

It is a testament to the professionalism of the Defence Force that these niche capabilities in one battalion can be deployed simultaneously across the world. It is a great result. To Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Gallaway, who is the commanding officer, his officers and the soldiers of the 1st Battalion: well done. You train and you work hard. You are there when your country needs you, but of course you are going overseas to look after people who are less privileged than we are. It is a great outcome.

I know that, in relation to Iraq, the opposition are absolutely salivating about the next election. The men and women of the Australian Defence Force in my electorate say to me, 'When can we go back to Iraq?' They think it is a wonderful opportunity to do great work for the people over there. But of course they also appreciate the other deployments that we have been involved in: Afghanistan, Timor-Leste and the Solomon Islands. Currently we have reservists in the Solomon Islands. Reservists these days represent about 20 per cent of Australia's forces deployed overseas. That is not widely known. Reservists these days have a very significant role in deployments that occur, and they come from across the country and across all disciplines, including very technical specialist disciplines. I wish the soldiers from the 1st Battalion well. I hope, trust and know that they will come home safely.

Telstra

Ms BIRD (Cunningham) (10.04 am)—I take the opportunity today to put on the record of the parliament my concern about a decision by Telstra to remove a pay phone from a suburb in my electorate called Otford. It is an amazing story. I have already had an issue with Telstra over the removal of a pay phone at the technical college at Wollongong. They say, 'There is another phone nearby,' but they never look at the site to see the implications in accessing that other phone. At the TAFE facility where they removed the phone it meant that the women—they were running largely women's courses in the building—had to pass through darkened areas of the college and through some bush type area to get to another phone. I have been telling Telstra that, when they make decisions to remove these pay phones, they need to have some sort of site inspection rather than just saying that there is another phone a certain distance away.

The issue of the phone at Otford was raised with me by Ian Nichols, a local resident, who has been running an effective campaign in the local community up there. They have hung up tin cans and put up a sign saying that this is Telstra's new service. The problem with Otford is that it is in the escarpment, so it is a major bushwalking area. It is the base for the bushfire services and it is the point where the buses come—in particular, the school buses. That is where they have removed the phone. Telstra's response is that there is another phone on the train station. You have to know the area. This is not a case of being able to see the train station from the small centre of the town. You have to know where the train station is. You have to walk through a bush track and cross the rail lines to get onto the train station—which you are not supposed to access anyway if you do not have a ticket—to use the phone. That is bad enough for a bushwalker with an emergency or for someone who wants to call out the fire service, but it is absolutely inappropriate for kids to be required to do that.

Mr Nichols, who lives at the house outside of which the phone was located, woke up one morning and noticed that it was gone. He rang Telstra, who told him that it was not marked for removal—it must have been vandals or it must have been stolen. He indicated to them that the whole phone booth was gone and that the wires had been cut and tied back up the pole. He was suspicious; vandals would not have been that considerate with the facility. Telstra continued to deny they had removed it. They sent out a technician. The technician said, 'Look, guys, this is a professional job; you have removed it.' Telstra then claimed that they did have the phone on a list and they had put a sticker on it three months earlier. When Mr Nichols said that nobody had seen a sticker, they said that the sticker must have been stolen. It is a *Fawlty Towers* farce. I have written to the regional Countrywide manager. He should come on site, see the problems and return that pay phone to Otford.

Ryan Electorate: School Funding

Mr JOHNSON (Ryan) (10.07 am)—I am pleased to speak in the parliament today about the Investing in Our Schools Program, which the students of the schools in the Ryan electorate, their parents and principals warmly welcome. I strongly commend the government for its recent announcement that an additional \$181 million will be allocated to this program on top of the initial \$1 billion that the government has put aside for all kinds of wonderful projects in our schools. The school I recently visited in the Ryan electorate, Mount Crosby State School, and its P&C were delighted to receive their money. An interesting point they made was that it seems odd that the federal government is getting involved in projects in state primary schools and state schools generally which ought to be the prerogative and under the jurisdiction of the state governments. I absolutely agreed with that sentiment—it is odd that the national government is putting in \$1 billion for projects that should be within the remit of state governments.

I want to touch on some of these projects because it opens the mind as to how incompetent and negligent our state governments are. Fancy the national government of a country having to provide money to repair toilet