’s a lack of scalability in the funds. Abbott said that there won’t be any extra money for example. It is a policy that ends at 2020, which kind of ends at the beginning because there’s a multi-decadal challenge to keep driving emissions down. And the other thing that we’re worried about is that it risks undermining what’s been more constructive climate diplomacy and something I'll come back to in a moment.

Our key recommendations out of our analysis was that the government needs to reveal before repeal. It needs to reveal the details of its policies and how it can achieve the reductions that the current policies can actually do. They’re not perfect, the current policies, but they are credible, in achieving the 25% reductions. They have talked about proper process in terms of regulations and including a scrutiny of regulatory impact statements. So we want them to put the Direct Action and the ERF, the Emissions Reduction Fund, under the same one and actually look, as do other countries, and conservative countries like Canada and the US, start to include things like the social cost of carbon into that analysis. Do away with renewable energy target review in 2014, and maintain the independent role of the Climate Change Authority, and I'm pleased that at least there’s no indication that they’re going to tamper with the pathway and actions of the Climate Change Authority until the legislation ... they do want to repeal it, which I hope they rethink, but on the timelines we’ll still get the materials and analysis from the Climate Change Authority of its final recommendations in February because it’s unlikely the ALP or the Greens will support repeal.

If the laws are repealed and then in our view they’re going to need, and particularly if there’s no more money, then they’re going to need the chuck the regulatory kitchen sink at the issue and in a higher cost way deal with the challenge. The Coalition people do like to say that President Obama has a similar direct action plan. Well, he’s got a very high regulation path so if they’re going to get similar, it’s going to be more of that is going to be necessary and of course he does back carbon markets, it’s just that his Congress, which makes even our parliament look interesting, look tame, is not backing such a carbon market. But there are things they are going to need to look at, a much more vigorous approach to the baseline credit scheme, much stronger renewable energy targets, and driving like 50% renewables by 2030. Emissions performance standards for power stations, and including gas as well as coal and a much stronger focus on energy productivity with vehicle emission standards, energy saving initiatives made national and some even more vigorous approach in terms of appliances and performance standards there. So a high regulation approach is going to be necessary if they’re going to be credible.

In terms of our international consequences, we would of course be the first country in the world to dismantle a carbon market. It is the reality when you look outside the fishbowl of Australian politics which have ignored these things that we are seeing expanding activity in a range of countries looking at carbon pricing and carbon markets. And seven, and indeed nine and perhaps ten emerging emission trading pilot schemes in China, and they are actively talking of moving to a national scheme. South Korea is looking at one, there are countries from Mexico to Chile and others also looking at these schemes as a more cost-effective way of achieving some of the reductions, and you have countries like South Africa and others looking at the carbon pricing, even the more standard carbon tax form. But we would be the first country to dismantle a carbon market.

We’re also, if we don’t have a policy set that has credibility internationally in achieving the reductions, threaten what’s been a more constructive climate diplomacy, and that matters. What Australia does, matters, in terms of the climate negotiations. So we are as a high carbon and the highest per capita country, important in the scheme of things but we’re also very effective negotiators and an effective middle power, for good and bad in the past. And in the climate negotiations, we chair what’s called the Umbrella Group which is a group of the US, Canada, France, sorry, Japan, Russia, a very important negotiating bloc. We don’t control what everyone says obviously, but we’re a key part of that. But we’ve also been influential in creating new groups. There’s the Catagena group which is actually a group of countries which are being moderate and being progressive in action around the sort of ... there’s a fascinating factoring going on of negotiating blocs internationally, and this has been a part of that, a group of developing and developed countries which we’ve been instrumental in driving forward.

It is important of course that for people to understand that those global negotiations actually, they’re tracking away okay. One of the great characterisations is that Copenhagen was a complete failure. Now it wasn’t what we hoped it to be, but it certainly wasn’t the failure that others pointed it out to be. The Accord that was bashed out in the corridors of Copenhagen has actually been implemented into the architecture which has actually got some stronger commitments. We saw in Durban a couple of years ago, a very important breakthrough in terms of countries agreeing to a single agreement with all emitters signing up with outcomes and there’s been steady but not perfect progress from that. There’s a timeline for 2015 in Paris for a next agreement to be realised with a bunch of key milestones happening and in particular through next year that can get ... have progress there.

We’re not going to see what we’d hoped for, what many of us had hoped for, as a really clear top-down approach out of Copenhagen, but we’re also not going to see some of the weak bottom-up ... countries just making commitments without accountability. We’re going to see some sort of hybrid of the two of those, with hopefully some clear accounting rules and some consequences for bad performance, and it is important in that context that people make the sort of global negotiations a proxy for action. At the end of the day, it is nations taking action and we do live in a world of nation states and so it’s actually about how do we best harness the action that is happening and boost that to achieve the goals that we need, and in particular our national interest in avoiding two degrees warming.

So, let me just, quickly if I can, I've got a couple of minutes left just to talk about some of the lessons and then what to do.

I think what’s important, we’ve learnt through bitter experience of this and it was kind of ... I kind of kicked the door as I heard Julia Gillard apologising for recognising that it was a mistake to concede that this was a carbon tax, because the moment she did concede that, we got into not only the imagery and negativity around tax itself, but of course that breach of mandate and breach of trust completely enveloped the debate as she acknowledged last night. But I do think, reflecting on this experience, that people who want action on carbon and climate, we’re going to need to rest it on three key pillars. We actually still need to talk about pollution and pollution limits and the associated environment impacts. But we’ve also got to talk about a new prosperity. We’ve got to talk about the opportunities that are there in taking action and that are clearly there in the 21st century and others chasing it, but we need to have a debate about prosperity and their indicators, clearly just a straight material based one is not going to be relevant – we’re going to need to broaden that out into broader concepts of welfare and abundance, which aren’t necessarily material or consumption based, and thirdly, we’re going to have to talk more about the self-interest in managing the risk. That’s at the personal level, bringing it back to the sort of things like food prices and insurance premiums, health, but also at the national level, remembering again that it’s national – it’s the collective national action that we need to be facilitating, so talking about the national interest in action, economic stability, infrastructure impacts, security, internal and external, which is very close to a segue to Mary, because if you want to see threatened borders and people on the move, then climate change is going to drive millions upon millions to be displaced and threatening these things.

Finally, what to do? I describe myself as a professional optimist. It’s very important that you don’t stay in the funk about these things. I think we’re going to need to go into a period of respecting diversity of approaches, to be innovative, to engage, but also not just to slip into ghettoes, to be bold, be creative, but to take an out and communicate in places which are obviously important, the eastern Melbournes, the western Sydneys, the Brisbanes electorally as well. I think it’s very important that we don’t roll over on the carbon laws. Or hide from carbon generally. There’s a bit of a view that you know, maybe we should just talk about renewables and energy efficiency. I think we need to talk about carbon so we need to keep engaging with that.

I've been pleased that the ALP’s not moving away from its legacy in this regard, but we do want to return to the bi-partisan situation where we had the Coalition recognising that this is an important and appropriate way forward. So they’ve really got to think about this thing, about their approach. I think 2014 offers up a whole range of opportunities which are going to re-cast this debate as we shatter the lens of the last couple of years – a focus around the debate. I mean, do the Coalition really want their climate policy for the next five or ten years be stamped with, authorised by Clive Palmer? Because that’s what they’re going to have to have, to get that through the Senate. Business are going to be starting to arc up and they already are, BHP quietly put out its Sustainability Report, reaffirming its support for carbon pricing is just one example. There are many businesses out there backing that.

We need to face up ... there’s going to be a whole range of international realities and meetings throughout next year which the government can’t hide from as well.

I do think we need to look at a focus on renewables, their possibilities and it’s important that there are place-based campaigns. I think it’s been surprising the work on CSG and coal that’s been driving some great action but which is part of a spectrum of actions. We do work around superannuation, which I think is a very exciting and profound area. I won’t go into great detail, but enabling people to be citizen investors and wake up to the power that they have with their super funds I think is a truly exciting area. We have this areyouthevitalfew.org as a way in which we can help you facilitate and engage with your superannuation fund to not only open questions about divestment, but actually have a look at how much emissions they have in their portfolio, and investments in low carbon solutions.

I think there are plenty of reasons to be pessimistic but there are some really friendly fundamentals out there as well. The broader technology costs are plummeting. We are seeing investors slowly waking up to the costs of action, Superstorm Sandy while it was important in that. It’s not entirely like 2005. We do have a low carbon political economy of greater strength than we’ve had previously and I think political economy is important, not just targets. We have banks, industrial conglomerates, property developers, a range of other ... and energy firms who are talking about the importance of action as well. We need to encourage them to keep speaking forward as well.

I'd better leave it there, but thank you very much.

**Mary Crock**

Well, thank you very much Robert, for the introduction that you gave us and for the invitation to come down here. It’s always delightful to come back to my home city from up north.

I have indeed been working with asylum seekers for many, many years now, probably since 1985. What I want to do today is give you some background on where we are at the moment. I'm going to run through what I see as the main planks of the Opposition, sorry, the government, the new government’s policy and then I'm going to try to talk to you a bit about what I think they can do and what we should be doing.

Now, I want to start by saying that within the socio-political academy, Australia is known as a settler society, a settler country. And this term acknowledges the fact that immigration has played a critical role in our formation and development as a country. What’s unusual about the Australian case though I think is that our experience of immigration has been very controlled and very planned, and our experience of irregular migration and of forced migration, notwithstanding the fact that we brought in nearly ... over 700,000 refugees as settlers into the country, we haven’t experienced asylum and forced migration, until recently. But this has changed. So, we start from this fundamental belief in our society that immigration is something that can be controlled and should be controlled.

Now, I've worked with asylum seekers for many years. I want to say at the outset that the phenomenon that we’re seeing at the moment of irregular maritime arrival, unauthorised maritime arrival, is something that any government should be concerned about and should be doing something about. Why? Because for no other reason, it is extremely dangerous to travel to Australia using those means and we’re seeing a great number of people dying in their attempt to come to the country. I think what has changed in recent years, and if you’re interested in the figures and the numbers, today’s *Sydney Morning Herald* has an article by Conrad Walters and others that actually compiles a really good list of all the boat arrivals that we’ve had since ... he goes back to 1999. The problem I think that we face is that rather than being something that is a concern to the country, we have seen irregular maritime arrival become a political plaything, and we’ve seen a gulf open between some of the parties, not so much between the major parties in some ways, but it’s become a bit of a political football and it’s become more importantly, a device to try and mess with our minds, and I think this is the biggest problem we have in Australia and in fact, I'd like to say that I think the greatest step forward that we’ve made is to have a government now who’s not in opposition so that they actually have to start doing something about it, rather than being part of the problem in terms of beating up the fact that Australia has open borders and so on.

So, we have seen boats come carrying asylum seekers come to this country, really only since about 1989 in any numbers at all. We had a very small number who came after the Vietnam War but it was really only at the end of the 1980s that we first started to get asylum seekers coming by boat without authorisation. That was a time we had a Labor Party in power at the time, where we saw the first real deterrent measures being introduced, policy measures aimed to try to dissuade people from getting on boats. That’s when we saw mandatory detention introduced. It really wasn’t until a decade later, however, at the end of the 1990s, that we saw a large number of people starting to come to Australia by boat, to claim asylum, and those were the years when we had a Coalition government in power that we saw the introduction of what has become known as the Pacific Solution Mark I, where we saw mandatory detention had continued all the way through, but instead of just locking people up, we turned to stopping the boats – interdicting the boats and sending people off to foreign countries, to Nauru, and to Papua New Guinea. We saw the introduction of temporary protection visas and a suite of measures which, from a legal point of view, broke completely new ground by creating a fictitious space outside Australia where people could arrive in Australia, but it would not be regarded as Australia for immigration purposes. They talked about that as the excision, excising of all the islands to the north of Australia for the migration zone.

Now, you’ll be well aware that with the change of government in 2007, many of those measures were dropped in the sense that we saw the closure of Nauru and Manus Island, Manus Island was closed by the Coalition before the change of government, but we saw the dropping of the temporary protection visas that really marked the period where the commission moved into opposition and started playing with the idea, we moved away I think from what went before when we had much more of a single policy if you like. I know there were differences between the political parties, but the issue of irregular boat arrivals wasn’t used as a political device to divide the parties.

Now, you know, the story about what’s happened since 2007, if you have a look at the data that was published today, you’ll see that the boats have ... yes, they were stopped around about 2002 through 2005 and we can talk perhaps maybe in the question time about how that was achieved. What I want to put to you today is that I don’t think that any single policy or collection of policies, can explain what happened over those years. And for that reason, the Opposition, now government’s rhetoric around what Labor did, I don’t believe is one that we should accept. In other words, I don’t think that the simple change of policy in 2007 explains what has happened since that time.

We have seen a steady rise in the number of irregular maritime arrivals since that time. In 2008 there were only 161, but this year, up until now, we are looking at 20,376 arrivals. Since the change of government, we’ve had 8 boats arriving, with 360 passengers. They’ve been 56 people who have lost their lives at sea. They reckon at the moment that it’s running at about 57.14 boats every 100 days. Okay? So we are having more boats arrive than at any other time in history. There’s been a drop since the change of government but nevertheless the boats aren’t stopping and I put it to you that they’re not likely to stop in the short term. What we do have at the moment is an extremely complex legal situation that there are in fact now six categories of people who claim asylum in Australia and this is what blows my mind when I think about this, but the people who come by plane, they are given the whole range of structures that have been set up to deal with the issue of claiming asylum, claiming refugee status in Australia. So they get access to lawyers, they get an oral hearing by the Department of Immigration, they get a right to appeal, they can go to the courts to argue their cases. We’ve had on average about 6 to 7,000 people coming by plane each year in recent times. What is different about more recent boat arrivals is that they are now outstripping the plane arrivals, but the truth of the matter is, we’ve always had a lot of people in recent years coming by plane to seek protection in this country. But we don’t respond to them in anything like the way we respond to people who come by boat.

Okay. Let me take you to the boat arrivals. You have, if I may I'll call them UMAs, unauthorised maritime arrivals, so you come by boat, came by boat before the 13th of August 2012, you were released into the community on visas that don’t give you any rights at all. In fact you can’t even apply for another visa. However, they are eligible for access to legal assistance, they get the oral hearing that you can get access to the tribunals. After the 13th of August 2012, the same people arriving on the boats, are subject to what’s known as the ‘no advantage’ test, have no access to work rights, judicial review nominally, or to tribunal review. They are also liable to be removed to Nauru or to Manus Island in Papua New Guinea. Now, depending on which of those two places you go to, you get a totally different system as well, because both of those countries have their own independent laws and Nauru is in fact ahead of Manus Island in terms of actually setting up laws to process you. Both people are looking at a five year stay in those places before they would be resettled back into Australia. From the 13th of August 2012, for those who are not sent to those places, and you’ll be aware that both of them have a capacity of between 1 and 2,000 places. We’re looking at the moment at 20,000 for this year. Last year’s arrivals were 17,603. Everybody knows that not all of those people can be sent offshore to these places. So those people face what’s known as the ‘no advantage’ test introduced by the previous government. That means no right to work, actually who knows what it means? Nobody knows what it’s meant, but it meant that you would be released into the community to wait, to wait for goodness knows what.

Those who arrived after the 13th of July of this year, they are subject to regional resettlement. We’re told that that means that they could be sent to Nauru or to Manus Island but they would never be resettled in Australia. Okay. So the change of government occurs in September. The first thing that we’re told is that everything is renamed. A lot of interesting things are happening by the way. The Department of Immigration has become the Department of Immigration and Border Protection. Yes. Operation Sovereign Borders is now in place and we’re led by the Chief of Army Angus Campbell, which involves having one military officer giving orders to the navy to turn back boats where safe to do so. We are also told that all the policies that are currently in place are to remain, in terms of offshore processing. In addition however, there’s to be a presumption against refugee status for people who arrive on boats without identity papers, or where they have ... asylum seekers have deliberately discarded their identity documentation. They are to be denied ‘the benefit of the doubt’ when determining refugee status. Temporary protection visas are to be re-introduced. What I would say to you here is that in fact, with the exception of the rhetoric, and these assertions about denial of benefit of the doubt, most of the measures that the Opposition, the government when in opposition, announces as their policies, in fact have already been put in place. The so called no advantage test, the release of people on what are known as temporary safe haven visas into the community, has had the effect for the last two years of placing people on temporary protection visas, in the sense that they’re not being sent home, but neither are they being allowed to integrate into the community. In some ways, and this might be a bit controversial to say, for those who know me, I think that the re-introduction of temporary protection visas has a lot to recommend for it, if you’re starting from that premise, because at least people will know where they stand.

Yes, under Labor, people who were recognised as refugees were given permanent residency straight away. My view is that’s to be preferred if you want people to become part of the community and to go ahead and build their lives. On the other hand, there is some evidence of people who are recognised as refugees immediately going back to Pakistan and not engaging properly with Australia too. So, this is a very difficult area of policy and it’s not black and white in terms of what ... how you should be treating people.

Other planks of the current government’s policy is that they would remove appeal and judicial review structures and entitlements. Well, as a lawyer, I can tell you, you can take away appeal rights to the tribunals. I put it to you however, that that’s not a very sensible thing to do, because tribunals actually give you a venue where people can go and argue their case and you can look at the merits of the case and really determine what their stories are. If you take that away, and then say, oh, they’ve got no right to judicial review, you go to the courts as well, you can do that with the lower courts. You can take away the right to seek judicial review in the Federal Court but our Constitution prevents us from taking away all judicial rights in the High Court. If you end up with a scenario where people have got no merits review and they can only go to the High Court, what we will have is a scenario that we had in 2001, when people were not able to get access to the Federal Court, they all went to the High Court. We had a backlog of immigration cases of 5,000 in 2001. If we do that, you end up ... you put the whole judicial system in Australia at risk, or, conversely, you just give on a platter, asylum seekers who fail, five years plus because of the time it would take to go through. Our High Court at the moment hears between 50 and 70 cases a year. You do the math on that. So you can’t remove judicial review. Sorry Mr Brandis, it’s just not going to happen. And if that’s the case, then this policy really is not particularly well thought through.

What I think is going to be tough for a lot of people is that the current policy seems to be that the government will be abolishing the Legal Aid scheme that ran for asylum seekers, known as the IAAS scheme, the Immigration Advice and Assistance Scheme. That will cripple the organisations like the Refugee and Immigration Centre will have to completely re-think the way that they are funded. And of course, the access to people who are taken overseas I think will be very similar to how it was in 2001. They’ll close down those centres so that people are not able to get access to people in PNG or Nauru. Detention centres – detention I think has been a common features of both of the major parties. It’s unlikely to change. We are told however that the plans, Labor plans to create a new detention centre at Singleton, New South Wales, has been canned with a saving of $56 million. I think that’s to be applauded, although they say that money will be redirected to offshore processing, to spend more money on Nauru and Christmas Island. I

Interesting things happening in the settlement area as well. These are the policies around what happens to people who are accepted as refugees, or brought into the countries as refugees through our managed offshore programs. Instead of all of that being done within the Department of Immigration, there is now a move to mainstream settlement services, so that instead of being handled within special unique programs governed by the Immigration Department, that will go into the mainstream housing and settlement services. Now in some ways I think that’s got a lot to recommend it too. What I'm afraid of however is that you may end up with a very fragmented services, which is what’s happened in America and in the UK. In all of these policy areas, what I find really fascinating is the extent to which governments around the world are talking to each other and adopting each other’s policies, and often we academics are not doing the same thing. We’re not talking to each other in other countries, and neither indeed are the governments talking to the academics in order to gain our insights and critiques of what they’re doing.

Okay. So, the upshot is that in many respects it’s a continuation of the policies that we’ve seen under Labor. The difference, and I think the major difference, is that we’re likely now to have an Opposition that’s not nearly as virulent as the Opposition that we have had, and as I said at the outset, I think that’s to be really welcomed, because as long as you have an Opposition standing up waving placards, driving a bus around for goodness sake, with a placard on the back showing how many boats are arriving, that has got to be part of the problem.

Why? Because, asylum seekers today are moving in greater numbers than ever before. There are push factors at work that are going to make it extremely difficult for us to ever get control of our borders again, to the extent that we’ve ever had. But they’re talking to each other and the connectivity between around the world is just at a different level today than it ever has been. The policies from 2001 can be reintroduced, but the world has changed. News flash everybody. It’s not the same place, and that’s why I've been saying for the last three years at least, that the Opposition was part of the problem. I'm very interested to see that one of the first actions that was taken by the new Minister Morrison was to create a media shutdown on information being fed out. So he said, ‘it’s the end of the shipping news’. Well, is that an acknowledgement that he was part of the problem in the start?

What do we do? Yes, I've worked for asylum seekers for many years. I've seen some nice ones, some rotten ones, some ratbags. They’re just like us. They have all sorts of stories. I'm not one of these bleeding hearts who thinks that we should throw open our borders and anybody should be allowed to come here. I do believe that we should have an immigration program and that we should try and have control of our borders. How do you do that however? I think it’s extremely difficult nowadays. The beginning and end of our problem in the short term and in the immediate vicinity, geographical vicinity, is that we are receiving these people through a very, very complex country and it’s interesting to see the shift that has occurred in the rhetoric before the election and after the election, with our Prime Minister going to Indonesia and recognising from almost the time that his feet touched the tarmac that the harsh rhetoric of ‘we’re going to push the boats back’, ‘We’re going to do this, we’re going to do that’, just doesn’t wash in government because you’re dealing with a very complex, very powerful country. It’s not like Haiti in America. Yes, in America they were able to get their boat people and put them back on boats and push them back to Haiti, contrary, totally contrary to international law. You can’t do that with Indonesia. It’s an archipelagic state that has 260 million people. You can’t go out and buy all the old boats. I mean, it’s really a joke I think that what we have tolerated in terms of the rhetoric around this area is just laughable. We should however, be trying to do something and as we were saying over lunch, in many respects what the government is now doing is what the previous government should have been doing from the start, however impeded they were by having an Opposition as virulent and as effective as the Opposition was. You need to go to government, in Indonesia, and you need to talk to them and you need to see well, what is it going to take to work with the Indonesians to stop the trade in misery by the boats. You need to deal with this at source and you need to find alternatives for people who need protection. Now it’s simple to say that, it’s difficult to operationalise, and I recognise that.

What I find truly obscene and this is where I'm going to finish, about our present policy, is just how much money we are spending on it. We have committed, and this is totally bi-partisan, so my opprobrium here is spread liberally across all the parties, we have committed close to nine billion dollars for these stupid policies that will have absolutely no effect at all, and that money is going to Nauru and to Manus Island and to policies that are inherently destructive and abusive of human rights. We can’t afford that, and we’re taking it from our aid budget as well.

Now, if you took that money, do you know how much money UNHCR has to deal with 42 million people of concern around the world in any given year? Three billion dollars. Yes. It is obscene what we are doing at the moment. It is totally wasteful, totally obscene, and it’s not going to work, either. So, what I would really like to see happen is a dropping of hostilities – it’s not going to happen, I know, but in my dream world people would come together, they would realise that Nauru, Manus Island, and in fact the whole infrastructure of mandatory immigration detention, has never worked, will never work, in fact deterrents don’t work. Stopping people does work. And probably pushing back boats would work too, but it’s not going to happen. It’s just not going to happen.

So, can we just wipe the slate clean, stop all this nonsense, and start looking at some concrete policies, where we work collaboratively with government, in Indonesia, but hey, also in Pakistan. We look at where these people are coming from.

We live in a very, very troubled world at the moment. It is as troubled as it has been since World War II at the moment. They’re talking about ten million refugees from the Syrian conflict alone. So, we’re actually in a box seat at the moment, literally, on the Security Council, chairing the Security Council and it’s terrific to see our new Foreign Minister taking to it with such aplomb. The time for the rhetoric has passed. It’s time for us to stand up and to sit up as an adult country and to really look at this in sensible and adult terms. Good luck to us.

**John Daley**

Thank you very much. By way of that introduction, Robert, we have a large number of intern positions, so if there’s any other relations that you have, please let us know.

What I want to cover today is where essentially Australia is, from an economic policy perspective, some of the things that the new government should get right. Some of the things that they might get wrong. So in terms of where we are. It is very unfashionable to say so, and indeed it has become a political myth that it’s politically unacceptable to say so, but we have definitely never had it so good and indeed we have had an incredibly prosperous decade, GFC or no GFC. National income is up about 60% in real terms over a decade. Household incomes are up about 30%, real, in a decade, and that includes for the bottom quintile. It is true that the middle and bottom quintiles have done pretty badly in the United States over the past decade. It is just not true in Australia. There is no statistics to back it up. The opposite – there are plenty of statistics to say that the people in the bottom quintile have by and large seen their real incomes rise very substantially – in the order of about 30% over the last decade.

And of course unemployment over that decade has also fallen. Both short term unemployment and long term unemployment are far and away the biggest drivers of disadvantage and that too has generally fallen. So it’s been a pretty good ten years.

But from here, what are the big challenges? Well, big challenge number one for governments we would suggest is that essentially they are living beyond their means. And if you look at the report that my colleague Jim Minifie published recently which talked about the prosperous decade that we’ve had, but pointed out just how much money we have spent, all these reports are available from the website, and if you look at the report that I published in April this year looking at the state of Australian government budgets, what they show is that Australian governments have been running structural deficits, in other words their real position, if you take the influence of the business cycle, you strip away the influence of the global financial crisis, they’ve been running deficits in the order of 2 or 3% in the last couple of years and we haven’t really noticed, and those problems will get a lot worse primarily as a result of increased health spending, a few other bits and pieces as well, but that’s far and away the biggest driver.

The second big problem that governments have got from an economic perspective, is that a large chunk of that growth in incomes over the last decade was driven by the terms of trade, a boring technical economic concept that is best rephrased as, how many televisions can you buy for a ton of iron ore? And the answer is, today, a lot. The answer ten years ago was not that many. And the answer in ten years time is likely to be substantially fewer than today. It is very likely that the real price of iron ore in world markets will fall and similarly the real price of coking coal will fall. And when it does, that will have an impact on the value of the money in our pockets. Also of course have an impact of the value of money in government pockets. And indeed that effect is so large that if we continue to see productivity growth at about the same rate we have in the last decade, we will see real incomes in our pockets over the next decade essentially pretty close to flat. So instead of seeing real incomes grow by about 3% a year as we have for the last decade, that adds up pretty quickly, we’ll essentially see no growth in real incomes for the better part of a decade. And if you think that there’s a lot of yelling and screaming about the cost of living at the moment, imagine what that’s going to look like if we see flat incomes for a decade.

And the third big challenge I would suggest that the new government has got is that it does have to deal with the transition. We are likely to see substantially less growth indeed substantially less in absolute terms in investment in mining. That has an impact on the rest of the economy and managing that transition will be, as they say, interesting. Although, as my colleague Jim Minifie found in his report on the mining boom, if you look at similar booms around the world, and there aren’t that many that are quite this big, but if you look at booms that have been reasonably big, usually they tend, when reasonably well, provided that governments don’t do anything stupid, and at least to date, Australian governments have succeeded in avoiding doing anything spectacularly stupid. Which is not to be underestimated – actually good government often consists of simply avoiding doing anything spectacularly stupid.

On the other hand, occasionally, Australian governments have done good things. Indeed, if you look at the track record over the last thirty or forty years of economic reform, there have been a large number of very effective reforms. That’s over a forty year time period. If we look at any particular government, of three years, in between elections, if it manages to make three really big economic reforms, it is well ahead of the average Australian government.

So, what might three really big effective economic policy reforms look like from the new government? Well, first of all I suggest it would be budget repair. If we are running a deficit in the order of 2 or 3% of GDP, that’s about 20 or 30 billion dollars in today’s terms. Let’s put that in context. If you were to raise the GST from 10% to 12%, there’s going to be a lot of political screaming about that, that would raise you an extra 14 billion dollars. So good news, you’re about half of the way there. But it does give you an idea of the size of the task.

Given the likely continued growth in health spending, our estimate at the Grattan Institute is that if we don’t change anything else, we will see Australian government budgets running deficits of around 4% of GDP in the next decade. So that means that we are essentially looking for about 60 billion dollars in today’s terms, and that is definitely a lot of money.

So budget repair is going to be important. It’s going to be difficult. The Rudd Gillard governments have actually done a surprisingly good job, one that they haven’t potentially done a great job of explaining what’s been going on but they’ve done quite a good job of essentially taking the lower hanging fruit in terms of squeezing the public service in terms of efficiency dividends, and they have certainly done a remarkably good job of cleaning up middle class welfare. There is now very little middle class welfare for people under the age of 60 left in Australia. If you accept that people on Family Tax Benefit A are by and large doing it pretty hard, and by and large they’re certainly not doing particularly well, the only middle class welfare that’s left is some Family Tax Benefit B going to families that would not otherwise ... that don’t qualify for Family Tax Benefit A, it’s only about 2 billion dollars. In the scheme of things, it’s not that big.

So if you’re serious about budget repair, either you are going to be talking about tax reform or you’re going to be talking about significant cuts and the things that are probably most attractive in terms of being big enough to care and not having enormous either economic or social consequences, are older age pensions. We do have a middle class welfare problem for people over the age of 60. 85% of people who retire are still qualifying for at least a part pension. So we still have ... and indeed of people with one and half million dollars in assets who are retired, 85% of those people qualify for at least a part pension. So there is a substantial amount of middle class welfare for people over the age of 65.

Secondly, we are going to have a long hard look at superannuation. Superannuation was originally designed to be a device that would essentially look after inter-generational equity and ensure that each generation paid for its own retirement. In fact, it has become a tax device for transferring money from by and large middle ages taxpayers, to older aged non-taxpayers, indeed the vast majority of superannuation tax concessions go to rich old people. That is what it has become as a tax device. And again, the Opposition has said, sorry the now government has said that they’re not going to be looking at superannuation. There will be ‘no adverse changes’. I expect if they’re serious about budget reform they’re going to have to at least start to look at it and maybe look at something for the next election. And of course that’s exactly what they’re planning to do on tax. They’ve announced that there will be tax review and that review will be something that they then take to the next election. I would actually suggest that that’s a very good way of going about tax reform. There are I think no oppositions in Australia in living memory that have been elected promising tax reform. There have been a number of governments that have been re-electing promising tax reform and a number of governments that have been re-elected having delivered tax reform.

So I think announcing that there will be a full-blown review of the tax and that the outcomes will be taken to the next election is exactly the right way to go about it.

The second big reform that I would suggest government probably should go after is around female workforce participation. It’s a huge lever. We know that the biggest impact on female workforce participation is essentially how much money do women get to take home after they have paid tax, given up welfare benefits because they’re working, and paid for child care. We know that the sums on that for most women in Australia who have children in childcare – it’s simply not worth their while working more than three days a week and indeed for many of them, it’s not even worth working three days a week. We need to have a long hard look at that.

And thirdly, we need to do something about the superannuation and pension ages – the age at which you can get qualified for your superannuation, the age at which you can qualify for your pension. All the evidence suggests that there are a large number of people in Australia who currently retire because they can, and to be blunt, as a country, we can’t afford it. And it will have a substantial impact on both budgets and on our economic productivity, that essentially generates the money to pay for everything else we would like to do, if we look at those ages.

So those are the three things that our government ought to do, if they were serious in economic policy, budget repair, female workforce participation and looking at the age at which you can qualify for your pension or your superannuation.

What might they do wrong? As I said, even if the government over the next three years did none of those things that we have mentioned, if they succeeded in not doing anything stupid on economic policy, that wouldn’t actually be such a bad outcome. You can actually do pretty well so long as you don’t do anything stupid.

Well, the first thing that they might do wrong is actually do nothing about our budget situation. Australian budgets have changed. For the last decade, every year that the Commonwealth Treasury and for that matter, by and large, State Treasuries, every year when they open the books, if they did nothing, their budgetary position got better, essentially because the mining boom meant that there was more and more money coming in tax, so as long as they didn’t go out and spend it, their budgetary position would actually be better in this year than it was last. We are now in a different world. We’re in a world where because of pressures on health, because of the mining boom slowing down, every year that Treasury opens its books, its budgetary position will be worse if it does nothing. And consequently, one of the real temptations for the real Coalition government will be to do basically nothing much about budgetary reform, to say, ah, look, there’s a few storm clouds on the horizon. Maybe the economy might be slowing down a bit, maybe we’re not going to ... you know, we’re serious about budgetary reform but you know, a little bit like Saint Augustine, you know, give me virtue, but not yet. That is I would suggest probably the most serious thing that they could do wrong. It is absolutely true that Australia does not face the same kind of budgetary problems that the United States and many countries in Europe do today. We are not in that position and I think the biggest lesson we can take away from those countries is, we do not want to be there. We do not want to have to make the kind of choices that they are currently making. We are far better off to make some unpleasant choices today than some extremely unpleasant choices ten years down the track.

The second thing that they could easily do wrong is around paid parental leave. It’s going to be very expensive. All the evidence suggests that if you are serious about increasing female workforce participation, the official way to do that is to look at higher government subsidies for child care, not in terms of essentially paying people not to work. Now, firstly it’s intuitive that it is more effective, in terms of encouraging participation, to pay people at the point that they’re working rather than at the point at which they are not working. Secondly, that’s exactly what the international evidence suggests. If you look at what explains variations between different countries in terms of female workforce participation, it’s very clear that it’s about take-home pay, after tax, after welfare and after paying child care.

If on the other hand, paid parental leave is in fact not an economic policy at all, if it’s in fact about promoting fertility, if it’s in fact about reducing the relatively high abortion rate for women in Australia, particularly those in the ages between 20 and 30, it may well be effective if that’s what we’re trying to do. That’s not an economic policy. It’s an objective on which I pass no judgment, apart from to say that if that’s what you’re trying to do, it may well be an effective, albeit quite expensive way of doing it.

Thirdly, it would be very possible for us to spend far too much money on infrastructure. There are a large number of bodies which have frankly, vested interests, running around Australia saying we have an enormous infrastructure deficit. The only evidence for this is a broker’s report which is unpublished, I spent long enough working in banking to know exactly what that is worth, and a report from Engineers Australia, who were essentially asked as a bunch of engineers, what are all the projects you could build and not surprisingly, as a bunch of engineers, they came back with a very long list.

If you actually look at the numbers, Australian governments are currently spending substantially more on infrastructure as a percentage of GDP than they have at any time since the ADS started to collect records in 1987. We are in fact spending money on infrastructure at an enormous rate. It may or may not be on the right things, but we’re certainly spending it. And of course there are real dangers in the Commonwealth government saying it’s going to fund roads, but not rail. What that will inevitably mean is that State governments would much rather spend 50 cents on a project that’s going to cost a dollar, rather than a dollar on a project. And if the Commonwealth government is essentially only subsiding roads, we will see a systemic overspend on road infrastructure relative to rail infrastructure, and particularly when we know that a large lever for productivity is essentially how many people can we get into central business districts and the kind of five or ten kilometres around them, when we know that the road capacity into our CBDs is now more or less at capacity. We know that substantial public transport into those areas is going to be increasingly important. That’s not an Australian trend. That’s a global trend.

And then the final thing I'd suggest we could get wrong is that we’ve certainly heard lots of talk about a northern foodbowl. It is worth remembering that the Western Australian government has spent about half a billion dollars on an irrigation scheme in northern Australia and it’s essentially just given it away to a Chinese agriculture investor, essentially because they came to the conclusion that that irrigation scheme wasn’t worth operating. So, it is possible that there is a huge bonanza from Australian governments investing in infrastructure in our north, but I would suggest that we would need to be very, very disciplined in our analysis before we assume that that’s true. The assumption is that the problem in the north is all about water. The reality is that water is doubtless part of the problem, the fact that essentially there’s a lot of water for six months of the year and then none for the remainder, but there are other problems. They are by and large, very, very infertile soils. We have a quite unusual geology by global standards, and that geology means that those soils up there by and large are relatively infertile. And of course it’s a relatively remote environment. It’s a long way from large population centres of people to consume any food that is produced, and so we shouldn’t assume as I said, that spending lots of money on it will be a good idea. And of course Australian economic history is littered with examples of governments spending a lot of money trying to promote agriculture in places that it’s not happening, and then are regretting it afterwards.

So that would be my kind of short summary. We’ve had a pretty good decade. We have a government whom I would suggest the very things that they ought to do, are around budget repair, female workforce participation, and looking at the age of access to pensions and super. And the big temptations will be the failure to take any action at all on the budget, the temptation to spend too much money on paid parental leave, a temptation to spend too much money on infrastructure in the wrong places, and a temptation to spend too much money promoting agriculture where it is not happening at the moment, and indeed is probably not going to be economically viable. Thank you.

**Robert Manne**

I looked at my watch and it actually says that it’s two o’clock, which is the time that I know a lot of people have to leave and also the time that we are due to finish. So rather than ... I don’t’ think we can go beyond the time. I was full of questions that I wanted to ask the panel. I'm sure you were full of questions that you wanted to ask but I don’t think we’re able. I'd just like to say this – that there were and are a lot of students in the audience today. I'm very pleased about that and I think what you’ve learned and I think it’s a very important lesson, is two things. How interesting public policy can be, important, but also how complex public policy can be. We’ve had three really outstanding short talks in areas that all of the three speakers could have spent hours going through the complexity of real public policy. I think for that, if for no other reason, it’s been a great experience and I'd like to thank the three speakers and apologise for the questions that I would have liked to be able to ask and you to be able to ask. I apologise. We just don’t have time.

I'd really like to thank you, all three very, very deeply.