At last, Turnbull is taking the fight to the Labor Party

What a great Christmas present for Coalition supporters: Malcolm Turnbull is at last going to take the fight right into the Labor heartland and attack Bill Shorten on all fronts for his outrageous lies during the campaign.

Mediscare was fostered and pursued by Shorten and seemingly assisted by the ABC; it nearly resulted in an election loss for the government. Unfortunately, Turnbull did not attack this horrendous fallacy from the outset. Shorten has now followed up with a similar scare campaign concerning pensions and has caused anxiety among the aged and infirm.

The government must get behind the Prime Minister and provide a concerted and credible assault on the entire union-backed Labor Party.

N. Bailey, Nicholls, ACT

Solutions to our financial plight are too obvious but unpopular, so it’s all back to preservation for our politicians. The vacillations of Malcolm Turnbull between conviction politics and essential policies are now the last gyrations of this weak leader. The republic debate has re-emerged as a distraction. The recent flirtation with carbon taxes was rejected; let’s see how long this last conviction will distract from reality. The credit rating agencies have made their verdict.

Alexander Kallas, Somers, Vic

Head of state claims

The sole reason Malcolm Turnbull gives to justify a highly complicated, expensive and divisive process, involving a plebiscite and a referendum, to remove our oldest legal and constitutional institution, is his claim that the head of state must be Australian.

So why in the recent election campaign did he give his considered explanation for not being present for the repatriation of Vietnam war dead? Turnbull said in June, “the Australian government, the Australian people, were represented by our head of state, by the Governor-General, Peter Cosgrove, the highest office holder in our nation”? We were entitled to think then that he had accepted there was no need for any fundamental change to our crowned republic, now or at the end of the reign.
**David Flint, Australians for Constitutional Monarchy, Bondi, NSW**

**Treaty’s benefits**

Greg Craven’s article is worthwhile reading, although his powerful arguments suffer from exaggeration (“Beware the false promise of treaty”, 17/12). His main point is that Aborigines will be let down by the outcome of treaties; that we would be less likely to be duped if we opted solely for constitutional recognition.

His logic? He treats Aboriginals as fools when concluding we think a treaty stands above the Constitution. In my book *Treaty and Statehood* I make the point that treaties are a compromise and as they are made by government, they are subject thereto.

Craven condemns states from entering into treaty talks. There is a lack of credible Aboriginal policy at the national level, so naturally states are going to fill the gap. Constitutional recognition is worth pursuing, but without backup, what will it deliver?

Craven is probably right about today’s conservative political climate and the attacks any decent policy will attract. But justice can’t be sidelined because the nutters have the floor.

A well-crafted treaty that delivers forms of justice, while leaving intact the benefits and lifestyle of the majority will produce a more united society that acknowledges differences.

**Michael Mansell, Launceston, Tas**

**Traitor, not heretic**

Edmund Campion’s co-religionists long claimed that the Jesuit martyr was executed in 1581 for his faith, not his politics. But Campion was hanged, drawn and quartered after indictment and conviction as a traitor, rather than burned at the stake as a heretic would have been. The distinction may seem trivial, but it had considerable significance in terms of the relations of church and state. So I hope Greg Sheridan’s version is a relic of his upbringing, not the foundation myth of a promising educational enterprise (“Western civilisation in safe hands at Campion College”, 17/12).

**Wilfrid Prest, emeritus professor of history, University of Adelaide, SA**

**Christmas bonus**
It’s going to be a happy Christmas at our place, thanks to all those lefties who’ve given us so much to chortle about. The old man doesn’t know if he wants to be a zie or a hir so we decided we’d take turns (“‘Husband’, ‘wife’ now off limits, says guide”, 16/12).

It should bring some Christmas cheer to our love life. Then I thought it’d be helpful if my old man could have a few extra wives to do the housework and cooking. This would have the bonus of a bit more in our welfare cheque, because Centrelink is a bit like Santa, if you know the right boxes to tick. It just keep giving and giving.

Joanna Hackett, Macleay Island, Qld