In the science area, Senator Carr promised complete freedom to scientists, the right to speak without fear or favour. We needed scientists to speak out. Indeed, they would be encouraged to speak out. That is, of course, until one took a whack at the government. All of a sudden we needed appropriate restrictions. We needed protocols, and they had to be rushed into place. So, when the CSIRO’s Dr Spash had a peer reviewed article for publication that was critical of the government, he was denied permission. Not until the censor’s pen had done its bit would the full scientific gems and thoughts be allowed to circulate to us, the great unwashed. George Orwell would have been proud. I understand that Senator Carr’s ministerial title will soon become ‘Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science, Research and Truth’.

As an aside, Labor’s censorship now also extends to the fact that if a listener wants a copy of this speech I will not be allowed to mail it to them using my meagre postage entitlement under Labor’s new rules. Reason: I have criticised the government. However, if I gave a speech and misled this place by saying what a good job the government was doing I would be allowed to use my allowance to mail out the speech. The sinister control-freakishness of the Prime Minister now reaches from members of parliament to our scientific community. This culture of censor-
ship, vetting and 'no criticism of government to be tolerated' supposedly will help foster and grow innovation. I say to the government: this is the culture that fosters the Trabant of last century totalitarianism, not 21st-century thinking.

The next promise Senator Carr made was to streamline the highly successful Commercial Ready program, which helped transition our innovations from design bench or laboratory to the marketplace. The government's very first budget saw the abolition of the Commercial Ready program in May 2008. Not satisfied with announcing its abolition on budget night, Labor and Senator Carr backdated the decision by some 14 days, putting a spiteful edge on a foolish decision. When asked, Labor's finance minister, Mr. Tanner, said that the Rudd government's best decision in its first budget was the abolition of the Commercial Ready program. When quizzed, Senator Carr said the program was abolished because he was not in the business of giving money to millionaires. Yes, that is right: 'not in the business of giving money to millionaires'. Senator Carr's and Mr. Tanner's comments are on the public record for all to see.

So a prime mover of innovation in our country was axed—all $700-plus million of it. What for? To make room, no doubt, for the $2-plus billion of the pink batts program. Now, there is innovation for you! There is smart thinking! There is a long-term investment for our country—getting Irish backpackers to install imported US pink batts in the name of stimulating our economy. It would be quite hilarious if it were not so serious. This scrapping of the Commercial Ready program was a silly, short-sighted, ideologically motivated decision, and it was condemned by all with any knowledge of the innovation system.

This is what a former Labor science minister had to say about the abolition:

'It is truly disappointing to see such an effective government initiative scrapped with seemingly little regard for Australia's innovative future.'

So said Mr. Chris Schatt, former Labor science minister. What about former Australian of the Year and Australian Living Treasure Sir Gustav Nossal? He described it as short-sighted. The CEO of Cochlear, Chris Roberts, described it as 'the saddest and dumbest decision of the entire budget'. Alastair Murdock, CEO of Spirogene, said:

These are not a group of Liberal flunkies; these are people like former Labor ministers and national treasures, who actually understand the innovation space, roundly condemning Labor and their decision.

Why did they do that? You just cannot turn innovation off and on and pretend that no lasting damage has been caused. Innovation relies on security, certainty and trusting a government to keep its word. A stable investment environment is paramount to innovation success. Having promised to streamline the Commercial Ready program, Senator Carr abolished it. That is one interpretation of streamlining—he sure got rid of all the paperwork. But what it shows is that this government's word is not its bond. Senator Carr clearly intended to abolish the scheme, because Labor crowed about it as their best decision, and Senator Carr said he would not give money to millionaires. I can say that I have not met one millionaire in my travels who would have been a beneficiary of this scheme.

This lack of integrity in public utterances is most regrettable. But, of course, it is part and parcel of what the minister did in the May estimates when he absented himself and