

So too are the spouses and partners of Australian Defence Force personnel and their dependants. The families of military personnel are their great enablers, their devoted supporters and play the largest role in influencing whether someone remains a member of the Defence Force. The families are also the ones who experience the reality of living with a member of the Defence Force. As their partner is moved around the country and the world to different rotations and deployment, they too get moved around and shuffled about. Many a Defence Force family has superb skills at packing and starting life again in a new town.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott): Order! The debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 34. The debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting and the member for Riverina will have leave to continue speaking when the debate is resumed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Army Reserve Bands

Mr RUDDOCK (Berowra) (20:00): I move:

That this House:

(1) recognises that:

(a) the band of the Royal New South Wales Lancers, based in Parramatta, makes a significant contribution to the local community;

(b) similar Army Reserve Bands across Australia make significant contributions to their local communities;

(c) these bands provide a key link between communities and the Australian Defence Force in this time of high operational tempo;

(d) the recent Government decision, as part of the Strategic Reform Program, to remove financial support for these bands places the onus for support on regimental associations; and

(e) such associations consist largely of retired veterans without the financial resources to provide such support; and

(2) calls upon the Government to continue support for Army Reserve Bands, thus ensuring these key links with the local community are not lost.

I would like to take a moment or two to say something of the 1st/15th Royal New South Wales Lancers. It is the oldest cavalry regiment in Australia. It was established on 3 January 1885. It is a regiment that has had troops deployed in South Africa at Federation. It took its name in 1956 when the 1st Royal New South Wales Lancers and the 15th Northern Rivers Lancers amalgamated. It carries battle honours of a number of former regiments, to a total of 31, from the Boer War, the First World War and the Second World War. Highlights include Gaza-Beersheba, the defence of ANZAC, Jordan, New Guinea, Wareo-Lakona, Gusika, Borneo, Balikpapan, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Egypt, Damascus, Stockton Bight and the Solomon Islands again. It is a regiment that has contributed

troops as groups and individuals to many contemporary operations undertaken by the Australian Defence Force. It has very distinguished leadership and I acknowledge particularly its most recent honorary colonel, Lieutenant Colonel Warren Glenny, who was the General of the Army Reserve for Australia.

The band of this particular regiment has been part of the Lancers almost from the beginning and was established in 1888. From its earliest days it struggled with financial survival, being forced from 1891 to undertake fundraising to purchase instruments due to the inadequate support from the General Officer Commanding, New South Wales. In 1897, the band was transferred to Parramatta and was located in the historic Lancer Barracks, which were built in 1819 under the instructions of the then Governor Lachlan Macquarie. They remain there today as the longest continually occupied military post in Australia.

The band has been involved in the Commonwealth of Australia inauguration ceremonies in 1901, leading a section of the parade through Sydney. The following day, with 21 other bands, it participated in the Commonwealth Inauguration Tattoo. This event, with an attendance of over 30,000 people, was the largest attendance at any gathering in Australia to that point in time. On 12 March 1913 it played at the Canberra foundation ceremony. In 1921 it commenced the annual participation in the Anzac Day march through Sydney, and this year on Anzac Day I remember the band of the 1st/15th Royal New South Wales lancers playing and leading a significant part of that ceremonial parade. It played at the formal opening of the parliament following the accession of King George VI in 1922. On 18 October 1959 it led the regiment to receive the freedom of entry to the City of Parramatta. During the centenary of the regiment in 1985 it led the regiment to receive the freedom of entry to the City of Sydney.

This band has been extraordinary. It has provided support to events across the local community, such as the Westmead Children's Hospital Bandaged Bear Ball, Floriade in Canberra, the Australia Day citizenship ceremonies at Parramatta, regimental dinners—I note the member for Parramatta is here; she and I attended the most recent regimental dinner, where again the band was playing. It has provided buglers for the local RSL Anzac Day services, the Anzac Day march in Sydney, the Reserve Forces Day 2011, the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia Vietnam Veterans' Day 2011, the Battle of Crete service at the Sydney Cenotaph, the Manly Jazz Festival, and buglers for funerals of veterans. It is a vital link between the community and the military, and so at this important time of ongoing operations, when one is seeking to get people to support the military, when one is seeking to recruit people for the reserves, this is the visible face that people see and can relate to. To constrain it is, in

my view, quite inappropriate at this time. The band is a reminder of the proud and longstanding military history and record of service of a very fine regiment.

So I want to speak about the funding cancellation. A minute on 24 August last year directed that ongoing support for bands in respect of replacement and repair of instruments and ceremonial uniforms would be withdrawn from most regimental bands. When I think of the size of the defence budget—and I know that there is a need for savings—I find it extraordinary that the savings are being made in relation to the replacement of instruments and ceremonial uniforms. I find that absolutely extraordinary.

This band has enormous local support. I have no doubt that the 1st/15th Royal New South Wales Lancers Association will provide support for their band, but it needs to be recognised that that will come from the pockets of retirees, many of whom are superannuants and whose savings are dwindling. Such spending also reduces the support the association can give to their other activities—in the case of the 1st/15th Royal New South Wales Lancers, the fundraising for their museum and community activities in which they are engaged.

Regimental bands support communities and they bind communities to the military. It is very important when troops are serving overseas—in Afghanistan and elsewhere—that that support is forthcoming. Given that there are very few military units now based in Sydney—and there are not many Army Reserve units—bands are even more important than ever in bringing the community and the ADF closer together. The lancers recently deployed a squadron minus to the Solomon Islands, demonstrating an ongoing commitment to service.

The cancellation of support for the Army Reserve bands comes with a budget that has cut defence spending dramatically, as I have mentioned. Ongoing efforts by Labor have seen, I think, unfortunately, a steady withdrawal of support for the Army reserves. It has been cloaked as a strategic reform program, but it aims to pick off what I would call low-hanging fruit to make quick savings—low-hanging fruit like stopping reservists being paid for attending Anzac Day ceremonies in 2010; low-hanging fruit like reservist funding, such that the Army Reserve can no longer meet their full training and development needs for anything other than high-priority tasks; and low-hanging fruit like support for Army Reserve bands, like that of the lancers.

As you would know, there is no higher priority than the coalition has than the defence and security of Australia and its people. But targeting organisations like Army Reserve bands is, in my view, a very seriously misguided saving. It is a saving that will separate the community from the military. It is a saving

that puts the onus for support on a bunch of superannuated veterans and ex-servicemen. It is a saving that hits communities as much as it hits the motivated reservists who form part of the bands. Specific funding allocated to ADF reservists is now insufficient to meet their training and development needs for anything other than high-priority tasks.

This motion deserves to be passed vigorously, and I hope the military brass are hearing what I hope will be support from both sides of the House. (*Time expired*)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott): Order! Is the motion seconded?

Mr Robert: I second the motion and reserve my right to speak, to allow the member for Canberra to speak and provide some appalling response from the government.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Fadden will resume his seat. I, as the occupier of this chair, will decide who is the next speaker, not the member for Fadden. The question is that the motion be agreed to. I now call the member for Canberra.

Ms BRODTMANN (Canberra) (20:11): I applaud the member for Berowra for his commitment to the musical life of the military, but I rise to speak against this motion tonight because it is unnecessary and it is somewhat confused. I attend many, many defence events in the course of my job as the member for Canberra. At all of those events there is always a very strong musical presence. One of the highlights of my time in Canberra was going to Beating the Retreat at Duntroon—on a freezing cold night, from memory. It was an absolute highlight. There is a very strong musical tradition in the military, and I applaud the member for Berowra for raising our awareness on that, but I do rise to speak against this motion tonight.

I am not supporting this motion for the following reasons. The current draft of the private member's bill refers incorrectly to regimental bands as reserve bands. It refers specifically to the Royal New South Wales Lancers Band and similar bands. Such bands are in fact regimental bands, yet this motion calls on the government to continue to support Army Reserve bands. The government actually already supports reserve bands and will continue to do so. At present, the government supports six regional reserve bands and more than 20 Army Reserve personnel who work in four Army support bands. These personnel and bands are part of the Australian Army Band Corps. The matter of support raised in this motion by the member for Berowra is actually an administrative matter. What is more concerning is that this motion proposes to interfere with and reverse a decision taken by the Chief of Army.

I will go into more detail about these issues shortly but, before I do so, I would just like to talk a bit more about the current band structure in the Australian

Army. As the member for Canberra, I am very appreciative of the role our Army bands play in our national discourse. The band of the Military College, Duntroon—often referred to as the RMC band or the Duntroon band—is based here in Canberra. The band is a respected and important part of Canberra's cultural life and is often called on to play at important events and ceremonies. So for me this is a pertinent issue.

There are two broad categories or divisions of bands in the Australian Army. The first category is the Australian Army Band Corps, which is composed of musically trained reserve and permanent personnel and was established to provide a musical service to the Army and the broader community. Our Australian Army Band Corps plays an important role. It provides music for ceremonial and training activities conducted by the Army and other services of the ADF. It provides music for ceremonial activities, including for royal and vice-regal events and federal, state and territory and local government agencies. It enhances morale and esprit de corps through entertainment for Army personnel in barracks and those deployed on operations or exercises and supporting civil affairs and psychological operations. It contributes to the attraction of quality recruits to the Army and—this is really important—it promotes the public image of the Army through musical performance.

The Australian Army Band Corps is organised as follows: it has one Army band of 43 Australian Regular Army musicians; four Army support bands of 22 Australian Regular Army musicians and 21 Army Reserve musicians; six regional Army Reserve bands of 40 Army Reserve musicians and three Australian Regular Army staff; a Defence Force School of Music—I have been to that school and met many of the players there—with 11 regular Australian Army staff; and a Director of Music Army with six staff. This structure is based on a 43-piece Australian Regular Army band in Canberra, the Royal Military College Band, and Army support bands each consisting of 22 Australian Regular Army personnel located proximate to formations in Townsville, in Brisbane, in Sydney and in Wagga Wagga. Each Army support band will hold an Army Reserve establishment of 21 in addition to the Australian Regular Army element. Regional Army Reserve bands consisting of 40 Army Reserve and three Australian Regular Army staff will be located in Melbourne, Adelaide, Hobart, Newcastle, Perth and Darwin. Perth and Newcastle will contain an Army Reserve pipes and drums component.

The second category refers to the regimental bands, which are composed of volunteers and are established to provide musical services primarily for a specific unit or regiment. As I mentioned before, the Royal New South Wales Lancers, referred to by the member for Berowra, is an established regimental band. Regimental bands are staffed by volunteers from both

permanent and part-time Army personnel from the parent regiment. The members of these bands are already employed by the Army in other roles. For example, if they are employed by the army as a cook, they may volunteer to play in the regimental band. The motion we are debating here claims that associations like the Royal New South Wales Lancers are a reservist band. They are in fact a regimental band. The member also suggested that they consist largely of retired veterans without the financial resources to provide support. This is also incorrect. The Gillard government already supports Reserve bands and will continue to do so. As I said before, the Gillard government supports six regional Reserve bands and over 20 Army Reserve personnel who work in four Army support bands. These personnel and bands are part of the Australian Army Band Corps.

As I also mentioned earlier, following a review into Army bands in May 2011, a decision was made by the Chief of Army to transfer the resourcing of regimental bands from the Commonwealth to the associated regimental associations. This decision by the Chief of Army is an administrative matter that is delegated to the Chief of Army pursuant to the Defence Act 1903. Therefore, the member's motion proposes to interfere with a decision by the Chief of Army.

As I understand it, these resourcing changes were necessary to ensure Army's dedicated musical capability could be sustained in the long term. To ensure that resources were focused on Army's dedicated musical capability, voluntary bands such as the regimental bands were given the responsibility to repair or replace musical instruments, uniforms and other equipment. The Chief of Army made a decision to no longer replace the musical instruments, uniforms and other equipment held by the voluntary regimental bands in order to prioritise financial support to the dedicated members and bands of the Australian Army Band Corps. This decision was made to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Australian Army Band Corps. This decision was made with fiscal responsibility in mind as well as a determination to see the history and culture of our Australian Army bands continue.

Members of the Royal New South Wales Lancers in Parramatta who are listed in the private member's motion, will be offered part-time positions with the Australian Army Band Sydney, which is an Australian Army Band Corps band funded by Army. The Australian Army does not plan to disestablish regimental bands. Regimental bands will retain their current musical instruments and uniforms. All Army Reserve members who are currently volunteering in regimental bands such as the Royal New South Wales Lancers and who are qualified as Army musicians will be given the option of transferring to an Australian Army Band Corps band. It is important to note that the

regimental bands reflect the heritage of various units and corps and perform duties primarily for their own regiment, which is why the responsibility should lie with the unit.

Ultimately this is an administrative matter which is delegated to the Chief of Army. I can appreciate the importance of our Army bands and I agree with the member for Berowra that they are incredibly important to the life of the military, to the culture of the military and also to the culture of communities such as Canberra. They are steeped in history and they are important to our national character, but this motion is simply unwarranted and unnecessary.

Mr ROBERT (Fadden) (20:20): I rise to support my colleague the honourable member for Berowra's motion and am happy to speak in support of it. The member for Berowra has given a very good account of the problems facing regimental bands—in this case the Royal New South Wales Lancers based in Parramatta. Whilst the member for Canberra has so eloquently gone through the issues of the Australian Army Band Corps and its history, she had the effrontery—the blatant audacity—to say that this \$2 million saving was about fiscal responsibility. She said fiscal responsibility, after this government has just gutted the Defence Force to the tune of \$5½ billion. Since 2008, the cuts, deferments and imposition on absorbed costs have resulted in over \$20 billion being ripped out of Defence to hollow it out. You come in here, Member for Canberra, and talk about fiscal responsibility for \$2 million from 14 regimental bands and you expect me to take you seriously. Well, ma'am, with the good grace that I have and as good a member of parliament that you may well be, I find that comment outrageous in the extreme.

On 24 August last year the Army, in response to the government's dubious strategic reform program, issued a directive to withdraw support from 14 regimental bands. It was an arbitrary decision—another example where the government failed to consult with the senior staff of the military. The policy has resulted in the Army withdrawing all instruments from these regimental bands, in effect passing the cost of instruments, uniforms and the like onto regimental associations. Why? For that fiscal responsibility, Member for Canberra: to save \$2 million while your party and government gutted \$20 billion. Let's put that in context: \$2 million versus your \$20 billion gutting. And you speak of fiscal responsibility—a drop in the ocean that is nothing short of outrageous, especially when you spend \$30 million advertising your carbon tax and you cannot even say the term 'carbon tax.'

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott): Member for Fadden, I am reluctant to interrupt in the given time, but you are referring to 'you', being the occupier of this chair. I would ask—

Mr ROBERT: Mr Deputy Speaker, I apologise for my youthful exuberance and the word 'you'—but there is a public outrage at the cuts that our Defence Force is going through. The member for Canberra tells me that this wasn't the government's decision; this was General Morrison. General Morrison issued this decision, yet after the public outrage this punitive policy was fiddled, it was changed. The *Sydney Morning Herald* on 1 October 2001 said that the 14 regimental bands will be allowed to keep their existing instruments but will not be provided any support to maintain those instruments or to purchase new instruments. So, Member for Canberra, what you are saying is that the Chief of Army made this decision and then, after this great public outcry, General Morrison—a man I know well and a man not prone to changing his mind easily, may I say—suddenly changed his mind without any instruction from the minister and without any political engagement or fiddling at all. May I suggest this is what happened, Member for Canberra: that the government, under its strategic reform program, has forced the Army into a range of dreadful cuts, as it is doing right now. After the great outrage, could the minister have said: 'Oh, Chief, this is not going well; could we make a little bit of a change here'? Do you think that could have happened, Member for Canberra, or do you think the Chief of Army simply changed his mind because this was an administrative decision of the Army and nothing to do with the government of the day? If you are suggesting that, I find that hardly credible and I struggle to believe it.

The member for Berowra has quite rightly noted that Labor's mean-spirited policy will put significant financial strain on Army reservists and their regimental associations connected with them. These associations so often made up of ex-regimental members—and I can attest to that from personal experience—are 100 per cent committed to their units—100 per cent committed to their communities and the units they serve with.

The motion simply asked for a little bit of goodwill. For all the fiscal responsibilities you talk about, how about community responsibility? How about responsibility for the unique nature of military service? But, then again, you will not index DFRDB pensions, so you are saying what your view of the unique nature of military service is. How about a bit of goodwill to assist 14 regimental bands, their associations and the communities that serve our nation? That would not go astray.

Ms OWENS (Parramatta) (20:25): With some regret, I have to say that I also cannot support this motion, because it is not really the parliament's role to look at the expenditure decisions of the Chief of Army and pick and choose which ones we as a parliament would have changed. It is just not our role to do that. This is a decision that the Chief of Army has made.

The reason why I say it is with some regret is that I know the Army Band Corps very well. My father was in the 1st Military District Band for 20 years and won an Order of Australia for his services to the military as a musician in the army bands. It is a sound I know well. I was raised with it. I spent a lot of time in Enoggera. I spent a lot of time watching parades and listening to my father. I understand the extraordinary contribution that the army bands have made not just to the community but to the broader community by the provision of those full-time positions throughout our community and the support that those positions give to teaching, to part-time musicians that work in clubs in various bands. The effect of those full-time positions and the quality of that work feeds out to the music industry generally, so it has a double purpose.

I am delighted to see in the decision that the Army made an absolute strong commitment to the maintenance of that professional band corps through the Army band in Canberra, the four army support bands, the six regional Army Reserve bands and also the Defence Force School of Music. There is in its decision an extraordinary commitment to maintaining those professional bands both full-time Army and Reserve bands.

I would say this as an observer to both the Army and the regiment: bands like the lancers are very much a part of our community. It is the oldest surviving regimental band in Australia. It was formed in 1888. It is one of three bands in Parramatta that are over 100 years old. We also have the Parramatta City Brass band, which celebrated its 100th last year, and the Parramatta Citadel Band from the Salvation Army, which is also over 100 years old. We have three in Parramatta, but the lancers is associated with the oldest functioning barracks and the most decorated regiment, which was formed for the Boer War. It has this history which we in Parramatta take on as very much a part of our own—an extraordinary barracks because of the nature of its buildings and the nature of its history. It is where our men and women enlisted for the first and second world wars. It is an extraordinary place.

The member for Berowra is incorrect in referring to them as superannuates and retirees. They are actually not; they are reservists and soldiers who have other jobs in the Army and do this on a part-time basis in their spare time. It would be reasonable, I would think, for a clarinettist always to provide their own clarinet and a trumpet player to provide their own trumpet—as they do in every band, by the way. The drums and the instruments, on the other hand, are a slightly different matter and are really quite expensive. So this will provide a difficulty for bands like the lancers and it would be quite tragic if in the course of time we saw these bands, particularly a band like this one with its extraordinary history, substantially weakened or disappearing. I would hope that in the transition period

we are quite sensitive to the needs of these bands. Mind you, I am talking for the one I know; I am sure there will be other communities around Australia that will talk for their regimental bands as well in exactly the same terms as I do. Once again, I do not criticise the Army for the decision it has had to make because I do not know of the other decisions it has had to make. This is one of a suite of decisions—you cannot look at one alone. But I would say again that bands like the Lancers, in the role they have had, carry an extraordinary part of our military history and the loss of even one of these bands would be a tragedy. It is going to be quite an interesting transition. I will be working with the band through that as best I can, but I have to support the Chief of Army in the suite of decisions he has had to make.

Mrs PRENTICE (Ryan) (20:30): I rise to speak on this important motion from the member for Berowra regarding the Royal New South Wales Lancers from Parramatta. This motion notes that many Defence Force bands similar to the Lancers make a significant contribution to the local community, but their very existence is presently under threat due to the decision by this Labor government to cut funding. The Reserves are an integral component of Australia's Defence Force. Along with my coalition colleagues, including the member for Brisbane, I have long supported the unique skills that reservists bring to defence and I have always supported the important work they carry out in achieving the ADF's objectives both at home and abroad.

Unfortunately, as a result of Labor's poor and reckless financial management of the country's budget, the government has decided to cut funding to the Department of Defence and, as the member for Berowra said, to the so-called low-hanging fruit of that department. An important consequence for the community of Labor's Strategic Reform Program, which is supposed to save \$20 billion over 10 years, is that such low-hanging fruit consists of things like paying for training and development needs of sectors of the Defence Force which are not considered high priority. At the very time that Australia has a significant number of troops overseas—clearly our highest priority—it does not make sense to be cutting funding in this way. A lot of sensible and positive programs that are not related to direct combat will be cut but the coalition does not believe that their funding should be cut—not in the current context and not ever. Yet this Labor government has decided that the defence department does not matter to the extent that their budget, as a percentage of GDP, is less than 1.5 per cent—the lowest it has been since 1938.

The May budget saw \$5.5 billion of cuts to the Defence portfolio. I ask the question: was there a specific strategic justification for these cuts? The answer is simple: of course not. Has the world become

safer or changed so much in the last couple of years that a capable Defence Force is deemed completely unnecessary? Of course not. At the same time, have conditions changed to the extent that the service of reservists in Army bands is no longer required? Of course not. The Labor government has abandoned its commitment to the reserves to the extent that specific funding allocated to Australian Defence Force reservists is so insufficient that some reserve units are down to as low as 20 days training per annum. This is despite numerous parliamentary studies of the Reserves agreeing that for an effective reserve service there must be a minimum of approximately 30 training days per year.

There are two main streams of Defence Force bands in the Brisbane area with which reservists assist. They are the regular Australian Army Band Brisbane and the Band of the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment which formed 58 years ago. The band of the RAR recently performed at the Ashgrove dawn service on Anzac Day this year for the 42nd year in a row. Unfortunately it may be the case that they will not be able to perform for the 43rd year in a row. It might be the case that, as the member for Berowra highlighted, there will be no buglers available to provide their services for the funeral of a veteran. At passing-out parades for diggers who have been deployed overseas to risk their lives for this country there will not be a band to welcome them home or to see them off.

A worrying development occurred on 24 August 2011 when it was announced that, for those in regimental bands, ongoing support for replacement and repair of instruments and financial support for things like ceremonial uniforms will be withdrawn. This is a threat to the Defence Force and the community. It is not trivial that these bands serve as an entertainment outlet for serving Australians both here and on overseas deployment; that they perform at Defence and government occasions; that they support the Defence Force's public and community relations events; or that they contribute to educational programs at schools and other charity organisations. I assure the Australian people that a re-elected coalition government will urgently seek to address the Gillard government's failure to properly support the ADF Reserves. I call on all members to support this motion.

Mr FITZGIBBON (Hunter—Chief Government Whip) (20:35): It is a great pleasure, Mr Deputy Speaker Murphy, to be addressing the parliament while you are in the chair. I begin my contribution by acknowledging what I am sure is a very genuine motion from the member for Berowra. I understand that he, like all of us in this place, appreciates the enormous contribution these people make through their participation in Defence bands and like organisations. They are invaluable to local communities; there is no doubt about that.

I am a late entrant to this debate because I realised about an hour ago that I might have caused this debate. It was me who, as then Minister for Defence, put in place the Strategic Reform Program and I suspect there may be, as other speakers have indicated, some link between the Strategic Reform Program and the Chief of Army's decision to curtail some of these activities. At the end of the day it is pretty simple: when I became defence minister we began, as we had committed to, the process of developing another Defence white paper. As we all know in this place, we live in an uncertain world in a region which is going through dynamic change, and no-one would contest the fact that, over time, as we continue to grow economically along with our near and not-so-near neighbours we will need to continue to develop Australia's defences in a way which allows us to continue our ability to defend ourselves independently of any other nation state.

Any look at our strategic outlook indicates that, over time, we will need to continue to spend more money on high-end capability, whether it be on air warfare destroyers, fast jets or other capabilities. There is only so much money a country can contribute to defence as a percentage of its GDP and, on average, we are up there with many comparable countries. It became clear to me as defence minister that, given our strategic outlook, we would not be able to find off the budget the sort of money we would need to be investing over the course of the next decade or more, so I came to the conclusion that the only way we could enhance the money coming from the centre of government was to find savings within defence.

I remember vividly suggesting to the Chief of the Defence Force and the secretary of the department at the time that, having had a thorough look at the organisation, we should be able to find \$10 billion internally—not \$10 billion to give back to the centre but \$10 billion to redirect into high-end capability within defence. Some people criticised me for that assessment, but having asked an independent private sector organisation to come in and study defence I was informed: 'You were wrong, Minister. You probably got it wrong when you suggested that \$10 billion could be found. We think \$20 billion could be found.' That was the recommendation from the independent consultant. So we put in place a strategic reform program not to take money out of defence but to make savings internally so that they could be redirected back into defence. That is what the strategic reform program is all about.

Having done that, we need to rely upon the service chiefs to make the decisions. If they want high-end capability and an efficient defence force they need to make some tough decisions about some of the legacy issues and how they might deal with them. It seems apparent to me—not that I look at these things all that closely these days—that the Chief of Army has

decided that there needs to be some rationalisation with respect to Army bands. I think it would be a very dangerous thing for this place, this parliament, this House of Representatives to look to intervene every time a service chief took a decision about how they might rationalise the spending within their own defence organisation.

Again, I accept the genuineness in the approach of the member for Berowra and of those who have supported him, but if we are going to have a strong defence force in the future we must have an ongoing reform program, we must rationalise, we must make savings and we must redirect those savings to the high-end capability in the force we need to protect our nation state. While not questioning anyone's genuineness, I think the parliament should stay out of these decisions. This is a relatively low-level decision for the Chief of Army and we should support him in his decision.

Mr EWEN JONES (Herbert) (20:40): Quite frankly, I am shocked. I rise to speak in support of my friend and colleague the member for Berowra and his motion that the band of the Royal New South Wales Lancers, based in Parramatta, makes a significant contribution to the local community and that Army bands across Australia make significant contributions to their local communities. I commend my friend for moving that this House recognise military bands.

I represent the seat of Herbert and the garrison city of Townsville. We are home to Australia's largest Army base—the 3rd Brigade at Lavarack Barracks. Not only do we house Australia's best troops and ready deployed forces but we are also home to the world famous 1RAR band. I must first commend the commander of 3rd Brigade, Brigadier Shane Caughey, for his commitment to ensuring that the Army maintains a strong community presence. His commitment to our community and to the greater North Queensland community must have played some part in his very much deserved Queen's Birthday honour.

The commander of 1RAR is Lieutenant Colonel Eamon Lenaghan. 1RAR is a battle-ready regiment. It maintains a high level of training for its primary role, which is to keep Australia safe. It continues a strong tradition of commitment to a number of community causes, but it is the 1RAR band which forms the social bond between all things military and civilian in my city. I note that the Chief of the Defence Force, General Hurley, was a former commander of 1RAR.

Under the Leadership of Major Lindsay Mee the 1RAR band plays a constant stream of community events. They play with joy and happiness. They play brilliantly. They have played the formal military role and they have also provided first-class musical accompaniment to a vast number of charitable and

community events. Everything from the senior citizens to the Ronald McDonald House ball will see the band providing dinner music, big band music, as well as jazz, blues, and rock and roll for every audience.

The band also provides musicians for the local music scene. I was lucky enough to be present for the 3RAR welcome parade to see the 1RAR band team with the Barrier Reef Symphony Orchestra and the 4th field regiment's artillery to present an open air rendition of Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture*. That, my friends, was a truly memorable evening. It is the willingness of the band to represent the entire community which I love the most. On Anzac Day the brass section can be seen at every dawn service, including Magnetic Island. They will then join together for the march along the Strand and will end up playing somewhere that evening.

I have a personal fondness for Grant Thomas. He plays the six-string bass in the main band and plays bass and lead in the rock band. He also plays trombone for the marching band—although the other band members tell me that he cannot play at all but they need the numbers so they give him a dummy trombone and let him pretend. His taste in music is wide and varied and he is just so happy to be there, playing music, but he is above all else a professional soldier. When the rock and roll band starts up Angie Currington moves from the back and brings a big and sassy jazz/blues voice to the front of house and really gets the party started.

The thing I like most about the bands we have in the military of Australia is that they do not have to do the public shows. They can quite legitimately concentrate on their role as a military band and as soldiers. That they see the greater good in the role they play in extending the hand of friendship from the ADF to the community speaks volumes of the individuals in the band and the leadership role they play. It is this pastoral and parish care of their staff which leads the way in setting the example and opening doors the right way.

There are many things in Townsville which need action. We have many problems and many things which require fixing. But we are an aspirational people. We care about our community. We care about the relationship between the ADF and our city and region. When everything is tough, and you turn up to a function and see the boys and girls of the 1RAR band setting up and laughing about the night ahead, you cannot help but feel good. This motion, from the father of the House, is a wonderful opportunity to thank the members of Australia's military bands for all the unpaid work they do for all our communities. I am glad we have them here and may they continue forever because, if they do stop, a part of history will be gone and it will be gone forever. These guys are soldiers

first, but they are professional musicians second. I talked to Brigadier Shayne Caughey about the 1RAR band. I asked him, 'What you are here for?' and he said, 'I am with the band. That is all I am; I am with the band.' It is about being special and it is about being proper and great for Townsville. Long may they live.

Dr MIKE KELLY (Eden-Monaro—Parliamentary Secretary for Defence) (20:45): First I would like to acknowledge the sentiments that have been expressed by my colleagues about the service members who perform in bands, regimental or reserve, and the service that they render to our nation as soldiers as well. I understand the sentiment that the member for Berowra is exhibiting on this issue. I commend his concern for the traditions of the Army. I certainly understand that. I understand very much the sentimentality that attaches to this but also the essence of the traditions and why those traditions are there and what constitutes the esprit de corps that makes the Australian Army what it is and the tradition that it has.

Of course, many things have happened over the years that I would not like to see disappear from the Australian Army. I was very sad to see that we did not have batmen any more when I joined up, and I missed my morning cups of tea and clean shoes, but they disappeared with the traditions of a bygone age. Certainly chiefs of army over the years have made all sorts of decisions about the conditions of service and the traditions that we have served under. Some of those have included the previous chiefs of army and the land commanders deciding that members would no longer wear berets in many circumstances. There was a great deal of emotional response to that issue as well.

But, at the end of the day, these are all decisions that the Chief of Army makes in relation to the authority that is delegated to him under the Defence Act. When we start trying to interfere with those decisions of the Chief of Army, where do we draw the line? This particular decision was not made as a result of any pressure put on the Chief of Army through the recent budget cuts because I remember these issues were being discussed with the Chief of Army prior to the last election. These were all part of his concept of rebalancing the Army. It really did not even relate to the strategic reform program as such. The issue that was being discussed then by the Chief of Army was his concern about reprioritising the efforts and maintaining his ability to sustain the actual band capability within the Army itself. I think the mistake that the member for Berowra makes in the motion is to conflate the regimental bands with the reserve bands, because they are different things. The regimental bands are made up of voluntary participants, permanent and reserve, who are not part of the band corps itself. There are certain formal band corps structures that are maintained within the Australian Army band corps itself. They are, in effect, professional musicians.

The Army supports reserve bands and also permanent band capability within that construct. So there are six regional reserve bands and there are over 20 Army reserve personnel who are working for Army support bands as well. They are part of that band corps structure. The Chief of Army has not decided that he intends to do away with the regimental bands. They may, in fact, continue. Hopefully they will continue. The only decision that the Chief of Army has made in this respect is that he will no longer replace the musical instruments, uniforms and other equipment held by the voluntary regimental bands so that he can prioritise his support to the actual Army band corps personnel.

Those regimental bands will hopefully be well supported by philanthropic groups and by those who raise funds through the normal regimental trust fund processes to make sure that those bands can sustain their instruments and their uniforms and the traditions associated with their regiments. Those who are involved with those regimental bands who wish to transfer to the reserve band structure or the band corps can do so and that will be facilitated. That structure consists presently of a 43-piece Australian regular Army band based in Canberra. Army support bands with 22 personnel each are located in various regions such as Townsville, Brisbane, Sydney and Wagga Wagga. The Army reserve bands of 40 Army reserve personnel and three regular personnel are located in Melbourne, Adelaide, Hobart, Newcastle, Perth and Darwin. Perth and Newcastle also contain an Army reserve pipes and drum component.

So the fine traditions of the Australian Army in relation to the band tradition will be maintained, supported and funded by the Chief of Army. I expect that the regimental bands will continue to draw support to sustain their traditions and their musical capability into the future. I certainly look forward to watching them in action at ceremonies around Australia.

Mr HAWKE (Mitchell) (20:51): It is a pleasure to rise to support the member for Berowra's fine motion on Army reserve bands tonight. It is interesting to follow the Parliamentary Secretary. I want to start by saying I was a member of the 1st/15th Royal New South Wales Lancers and, for the Parliamentary Secretary, to suggest there is any difference between regular service and reserve service is a falsehood. It is in fact a hallmark of a free society to have the citizen soldier at its disposal. The 21 battle honours of the 1st/15th, the most decorated regiment of the Australian Army, are a fine testament to that regiment and all of its serving men and women over the years.

This particular motion relates to the bands, and the band form part of the rich Australian cultural heritage that has developed through the Australian military. This band formed in 1891, and even in 1891, before Federation, £250 was received from the New South

Wales government and, after Federation, £150 from the Commonwealth government. If it was good enough in 1891 to fund this band, what is wrong with funding it today?

The service of the band has been recorded in the regimental history over more than 100 years. This is a regiment that has lasted the test of time. It has seen service in 21 different conflicts in defence of this nation. The rich tapestry that has been formed by the band goes to show the strength of our local community in Parramatta, and it was extraordinary to see the member for Parramatta come into this place and speak against the local Parramatta regiment, the 1st/15th Royal New South Wales Lancers, based at their historic headquarters at Parramatta. It was extraordinary for the member for Parramatta to come in here and say, 'That is an Army decision.' This is a direct decision of government that this motion relates to tonight—to fund the Australian Army and its reserve forces to be able to conduct its duties in Australia today—and it is the responsibility of this parliament to call to attention those deficiencies that come about when funding is not available for the reserve forces. We could fund it in 1891 with pounds from the New South Wales and Commonwealth governments, but we cannot afford to fund it today when we have \$10 billion for a Clean Energy Finance Corporation? We cannot find instruments for people to play in their regimental bands on our Anzac Days and at our memorial services in our communities, to help recruit young men and women to these reserve regiments to serve as citizen soldiers, to follow in that fine tradition of the Roman citizen soldier Cincinnatus—I am not a soldier; I am a farmer'—and of the minutemen, and of privateers in Elizabethan England? Free societies have been dominated by citizen soldiers, and the 1st/15th Royal New South Wales Lancers is a fine example of a citizen soldier regiment, giving us great service.

These people in the band do not do this for the money; I want to make that clear. They are not in this for the money. They do more service and voluntary activity than the government can ever possibly fund. We have heard from the member for Herbert about the dedication and the voluntary and selfless service that these young men and women provide. Yet this government says that there is no funding available for these great reserve regiments and for their bands. And that affects many bands. I have the minute here from Australian Army headquarters. These are the regiments affected: in 1st Brigade, 5RAR and 7RAR; in 7th Brigade, 2nd/14th LHR; and in 2nd Division, 1st/15th Royal New South Wales Lancers, the 4th/19th, the 23rd Field Regiment, the 2nd/10th Field Regiment, 8/7 RVR, 5/6 RVR, 9 RQR, 10/27 RSAR, 2/17 RNSWR, 25/49 RQR, the Queensland University Regiment, the Sydney University Regiment, the University of New South Wales Regiment and the Western Australian

University Regiment—all of those reserve regimental bands. For the parliamentary secretary to stand here today in this place and say, 'Somehow they will find the funding,' and that they should be a charity case is really demonstrating a lack of understanding of the importance of these reserve regimental bands and how they operate.

These people are already volunteering a lot of their time and a lot of their effort, putting their hearts and souls into these units that provide the social fabric at the heart of so many local communities around Australia. That is what a reserve regiment does. That is what a citizen soldier regiment does: it provides the corps at the heart of those communities—another social setup that provides unity and cohesion in society without the need for government to be involved.

If it was good enough to fund the RNSWR Lancers in 1891 with £250 from the state government and £150 from the Commonwealth government, it is good enough for us today to continue that fine tradition of 110 years of dedicated and selfless service that this regimental band and all of these regimental bands that I have mentioned, in all their societies all around Australia, provide, serving our nation, doing us proud and providing invaluable service to our communities. And it is a great motion before this House today to support them in what they do.

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (20:56): I note the contribution of the member for Mitchell; it was very passionate. In that spirit, in terms of declaring any particular interest, before I move to the motion raised by the member for Berowra, I will declare my particular interest, as a flight lieutenant in the RAAF Reserve, No. 23 (City of Brisbane) Squadron. Just before you get interested, I will just declare that I do not receive any money or any remuneration—no profit under the Crown. I do my work as a volunteer and do not get remunerated. I am not in a band. I have been in a band, but that did not receive any federal support. In fact, some could argue that it received almost no support at all! But that is another story for another day—on the curse of YouTube.

I turn to the more serious matter of the motion raised by the member for Berowra, the Hon. Philip Ruddock, who I always listen to and have a lot of respect for. I am on committees with him. However, I do think that this motion is a little unnecessary and a little bit misguided and, I would suggest, even perhaps an interference with the Chief of Army's duties to administer the Army in an efficient and effective manner.

I am from Brisbane, not from Sydney; I know that the member for Mitchell and the member for Berowra would have a better understanding of some of the decisions of the Chief of Army in terms of how they apply. Under the Howard government, in those times,

the changing of the guard and the band accompanying it at the Sydney barracks was a decision that was made for lots of reasons; it is not for me to inquire into. It was a decision made by the Chief of Army and I support that decision.

As I said in my declaration of interest, it is as a legal officer in the RAAF Reserve, not the Army or the Navy. But my understanding is that this motion does incorrectly refer to regimental bands as 'reserve bands'. I am sorry I did not hear the earlier conversations or whether that was corrected; I was otherwise engaged. But this motion refers specifically to the New South Wales Lancers' band and similar bands. My understanding is that such bands are in fact regimental bands. Yet the motion calls on the government to continue to support the Army Reserve bands, and my understanding is that this is factually incorrect.

Obviously, the Gillard Labor government already supports reserve bands and will continue to do so. I am advised that we support six regional reserve bands and over 20 Army Reserve personnel who work in four Army support bands. These personnel and bands are part of the Australian Army Band Corps, or the AABC. The government supports six regional reserve bands, and over 20 Army Reserve personnel who work in four Army support bands. These personnel and bands are part of the Australian Army Band Corps. Following a review into Army bands in May 2011, a decision was made by the Chief of Army to transfer the resourcing of regimental bands from the Commonwealth to the associated regimental associations. Regimental bands are staffed by volunteers from both permanent and part-time Army personnel from the parent regiment. The members of these bands are already employed by the Army in other roles. For example, they may be employed by the Army as a cook, but volunteer to play in the regimental band in their spare time, and perhaps even for no remuneration. Regimental bands are established to provide musical services primarily for a specific unit or regiment.

The decision is an administrative matter which is delegated to the Chief of Army and, as I am sure those opposite would know, respecting that chain of command is pursuant to the Commonwealth Defence Act 1903. This motion, as I read it, proposes to interfere with the decision of the Chief of Army. The Chief of Army made a decision to no longer replace the musical instruments, uniforms and other equipment held by the voluntary regimental bands—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Murphy): Order! The time allotted for this debate has expired. The debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting. The honourable member will have leave to continue speaking when the debate is resumed.

Olive Oil

Ms RISHWORTH (Kingston) (21:00): I move:

That this House:

- (1) welcomes the introduction of the Australian Standard for Olive and Olive Pomace Oils in 2011 which clearly defines the grade, content and quality of olive oil products and establishes labelling and packaging requirements;
- (2) notes the findings of an analysis conducted recently by the Australian Olive Association which revealed that a significant number of imported olive oils in particular, still fail to comply with this national standard;
- (3) recognises that misleading labelling practices present considerable challenges for the commercial viability of our domestic olive oil industry, lead to low levels of consumer confidence in olive oil products and prevent consumers from making informed choices about the products they consume, and which may have adverse consequences, including on their health;
- (4) welcomes the news that some retailers intend to phase in the voluntary national standard in light of the recent findings, and calls on these retailers to do so in a timely and rigorous manner; and
- (5) urges all retailers in Australia to adopt and enforce the Australian Standard for Olive and Olive Pomace Oils so that consumers can make informed purchasing choices, and so that producers of accurately labelled olive oils benefit from a level playing field.

I am very pleased to move this motion to highlight some of the ongoing challenges faced by our domestic olive oil industry and some challenges faced by the Australian consumers of olive oil products.

I have previously spoken in the House about some of these challenges facing our olive oil industry and, in particular, facing the olive growers and olive oil producers that make a wonderful product on the Fleurieu Peninsula, which includes a portion of my own electorate. In 2009 I raised the concerning lack of transparency in the labelling of olive oil products and the consequences for industry competition and consumer protection. I have advocated for the development of clear guidelines to differentiate between various qualities of olive oil and to ensure accuracy and clarity in the labelling of olive oil products.

Since that time, I am very pleased that Standards Australia has introduced an Australian standard for olive and olive-pomace oils which clearly defines the grade, content and quality of olive oil products and establishes labelling and packaging requirements. I understand that Standards Australia received almost 800 submissions throughout the drafting of the standard and that there was strong support from both consumers and stakeholders such as olive oil producers to introduce a standard to effectively address the issues facing the industry.

I welcome the standard, which was introduced in 2011 and defines a number of important areas: (1)