

*Thursday, 25 February 2010*

The **SPEAKER (Mr Harry Jenkins)** took the chair at 9.00 am and read prayers.

**PROPOSED JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON  
CYBER SAFETY**

**Mr ALBANESE** (Grayndler—Leader of the House) (9.00 am)—I move:

- (1) (a) That a Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety be appointed to inquire into and report on:
    - (i) the online environment in which Australian children currently engage, including key physical points of access (schools, libraries, internet cafes, homes, mobiles) and stakeholders controlling or able to influence that engagement (governments, parents, teachers, traders, internet service providers, content service providers);
    - (ii) the nature, prevalence, implications of and level of risk associated with cyber-safety threats, such as:
      - abuse of children online (cyber-bullying, cyber-stalking and sexual grooming);
      - exposure to illegal and inappropriate content;
      - inappropriate social and health behaviours in an online environment (e.g. technology addiction, online promotion of anorexia, drug usage, underage drinking and smoking);
      - identity theft; and
      - breaches of privacy.
    - (iii) Australian and international responses to current cyber-safety threats (education, filtering, regulation, enforcement) their effectiveness and costs to stakeholders, including business;
    - (iv) opportunities for cooperation across Australian stakeholders and with international stakeholders in dealing with cyber-safety issues;
    - (v) examining the need to ensure that the opportunities presented by, and economic benefits of, new technologies are maximised;
    - (vi) ways to support schools to change their culture to reduce the incidence and harmful effects of cyber-bullying including by:
      - increasing awareness of cyber-safety good practice;
      - encouraging schools to work with the broader school community, especially parents, to develop consistent, whole school approaches; and
      - analysing best practice approaches to training and professional development programs and resources that are available to enable school staff to effectively respond to cyber-bullying; and
    - (vii) analysing information on achieving and continuing world's best practice safeguards; and
  - (b) such other matters relating to cyber-safety referred by the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy or either House.
- (2) That the committee consist of 12 members, 4 Members of the House of Representatives to be nominated by the Government Whip or Whips, 2 Members of the House of Representatives to be nominated by the Opposition Whip or Whips and one Member from the independent Members, 3 Senators to be nominated by the Leader of the Government in the Senate, and 2 Senators to be nominated by the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate or by any minority group or groups or independent Senator or independent Senators.
  - (3) That every nomination of a member of the committee be notified in writing to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.
  - (4) That the members of the committee hold office as a joint select committee until the House of Representatives is dissolved or expires by effluxion of time.
  - (5) That the committee elect a Government member as its chair.
  - (6) That the committee elect a non-Government member as its deputy chair who shall act as chair of the committee at any time when the chair is not present at a meeting of the committee, and at any time when the chair and deputy chair are not present at a meeting of the committee the members present shall elect another member to act as chair at that meeting.
  - (7) That, in the event of an equally divided vote, the chair, or the deputy chair when acting as chair, have a casting vote.
  - (8) That 3 members of the committee constitute a quorum of the committee provided that in a deliberative meeting the quorum shall include 1 Government member of either House and 1 non-Government member of either House.
  - (9) That the committee have power to appoint subcommittees consisting of 3 or more of its members and to refer to any subcommittee any matter which the committee is empowered to examine.
  - (10) That the committee appoint the chair of each subcommittee who shall have a casting vote only and at any time when the chair of a subcommittee is not present at a meeting of the subcommittee the members of the subcommittee present shall elect another member of that subcommittee to act as chair at that meeting.
  - (11) That 2 members of a subcommittee constitute the quorum of that subcommittee, provided that in a deliberative meeting the quorum shall include 1 Government member of either House and 1 non-Government member of either House.
  - (12) That members of the committee who are not members of a subcommittee may participate in the proceedings of that subcommittee but shall not vote, move any motion or be counted for the purpose of a quorum.
  - (13) That the committee or any subcommittee have power to call for witnesses to attend and for documents to be produced.
  - (14) That the committee or any subcommittee may conduct proceedings at any place it sees fit.
  - (15) That the committee or any subcommittee have power to adjourn from time to time and to sit during any ad-

jourment of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

- (16) That the committee may report from time to time but that it present its final report no later than 11 February 2011.
- (17) That the provisions of this resolution, so far as they are inconsistent with the standing orders, have effect notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders.
- (18) That a message be sent to the Senate acquainting it of this resolution and requesting that it concur and take action accordingly.

I will speak briefly to this proposition. It is the fulfilment of a commitment that the Australian Labor Party made during the election campaign to investigate and to have a parliamentary committee which would investigate and report on cybersafety in Australia as part of our plan for cybersafety. The establishment of this committee fulfils this important election commitment. As the Deputy Prime Minister stated earlier this month, we want to ensure that we can build on what is happening in schools today to combat cyberbullying, so by having a dedicated, purpose-specific committee looking at the issue of cybersafety, we will be able, as a parliament, to be better informed about the policies and programs that can make a difference.

Cybersafety skills are a vital tool for all internet users. Engagement with the online environment offers powerful sources of information and entertainment. However, we must also recognise that there is a potential for malicious behaviour and harmful effects. Cybersafety incidents, such as online identity theft, cyberbullying and online breaches of privacy, can have both short- and long-term effects, such as physical harm, antisocial behaviour and financial loss. Along with these, computer addiction, online grooming and other effects, such as inadvertently becoming victims of these issues, present broader risks as a result of inadequate cybersafety skills. Given the extensive use of computers for internet usage across the education sector and in our society, we need to address cybersafety issues as a matter of priority.

The government has delivered on our commitment to establish a Consultative Working Group on cybersafety involving industry and child protection organisations. We have also established a youth advisory group to examine cybersafety issues from a young person's perspective. In addition, the government will introduce into parliament legislation for the mandatory ISP level filtering of refused classification content. Particularly topical have been incidents of suicide and self-harm among young people as a result of cyberbullying.

It is proposed that this committee will address the nature, prevalence and implications of cybersafety threats, such as abuse of children online; avenues to make the internet a safer place for young people to socialise, research and engage with broader society online; and identity theft and breaches of privacy. We

know that issues have been raised due to concern about cyberbullying, cyberstalking and sexual grooming online, and we need to address this issue as a society. It is appropriate that parliament play a role in this. It will be able to do this through this joint committee, which I am sure will operate on a bipartisan basis, as most committees in this House and in the Senate do. This resolution, I note, will ensure that there are representations from both houses and from both of the major political parties in this House. I note also that there will be broader representation. The government was pleased to ensure that there was representation of an Independent member of this House of Representatives, the member for Lyne, who indicated his enthusiasm for being able to make a positive contribution to the work of this committee.

The committee will also examine Australian and international responses to current cybersafety threats and their effectiveness. The committee will seek opportunities to engage with stakeholders in dealing with these issues, as well as analysing information on emerging strategies in dealing with cybersafety. The committee is also to inquire into and report on other such matters relating to cybersafety as the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy refers from the Senate or from the House of Representatives. I congratulate and acknowledge the work of both the Chief Government Whip and the Chief Opposition Whip in ensuring that this important reform has been able to move forward in such a constructive fashion.

Question agreed to.

**ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND  
BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION  
AMENDMENT (RECREATIONAL FISHING FOR  
MAKO AND PORBEAGLE SHARKS) BILL 2010**

**First Reading**

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by **Mr Garrett**.

Bill read a first time.

**Second Reading**

**Mr GARRETT** (Kingsford Smith—Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts) (9.07 am)—I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

On 25 January this year I announced that the government would be acting to address the disproportionate impacts on recreational fishers that have resulted from the inflexible relationship between our national environmental law—the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (the EPBC Act)—and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals. This bill specifically addresses those impacts. The government takes its international obligations seriously; however, it is important that our domestic legislation appropriately reflects and imple-