



THE FAWCETT FLYER

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2020



The Parliament of Australia sat again in August, and the Government secured the passage of a range of important legislation which supports Australians recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Considerable discussions occurred before this sitting of Parliament regarding how the use of video-conferencing technology for parliamentarians to contribute remotely could be integrated into proceedings, which raised some potential issues. These measures meant that Victorian parliamentarians – including the Senate President, Senator the Hon Scott Ryan, and Speaker of the House, the Hon Tony Smith MP – could participate and contribute either after quarantine in Canberra (for two weeks prior) or via videolink. Queensland parliamentarians were also able to contribute via videolink.

One crucial piece of legislation that passed during the August sitting weeks was the extension of the JobKeeper payment. This enables the JobKeeper payment to continue to March 2021. JobKeeper has supported more than 900,000 businesses and around 3.5 million workers, as of early September, and remains open to new participants that meet the eligibility requirements. As well as extending JobKeeper, this legislation brought into effect a two-tiered payment, better aligning the payment with individual circumstances to reflect full-time and part-time hours.

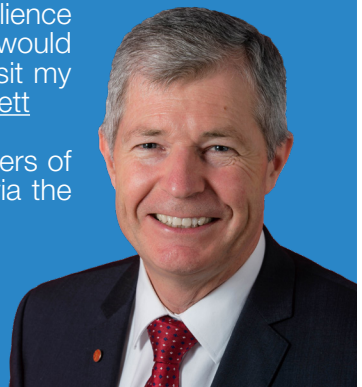
Offering hope that a pre-COVID way of life may return, Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced in September that the Australian Government will provide a free and voluntary COVID-19 vaccine for all Australians, as a result of a \$1.7 billion supply and production agreement. Should vaccine trials prove successful and timely, these vaccinations will be made available progressively throughout 2021, from January.

On August 15th, the world marked the 75th anniversary of Victory in the Pacific Day which commemorates the end of World War II in Asia and the Pacific – the official end of the war. As we look to recover from a global pandemic in 2020, remembering what Australians in 1945 had to endure and recover from demonstrates a resilience and strength from which we can learn. If you would like to view this short social media series, visit my Facebook Page: facebook.com/senatorfawcett

For more information on these or other matters of a Federal nature, please contact my office via the details available on the back cover.

Kind regards,

SENATOR DAVID FAWCETT





NATIONAL COMMISSIONER LEGISLATION INTRODUCED

Attorney-General Christian Porter MP introduced legislation to Parliament during the August parliamentary sitting weeks which establishes the role, functions and powers of the new role of National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention. The Commissioner's function is to inquire fully into deaths by suicide among Australian Defence Force (ADF) members – starting with an independent review of the 419 suicides by veterans which occurred between 2001 and 2017. In late September, the Government announced the appointment of Dr Bernadette Boss CSC as the new interim National Commissioner, to be formally confirmed subject to passage of the legislation.

A key component of improving the mental health of ADF veterans is providing opportunities which encourage the use of previous skills to overcome challenges in collaboration with other veterans. Such opportunities help in dealing with past trauma and allow for an

easier transition back into civilian life. The 'Setting a New Course' program is one such initiative, which uses sail training as a vehicle towards rehabilitation, assisting current and former Australian Defence Force personnel move beyond injuries sustained during their service. Based on the success of the pilot program, I'm grateful to the defence industry partners who have sponsored a second intake which commenced in September. Through this experience, the veterans can achieve a qualification accredited by the Royal Yachting Association, and have the opportunity build on the skills learnt through this course to compete in local competitions following the course and potentially sail at future Invictus Games.

For more information on the next Setting a New Course intake, click [here](#) or scan the QR Code below.



IMPROVING SA ROADS AND CREATING LOCAL JOBS

The \$141 million Flinders Link Project edges closer to completion as various milestones have been met over the last several months, including the installation of all 20 steel girders (fabricated in SA using Australian steel), the installation of the Flinders Railway Station canopy and more.

This project is supporting 55 full time jobs over its life. Once completed, the rail bridge provides a link between Adelaide city and the Flinders University and Health precinct.

Also providing improved transport infrastructure for those in the southern suburbs, the Darlington Upgrade has now been completed, reducing the commute time for the thousands of motorists who use the Southern Expressway each day – the result of a \$754.5 million investment from the Australian and South Australian Governments.

This project has delivered upgrades across approximately 3.3km of the existing Main South Road and has supported more than 370 jobs annually throughout construction.

Within the Australian Government's JobMaker plan, South Australian

road and transport infrastructure projects are being fast-tracked to sustain and create local jobs, while improving road safety and lowering commute times.

\$1.5 billion has been committed so far to help infrastructure projects across Australia commence as soon as possible, which will assist Australia's economic recovery from COVID-19 while providing much-needed infrastructure upgrades to communities nationwide.

The Federal and State Governments have pledged \$145 million to fast-track infrastructure and road safety projects in SA. Consisting of \$115.6 million in Federal funding, these projects include the Heysen Tunnel refit and safety upgrade (\$12 million), the Regional North-South Freight Route (\$9.6 million), and a regional road network package (\$41.6 million), among others.

For more information on SA projects being fast-tracked through the Government's JobMaker Plan, click [here](#) or scan the QR Code below.



Video conferencing and modern solutions are enabling parliamentary committee inquiries to progress.

As Chair of the Joint Standing Committee for Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (JSCFADT), the 9 hearings during August and September concluded the Committee's public hearings for the Inquiry into the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for Australian foreign affairs, defence and trade policy. These hearings included testimony from a number of government departments, private companies, think tanks and NGOs. Over 100 submissions were received, and the committee expects to report by the end of 2020. Within 4 of the 5 JSCFADT sub-committees, inquiries continue to consider Australia's relationships with Pacific Island nations.

Introduced in Parliament in September, the Counter-Terrorism Legislation Amendment (High Risk Terrorist Offenders) Bill 2020 has now been referred to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security (PJCIS). The Bill establishes an extended supervision order scheme, ensuring that high risk terrorist offenders who are released into the community at the end of their custodial sentences are subject to close supervision, in proportion to the level of risk they pose to community safety. Another

piece of legislation introduced to parliament following a PJCIS review, the Citizenship Cessation Bill passed through both Houses and is now law. This bill replaces the former automatic cessation of citizenship with a Ministerial-discretion model – giving the Minister the discretion in ceasing the Australian citizenship of dual-nationals when they were found to have engaged in terrorist conduct, either here in Australia or overseas.

In late August, PJCIS received a letter from the Minister for Home Affairs referring an inquiry into foreign interference in Australia's universities, publicly funded research agencies and competitive research grants agencies. For more on this new Inquiry, see *Page 7*. PJCIS public hearings were also held in September to review the Australian Federal Police powers and review Declared Area Provisions – these provisions make it an offence for a person to enter, or remain in, declared areas in a foreign country, historically on the basis of regional terrorism activity.

For more information on Parliamentary Committee Inquiries, click [here](#) or scan the QR Code below.





IN THE MEDIA

The Australian Government has recognised that elements of Australian industry are a fundamental input to our defence capability, if our nation is to maintain a sovereign capacity for independent action.

The Government's once-in-a-generation \$270 billion investment in our national sovereign defence capability is creating and sustaining thousands of defence industry jobs across South Australia.

Phase 1 of the C4 EDGE (Evolutionary Digital Ground Environment) program commenced following the \$4.2 million contract signed in June between lead contractor Electro Optic Systems (EOS) and the Australian Government.

Joining 15 other Australian businesses, I officially welcomed two South Australian companies, Codan Communications and Solinnov, to the C4 EDGE cooperative during a visit to Codan's Mawson Lakes facility in August (*pictured, above*).

This program further develops Australia's C4 (command control communications and computers) industry capabilities through leveraging internationally agreed open standards and partnership with Australian SMEs towards an advanced, integrated command and control environment designed for the Australian Army's mission and environment.

Codan Communications and Solinnov are now part of the

development for a proof of concept which demonstrates the flexibility, scalability and interoperability necessary for a modern battlegroup.



These companies have been selected for their proven IP expertise and experience in delivering technical solutions for defence, safety and security markets.

Less than a kilometre down the road in Mawson Lakes from where Codan and Solinnov are collaboratively working as part of C4 EDGE, Raytheon Australia is currently building its first production facility.

In late July, I joined Premier Steven Marshall to see progress on Raytheon Australia's Centre for Joint Integration in Mawson Lakes' Technology Park (*pictured, above*).

Expected to sustain 300 ongoing local jobs in the defence industry, the opening of this Centre will

facilitate the system delivery and final assembly of the National Advanced Surface to Air Missile System (NASAM) (*pictured, below*), following the Australian Government's selection of Raytheon Australia and KONGSBERG Defence and Aerospace to undertake the \$2.5 billion Short Range Ground Based Air Defence (GBAD) program – known as LAND19 Phase 7B.

With the addition of the Australian designed and built CEAFA active phased array radar significantly improving the system's overall capability, the delivery of NASAMS will provide the ADF with one of



the world's most advanced short-range GBAD systems, to replace the Australian Army's RBS-70 man-portable air defence system.

For more on LAND19 Phase7B, click [here](#) or scan the QR Code below.



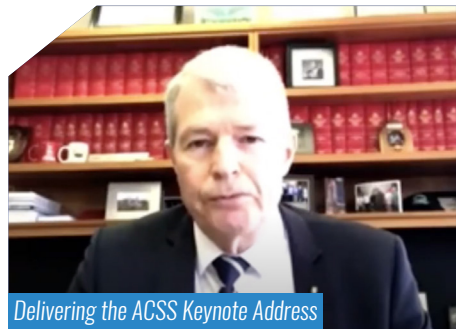
7 **STRENGTHENING OUR NATIONAL SECURITY**

With the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacting our nation economically and furthering geopolitical shifts in our region, the Australian Government is taking action to ensure that our nation's people and interests are prioritised as we begin to recover. While international relationships continue to provide enormous benefit to the Australian economy, culture and society, the Australian Government is committed to ensuring our national interest and security are not compromised through foreign agreements and relationships.

Introduced to Parliament in September, Australia's Foreign Relations Bill 2020 was created to ensure State and Territory governments' agreements with foreign governments are consistent with the Australian Government's foreign policy and the interests of Australians are protected. If passed, new laws will require State and Territory governments to consult with the Commonwealth Government in international arrangements, and arrangements that adversely affect Australia's foreign relations or are inconsistent with our foreign policy could be prevented from proceeding or terminated. The Australian Government has the

policy expertise and comprehensive understanding of the risks and opportunities associated with any arrangements with foreign governments. This legislation aligns state, territory and local governments on national security issues to ensure all agreements are consistent with our foreign policy and the interests of Australians are protected.

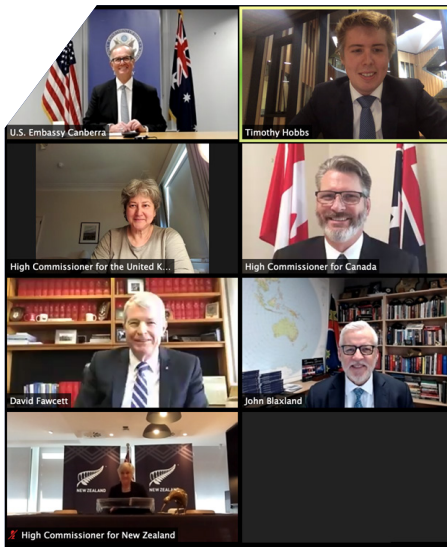
The Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee, of which I am a member, is currently receiving submissions on a review of this Bill and expects to report findings in November.



Within the last decade, the security of Intellectual Property and research has emerged as a national security concern for our Government, and concerns have been recently exacerbated by media reports which documented strong ties between academics in Australia

and foreign governments.

In September, the Minister for Home Affairs referred to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on International Security (PJCIS) an Inquiry into Foreign Interference in Australian universities, tertiary institutions and research agencies. Expected to report in mid-2021, PJCIS' findings in this Inquiry will help inform Federal



decision-making for the protection of our national security, sovereignty, and academic integrity. The terms of reference for this inquiry are currently being finalised, before submissions will be sought from stakeholders.

Skilling more young Australians to operate in and navigate national security complexities better equips Australia to overcome future foreign and defence policy challenges. This

month, I delivered the Keynote Address via videoconference from Adelaide at the opening of the inaugural Australian Crisis Simulation Summit in Canberra (*pictured, far left*) – a 5-day forum which engaged 70 of Australia's upcoming national security leaders with discussion on possible future national security policy challenges. To view this address, visit <https://bit.ly/3n0qlO7>.

At the conclusion of the summit, I also had the pleasure to speak on the importance of the Five Eyes intelligence and security partnership with US Ambassador to Australia Arthur Culvahouse, UK High Commissioner to Australia Vicki Treadell, NZ High Commissioner to Australia Dame Annette King, and Canadian High Commissioner to Australia Mark Glauser (*pictured, left*). The conversation with participants was facilitated by Professor John Blaxland of the Australian Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, and Tim Hobbs, Director of the Australian Crisis Simulation Summit.

For more information on the recently introduced Foreign Relations Bill, click [here](#) or scan the QR Code below.



TRAINING AND TELEHEALTH FOR RURAL SA

A 40% increase in junior doctors applying for rural generalist training has been confirmed by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) in August, when compared to application rounds from the same period in 2019.

This improvement is testament to the early success of the Government's National Rural Generalist Pathway (NRGP) and increased support for rural trainees.

While continued improvement is necessary to end the rural GP shortage which has persisted for years, our National Rural Generalist Pathway, Stronger Rural Health Strategy, and support of Telehealth services reflect our commitment to achieve long-term improvements in the rural health sector.

Supported by the Rural Doctors Association and the RACGP, the Government's expansion of access to Telehealth services – introduced during the height of COVID-19 – are being extended after showing their potential for providing long-term benefits to Australians.

Under the Telehealth reform Stage 7, the continuous care of a patient from their regular GP or medical

practice is being prioritised. As part of the reform continuation, telehealth GP providers are now required to have an existing and continuous relationship with a patient to ensure more Australians receive quality, ongoing care from a GP who knows their medical history and needs.

In September, the Government announced an investment of \$2 billion to extend a range of



COVID-19 health measures until March 2021 including the telehealth expansion, as Australia recovers from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic – ensuring all Australians can continue to receive medical care and support they need, in their own homes.

In addition to the progress of the NRGP and better access to care

through Telehealth services, the Australian Government announced a \$27 million investment in late July to establish Rural Coordination Units.



These Rural Coordination Units enable aspiring rural generalists to receive specialist training in emergency medicine, anaesthetics and obstetrics, according to the demands of rural generalists.

The Government is investing \$62 million to fast track the NRGp and increase access to rural generalist training, demonstrating a strong commitment to bridging the gaps between metropolitan and rural health care.

To help lead and further refine the NRGp among other responsibilities, Associate Professor Ruth Stewart (*pictured, above*) has been appointed as Australia's new National Rural Health Commissioner, following the outstanding service of former Commissioner Emeritus Professor Paul Worley (*pictured, Page 9*).

Associate Professor Ruth Stewart brings to the role her extensive experience and expertise in vital rural health disciplines such as nursing, allied health and Indigenous health.

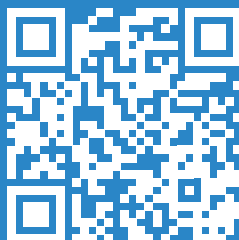
Associate Professor Stewart has begun to support the Government's ongoing rural response to COVID-19 and examine the impact on health workforce planning in regional, rural and remote communities.

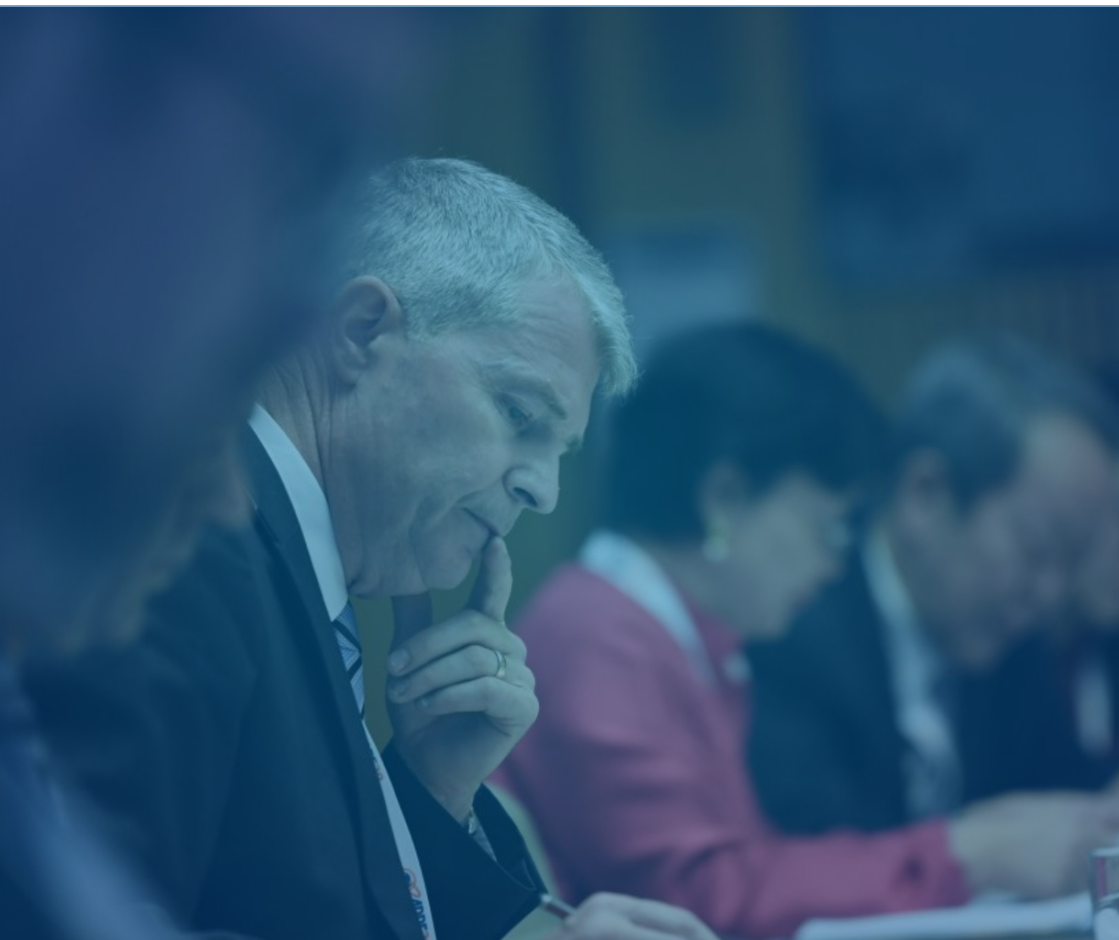
For more information on the Government's Stage 7 Telehealth reforms, click [here](#) or scan the QR code below.



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