



Hansard

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

60th Parliament

Tuesday 7 February 2023

Office-holders of the Legislative Assembly

60th Parliament

Speaker

Maree Edwards

Deputy Speaker

Matt Fregon

Acting Speakers

Juliana Addison, Christine Couzens, Jordan Crugnale, Paul Edbrooke, Bronwyn Halfpenny,
Paul Hamer, Michaela Settle, Meng Heang Tak and Jackson Taylor

Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Premier

Daniel Andrews

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Deputy Premier

Jacinta Allan

Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and Leader of the Opposition

John Pesutto

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and Deputy Leader of the Opposition

David Southwick

Leader of the Nationals

Peter Walsh

Deputy Leader of the Nationals

Emma Kealy

Leader of the House

Mary-Anne Thomas

Manager of Opposition Business

James Newbury

Members of the Legislative Assembly

60th Parliament

Member	District	Party	Member	District	Party
Addison, Juliana	Wendouree	ALP	Lambert, Nathan	Preston	ALP
Allan, Jacinta	Bendigo East	ALP	Maas, Gary	Narre Warren South	ALP
Andrews, Daniel	Mulgrave	ALP	McCurdy, Tim	Ovens Valley	Nat
Battin, Brad	Berwick	Lib	McGhie, Steve	Melton	ALP
Benham, Jade	Mildura	Nat	McLeish, Cindy	Eildon	Lib
Britnell, Roma	South-West Coast	Lib	Marchant, Alison	Bellarine	ALP
Brooks, Colin	Bundoora	ALP	Matthews-Ward, Kathleen	Broadmeadows	ALP
Bull, Josh	Sunbury	ALP	Mercurio, Paul	Hastings	ALP
Bull, Tim	Gippsland East	Nat	Mullahy, John	Glen Waverley	ALP
Cameron, Martin	Morwell	Nat	Newbury, James	Brighton	Lib
Carbines, Anthony	Ivanhoe	ALP	O'Brien, Danny	Gippsland South	Nat
Carroll, Ben	Niddrie	ALP	O'Brien, Michael	Malvern	Lib
Cheeseman, Darren	South Barwon	ALP	O'Keefe, Kim	Shepparton	Nat
Cianflone, Anthony	Pascoe Vale	ALP	Pallas, Tim	Werribee	ALP
Cleland, Annabelle	Euroa	Nat	Pearson, Danny	Essendon	ALP
Connolly, Sarah	Laverton	ALP	Pesutto, John	Hawthorn	Lib
Couzens, Christine	Geelong	ALP	Read, Tim	Brunswick	Greens
Crewther, Chris	Mornington	Lib	Richards, Pauline	Cranbourne	ALP
Crugnale, Jordan	Bass	ALP	Richardson, Tim	Mordialloc	ALP
D'Ambrosio, Liliana	Mill Park	ALP	Riordan, Richard	Polwarth	Lib
De Martino, Daniela	Monbulk	ALP	Rowswell, Brad	Sandringham	Lib
de Vietri, Gabrielle	Richmond	Greens	Sandell, Ellen	Melbourne	Greens
Dimopoulos, Steve	Oakleigh	ALP	Settle, Michaela	Eureka	ALP
Edbrooke, Paul	Frankston	ALP	Smith, Ryan	Warrandyte	Lib
Edwards, Maree	Bendigo West	ALP	Southwick, David	Caulfield	Lib
Fowles, Will	Ringwood	ALP	Spence, Ros	Kalkallo	ALP
Fregon, Matt	Ashwood	ALP	Staikos, Nick	Bentleigh	ALP
George, Ella	Lara	ALP	Suleyman, Natalie	St Albans	ALP
Grigorovitch, Luba	Kororoit	ALP	Tak, Meng Heang	Clarinda	ALP
Groth, Sam	Nepean	Lib	Taylor, Jackson	Bayswater	ALP
Guy, Matthew	Bulleen	Lib	Taylor, Nina	Albert Park	ALP
Halfpenny, Bronwyn	Thomastown	ALP	Theophanous, Kat	Northcote	ALP
Hall, Katie	Footscray	ALP	Thomas, Mary-Anne	Macedon	ALP
Hamer, Paul	Box Hill	ALP	Tilley, Bill	Benambra	Lib
Haylett, Martha	Ripon	ALP	Vallence, Bridget	Evelyn	Lib
Hibbins, Sam	Prahran	Greens	Vulin, Emma	Pakenham	ALP
Hilakari, Mathew	Point Cook	ALP	Walsh, Peter	Murray Plains	Nat
Hodgett, David	Croydon	Lib	Walters, Iwan	Greenvale	ALP
Home, Melissa	Williamstown	ALP	Ward, Vicki	Eltham	ALP
Hutchins, Natalie	Sydenham	ALP	Wells, Kim	Rowville	Lib
Kathage, Lauren	Yan Yean	ALP	Wight, Dylan	Tarneit	ALP
Kealy, Emma	Lowan	Nat	Williams, Gabrielle	Dandenong	ALP
Kilkenny, Sonya	Carrum	ALP	Wilson, Belinda	Narre Warren North	ALP
	Narracan		Wilson, Jess	Kew	Lib

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

ALP – Australian Labor Party, Greens – Australian Greens,
Ind – Independent, Lib – Liberal Party of Australia, Nat – National Party of Australia

CONTENTS

CONDOLENCES	
Hon. John Landy AC CVO MBE.....	65
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE	
Health system.....	76
State Electricity Commission	78
State Electricity Commission	80
State Electricity Commission	81
Mental health.....	83
State Electricity Commission	84
Bail laws	85
State Electricity Commission	86
Education funding	87
State Electricity Commission	88
BILLS	
Human Source Management Bill 2023.....	90
Introduction and first reading	90
Health Legislation Amendment (Information Sharing) Bill 2023.....	90
Introduction and first reading	90
MEMBERS	
Acting speakers.....	90
ANNOUNCEMENTS	
Deputy Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.....	91
BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE	
Notices of motion	91
DOCUMENTS	
Judicial Commission of Victoria.....	91
Report 2021–22	91
Documents	91
BILLS	
Racing Amendment (Unauthorised Access) Bill 2022.....	93
Appropriation.....	93
MOTIONS	
Lord’s Prayer.....	93
Joint standing committee on road safety	93
Standing and sessional orders.....	93
BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE	
Adjournment	94
Program	94
MEMBERS STATEMENTS	
Michael Boland.....	99
Woodchop events	100
Floods	100
Kalkallo electorate schools.....	100
Rural and regional roads	101
Clarinda electorate.....	101
Pest control.....	101
Sunbury electorate	102
Mount Beauty Secondary College.....	102
Roadside vegetation	102
Black Dog Ride	102
Paul Richardson.....	103
Rosebud Hospital.....	103
Bancoora Surf Life Saving Club.....	103
Pahran electorate	104
Jane Satchwell.....	104
Family violence	104
Melton electorate infrastructure	105
Thomastown electorate schools	105
Lunar New Year	106
Emi Luppino	106
Belinda Young.....	106

Ash Wednesday commemoration.....	106
Bayswater electorate	106
Elaine Wilson and Cheryl Sampson	107
George Pearson.....	107
Ripon electorate public transport	107
Quarters Primary School.....	107
BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE	
Sessional orders	108
ADDRESS TO PARLIAMENT	
Governor's speech.....	124
Address-in-reply	124
BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE	
Postponement.....	141
ADJOURNMENT	
Walshs Road, Goughs Bay.....	142
Wendouree electorate infrastructure.....	142
Albury Wodonga Health.....	143
Mordialloc electorate schools.....	143
Grampians Health.....	144
Warnet jetties	145
Junk food advertising	146
Preston South Primary School.....	146
Maternal and child health services.....	147
State Electricity Commission	148
Responses	148

Tuesday 7 February 2023

The SPEAKER (Maree Edwards) took the chair at 12:03 pm, read the prayer and made an acknowledgement of country.

*Condolences***Hon. John Landy AC CVO MBE**

Daniel ANDREWS (Mulgrave – Premier) (12:04): I move:

That this house expresses its sincere sorrow at the death of the Honourable John Landy AC CVO MBE and places on record its acknowledgement of the valuable services rendered by him to the Parliament and the people of Victoria as the Governor of Victoria from 2001 to 2006.

A bronze statue of John Landy casts a shadow over Olympic Park. Below it on a plaque reads the word ‘sportsmanship’ and the story of one of the greatest moments in Australian sporting history, on 11 March 1956. The statue does not immortalise a great win or a broken record; instead, it immortalises an act of kindness, an act of fair play, an act of sportsmanship. John had stopped his own race to help Ron Clarke, who had taken a fall. As runners passed the fallen Clarke, John ran back to check on him. Clarke slowly rose to his feet, with John urging him on. In the seconds that passed, it was thought that John may have missed his chance at a world record, but incredibly he still won the race. The next day an open letter was published in the *Sun News-Pictorial*. It said:

In a nutshell, you sacrificed your chance of a world record to go to the aid of a fallen rival. And in pulling up, trotting back to Ron Clarke, muttering “Sorry” and deciding to chase the field, you achieved much more than any world record.

John Landy was one of the greatest runners of all time, but it speaks to his life of service to others that he is best remembered for a time where he decided not to run. Landy Field, a track named in his honour just outside of Geelong, is still a place where school groups and young athletes meet and train. His legacy as a runner will always be an ongoing inspiration for Victorian athletes, both young and old.

While John was a man of many pursuits, he approached everything and everyone with that central sense of kindness – a kind nature. After his running career finished, he continued to contribute greatly to the people of Victoria. He was a scientist, a teacher, an agriculture expert and an accomplished author. John was a foundation member of the Land Conservation Council. He was a fellow of the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science and he was the patron of the Invasive Species Council and many other organisations that spoke to his passion, his belief and his fundamental generosity. His passion for our natural environment started when he was very young, and he would go on to become a lifelong conservationist and naturalist. He even donated his personal collection of butterflies to the national museum, which is still appreciated as one of the finest collections of its kind in the country to this day.

John Landy, as we know, became Governor of Victoria in 2001 – an inspired choice by then Premier Steve Bracks – and naturally he carried his trademark humility and sense of service and sense of purpose in the service of others into that important role. It is said that early into his time as Governor, John was stopped by an aide as he tried to enter the Governor’s dining room one evening. John had overheard Government House staff – the MC for the evening – asking everyone to be seated for the arrival of the official party. John, in a quintessential representation of the sort of person he was, had failed to realise that the guests that were being referred to as the official party were in fact him and Lynne. That sense of humility, that sense of being a generous person, being someone far more concerned with the welfare and prospects and ambitions and hopes of others, rather than his own position, defined his time at Government House and indeed the work of his wife Lynne.

He focused much of his attention on regional Victoria during his time as Governor – a point of pride for him – and he was never happier than when he was in the country, when he was in rural and regional parts of our state. While touring our great regions, John would regularly chat with local farmers, shopkeepers

and people in civic leadership. He was at home and comfortable and felt that he was making a really profound contribution to rural and regional parts of our state, and I think it is beyond question that indeed he was. No medals or honours or titles ever changed his outlook, his personality, what made him tick, his inherent decency or his warmth towards others. That was just who John Landy was.

One of John's last responsibilities as Governor of Victoria was to deliver the Queen's baton to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at the opening of the 2006 Commonwealth Games. It is fitting that he marked his retirement as Governor with a demonstration of his athleticism, even at the sprightly age of 75.

All Victorians owe John a great deal of thanks. He leaves a compassionate legacy, one that will continue to inspire athletes and so many more for generations to come – a legacy, an effort, a contribution that has helped protect Victoria's forests, our waterways and species. Through all of this he has touched the lives of countless Victorians in many different ways. But to his wife Lynne, his children Matthew and Alison and his grandchildren, he was not that bronze statue, the Olympic medallist or the Governor of Victoria; he was just John – John the gentle husband, John the loving father, John who loved to sit in his garden with a beer in hand. We are all richer for the generous life of John Landy and poorer for his passing. Vale, John Landy.

John PESUTTO (Hawthorn – Leader of the Opposition) (12:11): I am pleased to join with the Premier in support of this condolence motion. The passing of the Honourable John Landy on 24 February last year marked the loss of one of Australia's most respected, accomplished and universally admired public figures. For Victoria it is a loss that continues to reverberate today, almost a year on – such was John Landy's contribution to our public life, and such was the warm affection with which he was regarded and the high esteem in which he was held. But with the sadness that comes from his passing so too comes our gratitude for his remarkable legacy and for the opportunity to celebrate and draw inspiration from a life so large and well lived. John Landy was a very proud Victorian. He left a positive impression on all who met him and an indelible mark on our great state, discharging the diverse yet complementary roles he held with distinction and with his trademark tenacity, intellect and humility: athlete – indeed, Olympian – agricultural scientist, photographer and author, naturalist and environmentalist.

His love and passion for nature and his knowledge and insights were unique and unparalleled. Former Government House aides I have spoken to have described to me the rigour and enthusiasm with which he shared this core part of himself during their long conversations while travelling throughout Victoria and sharing meals on long workdays. For those who worked closely with him, these conversations often signalled an awakening of their own deeper understanding and appreciation of natural history and the natural world and the importance of its preservation – what a gift to impart to a group of young people at the early stages of their professional careers. One aide told me that during a return drive from an event in Healesville she recalled catching sight of a pair of small, bulging eyes belonging to a frog which had somehow propelled itself into the car and sat crouched, slimy, hind limbs outstretched, presumably in readiness to leap forwards from the rear window. The aide told of shrieking in horror, almost causing an accident, while the then Governor gingerly scooped the tiny creature into his hands and examined it studiously, detailing all the fun facts about its species before gently releasing it back into nature at the first opportunity. It is no surprise, then, to learn that John Landy was also a keen lepidopterist, collecting and meticulously preserving 10,000 Australian butterflies over 75 years, generously donating this vast collection, housed in 140 personally constructed wooden boxes, to the Australian Museum in 2018 – yet another gift imparted to others.

As Victoria's 26th Governor between 2001 and 2006 John Landy, with the great support of his wife Lynne, fulfilled the role and its many responsibilities with unwavering dedication and distinction. Who can forget that iconic moment at the opening ceremony of the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games? The world's longest baton relay had travelled more than 180,000 kilometres and visited all 71 nations of the Commonwealth, and it was now at the MCG before a capacity crowd and being televised to millions of viewers around the world, moving from the hands of fellow athletic champions Cathy Freeman to Ron Clarke to Marjorie Jackson-Nelson before culminating with the then 75-year-

old John Landy as the final runner, with razor sharp focus, elegant, sprinting up some 40 steep steps, where he delivered the baton to Queen Elizabeth to a thunderous ovation.

Chiefly, his self-described most central role was that of devoted husband to Lynne, father to Matthew and Alison and grandfather to Isla, Neve and Maya. At his state memorial in December last year son Matthew spoke poignantly about his father, and it is worth recording it here. He said:

Growing up as the child of a famous person can be hard. Growing up the child of John Landy wasn't; it was a privilege.

...

By privilege I don't mean money or power or fame, I mean the good fortune to have a father who was everything the public thought he was and yet more: a person who was renowned for his integrity and who showed us what that meant every single day of his life, a person who was universally loved and who loved his own family even more.

Beyond the roles, honours, awards and achievements, it is the personal characteristics touched on by Matthew and others at his private and state services that John Landy was revered for most and which those who knew him well continue to reflect on most affectionately: his integrity, kindness, generosity and propriety. On reflecting on his life since his passing and in anticipation of speaking today, I am reminded of the 15th-century ideal developed in Renaissance Italy which they called 'uomo universale' – the universal man. In many ways John Landy was Victoria's very own 20th- and 21st-century Renaissance figure. Just as those extraordinary individuals of the Renaissance sought to develop skills across diverse subject areas, developing knowledge and expertise and pursuing physical, social and artistic accomplishments for the collective benefit of society, so too did John Landy. He possessed as much skill as a professional athlete as he did in the fields of science, innovation, writing and public service. As Governor of Victoria he was our head of state, and on either side of that appointment he fulfilled the ideal citizen statesman.

On behalf of this side of the house, I convey our profound appreciation for Mr Landy's distinguished service to Victoria and extend our sincere condolences to Lynne, Matthew, Alison, respective partners Nirupama and Charlie, and grandchildren Isla, Neve and Maya. May he rest in peace.

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop, Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery) (12:16): I too rise to pay my respects to former Governor John Landy. John's athletic prowess has rightly been acknowledged here today and many times over, and deservedly so. His determination to perform at his best while living his values won him hearts and minds the world over.

I wish today to remember John's time as Governor, his commitment to the environment and his time in central Victoria. Those with longer memories may recall that there was some frisson around the time that John Landy was announced as Governor in August of 2000 by then Premier Steve Bracks. John had not come to the role through any of what had been seen as the more traditional pathways – through law or military service – as many other governors had before him. As we know, John was an athlete and an accomplished agricultural scientist with a passion for the environment, and we have heard about his avid collection of moth and butterfly specimens that are part of our national archives today.

We saw when he became the Governor on 1 January 2001 that John embraced the role and Victorians embraced John Landy as their governor. He brought the kindness, decency and work ethic that had made him a household name as an athlete to the vice-regal role of Governor as he worked with the Victorian community. His background in agriculture and love of nature gave him a particular affinity with regional Victorians. As many have noted since his passing, he was never happier than when he was in country Victoria.

A few short weeks before John's retirement as Governor on 7 April 2006, he carried the Queen's baton into the MCG as the final runner during the Queen's baton relay, presenting the baton to the Queen at the opening ceremony. Fifty years earlier John Landy had stood in the MCG to read the Olympic oath

on behalf of the athletes at the 1956 opening ceremony. You have to wonder whether in that moment in 2006 John Landy looked around the marvellous MCG and indeed marvelled at how far our state and our community had come in that short 50-year period. In 2006 the MCG will host another Commonwealth Games opening ceremony, as Victoria is the host of the games. Regional Victoria will be the home of the 2026 Commonwealth Games, this time raising the curtain on regional Victoria's games, the first of its kind – the opportunity to have our wonderful regional Victoria in the spotlight. We just know that John Landy would have so loved to have been part of this.

After his time as Governor, John had the opportunity to continue his community work and also spend more time in central Victoria. One role I did particularly want to highlight today was John serving as the first chair of the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund advisory committee between February and September 2009. It was such an important role at such a critical time, in that immediate aftermath of those devastating fires, where he was working with communities who had been just so terribly and deeply affected by those fires that tore through our communities just 14 years ago today.

We also saw John's lifelong passion for our natural environment, which saw him play important roles both during his time as Governor and on either side of his time as Governor of Victoria. For example, he was a foundation member of the then Land Conservation Council of Victoria between 1971 and 1979, and during this time the area of national parks in Victoria increased fivefold. As we know and we have heard, John wrote two books on Victoria's flora and fauna, published with his own photos – one on the flora and fauna around the Upper Murray region and the second on the Otway Ranges. I know – and I know you do as well, Speaker, from our firsthand engagement – John and Lynne also loved the unique box ironbark forest found around central Victoria that they called their home in recent decades. John was patron of the Great Dividing Trail, and this is a fantastic landmark in our goldfields region that tells the story of our goldfield heritage as you wind your way through the unique box ironbark forests and reserves – a marvellous intertwining of our natural environment and the built heritage of our region.

John and Lynne were active in the local community, having been, firstly, part-time residents for many, many years and then full-time residents for some time as well. The last time I had the opportunity to see John was a few years ago – I think it was in 2019 – at a local artist's exhibition at her own gallery in Castlemaine as part of the Castlemaine festival. He was of course there with Lynne, and as we admired the talent of an exceptional creative community, we discussed the events of the time. John was then, as he always was, a man engaged and interested in the world around him – charming and delightful, with a ready smile and great thoughts. My sympathy to Lynne, to Matthew and Alison, and their extended family. Rest in peace, John – a man who served our state with great dignity and compassion.

Peter WALSH (Murray Plains) (12:22): I rise to also join the condolence motion for John Landy. John Landy's sporting prowess is without peer in Australia and the world, and the John Landy story is of someone who was so giving and so unassuming that many of his most legendary achievements get a little bit lost in the legend of the athlete. Since John Landy's death in February last year, there have been tales of the ultimate athlete, from the 4-minute mile barrier, stopping mid-race in the Australian mile championship to help the fallen Ron Clarke and still winning to the Olympics and beyond, and it is the 'beyond' on which I would like to speak today as we honour a truly great Victorian and great Australian.

Few people would realise that John was a naturalist at heart, starting with a childhood interest and lifelong devotion to butterflies. In 2018 he would gift his collection, considered one of the finest and most complete in the country, to the National Museum of Australia. It would be agriculture where John would make the seamless transition from miler to long-distance competitor. He was a Dookie College ag science graduate, an accomplishment achieved at the same time he was at the height of his athletic career. He would go on to have a stellar career in agriculture, particularly with ICI, the Imperial Chemical Industries company, where he would spend a significant part of his working life as the research and development manager in its rural division. His last 11 years at ICI, running projects

within the biological group, resulted in what could be considered an unparalleled contribution to the confluence of science and industry.

His research work and his lifelong passion for the natural world would combine to see him extend his agricultural influence well beyond his corporate life. He would chair the Wool Research and Development Corporation for five years from 1989, the Meat Research Corporation for four of those same years and – something very near and dear to his heart – sit on the board of governors of the Australian National Insect Collection from 1995 to 2000. He would also have roles with Clean Up Australia, be president of Greening Australia from 1998 to 2000 and become a foundation member of the Land Conservation Council of Victoria and be there from 1971 to 1979. Wherever John Landy turned his impact, it was positive and lasting. Just during his tenure at the land conservation council, for example – his eight years there – the area of national parks in Victoria would increase fivefold and the organisation’s fundamental guidelines and policies would be established. In his spare time his connection to the natural world and its conservation would see him write and publish two seminal works. *Close to Nature: A Naturalist’s Diary of a Year in the Bush*, 1985, would win a CJ Dennis award, while *A Coastal Diary: A Study of One of Australia’s Wildest and Most Beautiful Coastlines*, published in 1993, has provided information and pleasure to anyone visiting Victoria’s south-west coastline.

In 1984 John was elected a fellow of the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science. In 2012 he became a patron of the Invasive Species Council, which works to tackle Australia’s growing weed and animal pest problem.

Don Lawson, who is known to many in this chamber – a beef stud breeder, a fellow ag scientist before he became a farmer and a bit of a speedster himself in his younger days when training with John Landy as a junior – probably best summed it up when he described John’s passing as ‘a sad day for agriculture’. He said:

They will talk about his running but his contribution was really in agriculture. He had what is missing today, a thing called integrity, he knew what conflict of interest was.

He was our number one ag scientist, a person ahead of his time as an environmentalist and conservationist in agriculture.

Don even cited Landy’s intervention in his key roles in raising awareness about protecting red stringybark trees from being ringbarked by cattle when they were short on fibre and drawing attention to the importance of developing understories when planting trees to keep birds and insect species in balance. Don said:

He was very unassuming, and he was not frightened to lose ...

He was a significant figure in agriculture and in my opinion one of the foremost ag scientists.

As a farmer himself, he could only sit back in awe of a man who could do so much, achieve so much and yet keep such a low profile and be so grounded. John was at his most comfortable in a room of farmers, explaining in detail the work he was doing, the work of the organisations with which he was working, and would answer any question honestly, to the best of his ability and, most importantly – I have heard from everyone who was fortunate enough to be there at the time – in a language they could actually understand.

What many do not realise is that John Landy mostly took up competitive running on the track as part of his training regime to get ready for the football season. In 1949 and 1950 he played for Dookie while a student there, winning the 1950 Central Goulburn Valley Football League best and fairest award. Singularly, here was a young man with the world at his feet and a future which would have a major impact on the betterment of his country far beyond the Olympic Games.

There is a statue, as others have mentioned, freezing that 1956 moment in time for all – a day when John Landy stopped to help Ron Clarke – but there should be an even bigger statue of John Landy the naturalist, the researcher, the agricultural industry leader and a Victorian who for all time will be one of our state’s most complete legends. Vale, John Landy.

Tim PALLAS (Werribee – Treasurer, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Trade and Investment) (12:28): I rise to pay tribute to an extraordinary man, former Governor John Michael Landy. Looking back at John's life, it is hard really to imagine how he squeezed so many achievements into one lifetime. As the Premier said, John Landy has gone into our history books as the second man to break the 4-minute mile and the 26th Governor of this great state. His best-known race, the miracle mile as it subsequently was described, against Roger Bannister, was an international event that was listened to on the radio back then by a hundred million people. It is really hard to imagine such an event today – one that captured people's imaginations, and rightly so.

John was one of the 20th century's greatest athletes and a dedicated public servant, but perhaps first and foremost he was unashamedly a proud Victorian. I was honoured to attend his memorial service last year, fittingly held at that site of Victorian distinction, the Melbourne Cricket Ground, and what struck me most of all was the esteem that John Landy was held in by so many people from so many varied walks of life. This was not just a man who was an outstanding athlete; this was a man who was a genuinely decent human being, who added to the collective knowledge of his community, and he also was a beacon of decency. Of course there is that moment that we all remember from the 1956 Australian championships, where John stopped mid-race to check on the welfare of a fallen competitor, Ron Clarke, which is iconic in Australian sport and Australian culture. It speaks to the sort of person that John was, the kind of person that we all like to pride ourselves on, something that is quintessentially Australian and Victorian – that we believe in a fair go and that we reflect those values in the way that we play our sport and in the way that we deal with each other. Indeed it talks about the kind of people we as Australians and Victorians want to be. But more importantly it speaks to the kind of person that John Landy actually was.

As the Premier quite rightly identified, the statue that marks this event has underneath it the word 'sportsmanship'. But, you know, when you spoke to John about that statue, he almost became gruff about the suggestion that it was about an iconic or defining moment. He saw it as being his obligation: he had tripped over somebody; he had to go back and see that he had not caused substantial injury. He said, 'Of course, anybody would do that.' Well, I am not sure everybody would. I do not know, if I had a chance, I might have seized the opportunity before me at the time. But that was not John Landy. He was an exceptional individual. Underneath that statue, 'sportsmanship' – really, what it should say is 'decency and humility' because to me that is what sums up John Landy, and John's refusal to believe that stopping mid-race to check on a fellow competitor was anything out of ordinary was testament to his inherent decency.

John Landy was a committed conservationist who served on the Victorian Land Conservation Council. He wrote two books on natural history. He loved the Victorian bush, and he was a strong, articulate and indeed persuasive advocate for its preservation. The passing of time shows that his beliefs when it came to environmental protection were in fact the right ones. He became president of Greening Australia, devoted to large-scale tree planting. His knowledge of Australian flora and fauna was nearly second to none. John farmed, he taught, and he chaired the Meat Research Corporation and the Wool Research and Development Corporation. In his later life, he donated his stunning butterfly collection to the Australian Museum in Sydney – our great loss, but I understand his justification that he nicked a few of the insects from New South Wales and felt obliged to give them back. His knowledge of insects could and indeed did fill books.

I was Steve Bracks's chief of staff when Steve recommended John Landy to be the 26th Governor of Victoria. Now, a little-known story that probably is little known because it should not be told, but I will tell it anyway: he was a reluctant conscript to be Governor. In fact he required a number of conversations to explain to him why it would be so important for him to be Governor. I remember in one of those meetings, where I was simply holding a place for Premier Bracks, who was due to join us, he looked at me and he said, 'Well, what do you think? Should I take it?' I thought about it, and I said, 'Well, yes.' He said, 'Thanks, Tim.' It was as if there was something incredibly incisive in my commentary or my view. In fact all he was hearing were the words of a fanboy. But he did nonetheless,

I think, demonstrate what it meant to him to engage with people, and he loved it. Everywhere he went he enjoyed people's company, and he was a great asset to this state during that time. He believed that it was an honour and a duty to serve when asked, and he made his mark on the role, serving the state with trademark dignity and decency from 2000 to 2006. As Steve Bracks said:

He had great humility and a tremendous capacity for work. He worked for all Victorians.

If I could say one thing on a personal note about John, it is that he was always a generous man, generous with his time. Regardless of your status, John had no time for airs or graces. He understood that there were obligations that went with the office, and he never at any stage sought to demean the office by disparaging them. He understood that that was his duty, as he did with so many other things. But really, he had a calm and laconic approach to public life, always doing his job but doing it with the kind of gentle and generous touch that marked all of his life. He refused to be called 'Your Excellency', preferring 'Governor' or simply 'John'. As likely to stop and chat with his driver or the waitress or the lowly adviser, John had strong egalitarian principles that he lived by every day, and he made us all better people for having had the opportunity to engage with him.

Many of us will recall that moment at the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne in 2006 when John Landy presented the baton to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. I was exhausted for him watching him run up those 50 or so steps. Of course for John, the rigorous exercise regime that he religiously applied through a very substantial part of his adult years made it easy for him, even at that time. Presenting the baton to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was a big moment in a big life but also another small service that John Landy did for his state.

He was married for 51 years, and I thank John's wife Lynne and his children Matthew and Alison – incidentally, Matthew I think gave an outstanding eulogy at his father's passing – for sharing their husband and father so generously with the state. I offer my deepest condolences on your loss.

John Landy was one of Victoria's finest athletes, public servants, conservationists and advocates. He had a tenacity for service, and he served our state with humility, honour and grace. He indeed was the gold standard. He indeed was the benchmark by which we should judge ourselves – not as governors or politicians but as people, not as elite sportspeople but as people who care about each other – and a reluctant conscript to service who demonstrated exactly why he was such a decent and important person. Quite simply, John Landy loved his state and his state loved him. On behalf of the government, I thank you and I pay tribute to a great Victorian. Vale, John Landy.

Cindy McLEISH (Eildon) (12:38): Humble, gentle, determined, honourable, selfless, family-oriented, a man with integrity, a leader, a role model – these are words and terms that are so commonly used to describe John Landy, and we see and hear them time and time again. He lived his life by his values. In everything he did you could see those values, and he made such an important contribution to so many communities in so many ways. He was also very modest, because his wife Lynne was completely unaware of the level of fame that John held in Victoria. Before they were married she attended an athletics carnival in Ararat with him and was quite surprised at the group of nuns that were there who went quite gaga – was the word – over John Landy because he was a big deal, and his fiancée just did not realise that at the time. On top of that, he was undeniably an incredible athlete.

John Landy – former Victorian Governor, sporting legend, passionate agriculturalist – passed away at the age of 91 almost 12 months ago. He contributed to Victorian society in so many ways and also made his mark on the international stage, particularly through his athletics. We know John for his athleticism and his sportsmanship and his role as Governor from 1 January 2001 to 7 April 2006. It is interesting that when he was asked to be Governor by Premier Bracks he had never met him before at all. As the previous speaker, the Treasurer, said, it came quite out of the blue for him.

John grew up in Malvern, he was the second of five kids and, like many others, he rode his bike everywhere. His mother made his first butterfly net for him when he was four or five, and that started his lifelong passion. He would collect caterpillars in his schoolbag and bring them home, and they

would be crawling up the family curtains. He would ride his bike to that well-known regional area of Glen Waverley to collect butterflies when he was at school. He started school at Malvern grammar school, and then later he went to Geelong Grammar. When he was at Geelong Grammar he and one of his mates, ornithologist Graham Pizzey, would ride their bikes to the You Yangs for the day. John would collect butterflies and Graham would do his bird studies – and we know that John ended up with one of the finest butterfly collections, which he gifted to the National Museum of Australia in 2018.

When John left school, as has been mentioned previously, he went to Dookie Agricultural College, and in 1955 he graduated from Melbourne University's Dookie college with a bachelor of ag science. He taught at Timbertop at Geelong Grammar – science and maths – and he was awarded an honorary degree of doctor of laws by the university of Victoria in 1994, an honorary doctor of rural science by the University of New England in 1997, a doctor of laws by the University of Melbourne in 2003 and a doctor of laws by Deakin University in 2004. His agricultural contribution has been less talked about, but he certainly has a remarkable legacy there. He became a very good agricultural scientist with a research focus after leaving Dookie. He had a very inquiring mind with a particular bent on the environment, and he was at the forefront of environmental farming. As we have heard, he was a patron of the Invasive Species Council. He looked at tillage of soil on farmland. At ICI, at Merrindale, which was a leading agricultural research enterprise, he made considerable inroads. With meat and livestock he was involved with research groups, and as we have heard, the endangered red stringybark tree that was being ringbarked was a concern for him, as was the ecology of the understorey.

In agriculture there were many achievements and appointments. He was a foundation member of the Land Conservation Council of Victoria from 1971 to 1979; an author and photographer recording Australian landscapes and nature; president of Greening Australia, the organisation devoted to large-scale tree planting, from 1998 to 2000; and he was the chair of the Wool Research and Development Corporation from 1989 to 1994. The executive director of the Australian Council of Wool Exporters and Processors Peter Morgan said the thing that struck him most about John in this role was that when he spoke publicly to woolgrowers about the work that the organisation was doing he confined himself to a few projects so he could speak to them in considerable detail so his audience really understood about the work that they were funding and what it meant for them. He was a fellow of Ag Institute Australia, and he remained a firm supporter of Ag Institute Australia, so when a new lapel pin for fellows was introduced he held a special reception at Government House where he personally presented each member with their new fellowship pin.

John developed a natural talent for running through his sporting passions. He loved Australian Rules football, and as has been said, he started competitive running to get fit for Australian Rules football. He played for the Melbourne Demons under-19s in 1949 to 1950, following in his dad's and uncle's footsteps – they also played in the under-19s. He played for Dookie and took out the best and fairest in the league when the agricultural colleges were really a force of the day, and he won the 1950 Central Goulburn Valley Football League's best and fairest. But with regard to his running, he trained at Caulfield Racecourse, where he won all of the races at school. He remained an amateur athlete. He would train by running the streets at night with the milkman, and the milkman would say, 'Who do you think you are, mate, John Landy?' not knowing that he was John Landy.

On the track he was the second man to break the 4-minute mile, and he broke that barrier on six occasions and set world records for both the mile and the 1500 metres. In the 1956 pre-Olympic track and field championships, we had that already well spoken about legendary act of sportsmanship which really put him on the map as showing everybody what true sportsmanship looks like. A lot of us perhaps would have made a different decision at such time, but that certainly was not John. He won bronze in the 1500 metres at the 1956 Olympics, he won silver in the 1954 Commonwealth Games for the 1600 metres and he was inducted into the Athletics Australia Hall of Fame in 1985. He was awarded the Kokernon Cup by the Finnish president, which was remarkable, as this cup had never before been presented to anybody but a Finn. He was described by Roger Bannister in *Sports*

Illustrated as ‘an athlete faster, neater and more generous than any other’. Landy sometimes ran with injuries but never told anybody and never blamed injury on his running results.

As we know, and the reason we are speaking here today on the condolence motion, he was appointed the 26th Governor of the state of Victoria in 2001, retiring in 2006. He was awarded an MBE for services to sport in 1955 and was made a Companion of the Order of Australia in 2001. As Governor he visited every shire in the state, and the regions were particularly important. He attended Buckingham Palace; he met the Queen. His family always saw him as quite an amusing character. He amused Princess Anne at Government House, when she was staying, with many stories and had her in stitches. He worked very long hours well into his 70s, helped lots of young children in athletics and took up invitations to visit schools wherever possible. In true style John kept many things to himself. He had Parkinson’s disease for 12 years, and he kept that a secret from his family.

He was a phenomenal man who achieved so much in his lifetime across many fields. He was an inspiration and will remain an inspiration to all. He served Victoria in so many different ways and leaves such a wonderful legacy. My deepest condolences to his wife Lynne and their children Matthew and Alison, who had a wonderful father and who have seen and understand really what a remarkable character he was in the Victorian, Australian and even international landscapes. Vale, John Landy.

Ben CARROLL (Niddrie – Minister for Industry and Innovation, Minister for Manufacturing Sovereignty, Minister for Employment, Minister for Public Transport) (12:47): American civil rights activist Maya Angelou said:

... people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

The master of ceremonies Steve Moneghetti at John Landy’s state memorial service held late last year said when you left John Landy’s company, ‘you always felt better about yourself’. And that is the beauty in John Landy. It is hard to separate John Landy the man, John Landy the famous athlete, John Landy the famous scientist and John Landy the Governor. He was one and the same, none could be separated.

I was not the Premier’s chief of staff during his appointment; I was actually in charge of correspondence. As the Deputy Premier and the Treasurer have alluded to, John Landy’s appointment was not without some controversy. I can tell you, the correspondence came in thick and fast, particularly from the Italian community. Everyone will recall that a governor’s term of office is usually five years, but Premier Kennett, who had commissioned Sir James Gobbo, made it a 3½-year appointment because of the looming referendum on whether or not Australia should become a republic. It was common knowledge that should that vote succeed, the office of the Governor-General would have been abolished and so there would have been no governor in Victoria. But as is the Premier’s right, Premier Bracks exercised his right at the conclusion of Mr Gobbo’s 3½ years in office to appoint a new governor.

As the Treasurer and the Deputy Premier rightly highlighted, John Landy was a reluctant starter. I had a brief chat with Steve Bracks yesterday to remind him of some of the correspondence that was coming in, and he reminded me too that, yes, he was a reluctant starter and it did take a couple of meetings. But in many respects that sums up the sort of person that John Landy was. He would never do anything in half measures.

He also thought his running career had exceeded everything he had envisioned for his life, and he was happy living with his wife Lynne in Castlemaine and being a conservationist and enjoying retirement. As Steve Moneghetti said at his memorial, he was never happier than when in the country. What was very interesting, though, was that within about 24, 48 hours – it was pretty quick – the *Herald Sun* said the Premier had sacked Sir James Gobbo. That was not quite correct. Once the name of John Landy came out as the appointment, everything just dissipated – the noise dissipated. I have got an editorial here from the *Australian* of 9 August 2000. I just want to quote it if I can. It says:

Victorian Premier Steve Bracks has sensed the time has passed for Governor James Gobbo, and he is right. In sports hero John Landy, he has found a people's governor whose appeal is timeless.

...

The choice of Mr Landy – an agricultural scientist in touch with regional Victoria, beaches, butterflies and the state's great passion, sport – sends a clear signal of what a 21st century appointment should be ... It is a new kind of appointment that should invigorate vice-regal offices everywhere.

I think it goes without saying what a success it was. The irony is that he did start on 1 January 2001 – everyone will recall that was the centenary of Federation and it was also the International Year of Volunteers. In his speech at Government House for his inauguration, which was attended by 700 people, he said:

Volunteers are to the community what lifesavers are to the Australian beaches. They are a vital ingredient in so many facets of our life, whether it be charity, caring, schools or sport. Volunteers serve without question. They share without reservation. They listen with compassion and they enrich their community beyond measure.

On 26 January 2001 in his first address on Australia Day his speech was some 21 pages long. It was a call to arms on the environment and biodiversity – on leaving the state better than how we have inherited it.

His time in office was not without some lowlights either. Sadly, on 11 September 2001 we all remember the Twin Towers being attacked – some 10 Australians were killed on that terrible day. As Governor, with that common touch, John Landy met with some of the Australians who had lost relatives. One particular man touched him, and that was Paul Gyulavary, whose brother was killed in the attack at the World Trade Center. Paul had an idea that on the one-year anniversary of September 11 everyone driving a motor vehicle around the state of Victoria should put their headlights on. John Landy became a strong advocate of this – indeed he spoke to Premier Bracks, he spoke with Bill Noonan at the Transport Workers Union and he spoke to the CFA – and on that anniversary everyone around the state put their headlights on and drove around as a memorial to the victims.

I also just want to put on record, as a member of Melbourne's western suburbs, the work John Landy did around Coode Island – many will be aware of those events around August 1991. John Landy was then appointed by Joan Kirner to chair a task force. He was also joined by the late Lynne Kosky. The work he did on that task force was second to none in terms of hazardous materials and waste and making sure that we do everything we can for residents that live in nearby areas such as Coode Island.

I want to put on record my thanks and appreciation for the person John Landy was. It was an honour to know him, albeit briefly, as a young adviser in Premier Bracks's office. I do just want to put on record one quote, and I want to thank the parliamentary library for their work and their research. Paul O'Neil wrote in 1956 about Landy. He said:

Landy is a complex human – an intellectual with a compulsion for the arena, and a stoic disregard for pain and exhaustion; a reserved and sensitive man whose mind is repelled, but whose spirits are kindled, by the roar of applause and the incandescent glare of publicity.

Vale, John Landy.

Sam HIBBINS (Pahran) (12:53): I rise on behalf of the Victorian Greens to support the condolence motion for former Victorian Governor John Landy, who passed away last year aged 91. And whilst being appointed to one of the highest offices in Victoria, John Landy is of course widely known for his legendary achievements as a middle-distance runner: just the second person to run a mile in under 4 minutes, a world record holder for the mile and 1500 metres and a bronze medal winner at the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games at the MCG, not far from here.

But what is really interesting is that he is not best known for these achievements and the many more in his life but how he conducted himself in achieving them, famously going back to assist his closest rival, Ron Clarke, after he had fallen, and then going on to win that race and become the Australian champion, now immortalised in bronze. He really showed that winning a race and demonstrating the

CONDOLENCES

Tuesday 7 February 2023

Legislative Assembly

75

best of sportsmanship towards your fellow competitor need not be diametrically opposed forces but in fact go hand in hand, and perhaps that is a lesson for all of us in here.

In addition to sport, John Landy had a love of nature and conservation, which he studied, he collected and he advocated for. He served on a number of environmental organisations, including the Land Conservation Council, at a time when there was a significant increase in the area of Victoria covered by national parks. He was an author. He published two books, *Close to Nature* and *A Coastal Diary*, which are reflections from a year that he spent studying the Otways.

He served as Governor of Victoria from 2001 to 2006 and received numerous recognitions in his life. Our sympathies are with his family. Vale, John Landy.

The SPEAKER (12:55): Thank you, members, for your contributions on this condolence motion. With the indulgence of the house I would like to add a few words. The Honourable John Landy was a resident of Bendigo West during his retirement years. There has been much said about John's remarkable life, and he achieved so much. John and Lynne were also well-known locals across the communities of Castlemaine and Fryerstown. He was humble, genuine, dignified and passionate about the issues that mattered to him. I want to highlight John's retirement years and his volunteering and support for our local communities of Fryerstown and Castlemaine and his great love of the Australian bush and its environment. The former historic Fryerstown police station at 5 Camp Street in Fryerstown was renovated and enjoyed by John and his wife Lynne for about 20 years before they sold it in 2015 and moved to Castlemaine. John and Lynne were both committed to the local community and drove significant community projects, including the upgrade of the heritage Fryerstown hall.

John joined the fight against climate change, becoming the 600th member of the Mount Alexander Sustainability Group. He was surprised that such a small group had 600 members. He had a long-established interest in sustainability, as we have heard, particularly in protecting biodiversity. He was very pleased to be part of such a vibrant local community group taking action on climate change, and I quote from John:

We are all responsible for the current climate change crisis, and we can all play a part in dealing with it, in our homes, businesses, schools and sporting clubs.

John also documented and photographed 35 species of butterflies and over 300 species of moths in Fryerstown, some of which had not been classified. He donated his moth collection to the Australian National Insect Collection in November 2016. Meticulously curated, his extensive collection contains many specimens that significantly enhance the taxonomic and geographical coverage of the ANIC. Thanks to John's donation, these specimens, not just from Fryerstown but from across Victoria, are available for future generations to study.

John and Lynne were also members of many community organisations, who all benefited from his knowledge and contributions. John was a much admired, respected and loved member of our community throughout his later years. He loved the Australian bush and particularly the Chewton bushlands and surrounds.

I bumped into John on many occasions at events and community celebrations across the electorate. The last time I saw John was out the front of Bendigo Health when I was there with the former chair of Bendigo Health Bob Cameron. John was in a wheelchair, but he still stopped for a chat, and he remarked on what a wonderful new hospital Bendigo had and how amazing it was. But he also, just like John as he was, commented on how the staff were exceptional and were treating him so well.

Our community was saddened to learn of his passing, and on behalf of the people of Bendigo West I send condolences to Lynne, his children and their extended family and his many, many friends. Vale, John Landy.

Motion agreed to in silence, members showing unanimous agreement by standing in their places.

The SPEAKER: As a further mark of respect to the memory of the late Honourable John Landy AC CVO MBE, the house will now adjourn for 1 hour.

House adjourned 1:00 pm.

The SPEAKER took the chair at 2:01 pm.

Questions without notice

Health system

John PESUTTO (Hawthorn – Leader of the Opposition) (14:01): My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre has cancelled critical surgery for dozens of Victorians with cancer due to limited resources, with the acting director of cancer surgery Professor Michael Henderson saying in an email to staff that cancelling this critical surgery will have implications. What advice has the minister received as to how seriously this risks the health of Victorian cancer patients who will be unable to obtain critical surgery as part of their cancer treatment and management?

Mary-Anne THOMAS (Macedon – Leader of the House, Minister for Health, Minister for Health Infrastructure, Minister for Medical Research) (14:02): I thank the member for Hawthorn for his question. I note that he of course was not here last term, and if he was, he would have had many opportunities to understand exactly what is happening in our health system at the moment. As a consequence of a once-in-100-year event, the COVID-19 pandemic, it does not matter what you want the situation to be, the reality is this: the COVID pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on our health services. This is an impact that is being experienced right around the state, right around the nation and indeed right across the world. It has had a global impact on health services. But what I can tell you and what I can share with the house is that our government has a plan in order to alleviate this impact. We have invested \$12 billion into our –

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind members that when the Speaker is on her feet the house will come to silence.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, the standing orders do require that an answer be direct. We have been meandering for a couple of minutes and going nowhere near the specific question, and I would put to you that this certainly is not direct in its response.

Daniel Andrews: On the point of order, Speaker, the minister was asked a question about Peter MacCallum, about surgery and about health matters, and that is exactly what she is going to very directly. The assertions of the leader of opposition business, who is not sitting at the table – I am not quite sure why – are spurious.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! This is not a good start to question time, members. I expect a little more silence in the chamber when people are on their feet. It is very disrespectful.

John Pesutto: On the point of order, Speaker, the question was very direct: it was about Professor Michael Henderson's comment that cancelling critical surgery will have implications. The question is not about the causes that the minister might like to cite, it is about what implications surgical cancellations will have on the prospects of cancer patients. They are watching. They need to know the answer.

The SPEAKER: The Minister for Health was being relevant to the question, and I ask the minister to continue her response.

Mary-Anne THOMAS: I would note it is really important to set the context for those on the other side of the house to understand exactly what is being experienced by our hardworking healthcare workers who are working every day at Peter Mac and elsewhere to deliver the health services that our community needs. But I want to make this point too before I come specifically to talk about Peter Mac: I want everyone in this house to understand that during December we had up to 750 people hospitalised with COVID, and on any given day we had up to 2000 staff members furloughed because of COVID. So as much as those on the other side want to wish COVID away, pretend it never happened with their ‘let it rip’ strategies and so on, I need to point out that it is having a lasting impact. Only our government has a plan to support our health services through this. Not only are we investing in the infrastructure that our health services need, but most importantly of all we are employing the staff because it is people that care for people. Our government was very proud in the election campaign to stand shoulder to shoulder with our nurses, with our ambos, and with our clinicians. What a contrast to those on the other side – not a health worker to be seen.

Let me come back to Peter MacCallum – what an extraordinary and wonderful medical facility that is. I know that there are so many people in this chamber who themselves or whose own families have been impacted by cancer, and we are always grateful for the extraordinary work that is done at the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre by the people of Peter Mac and indeed cancer specialists right across the state. But I want to tell you this: despite all the challenges that have been faced, Peter Mac continues to respond to those issues, and indeed 3307 patients were admitted from their planned surgery waitlist during 2021–22. This is a great outcome, and I thank them for that. Further to this, Peter Mac performed more planned surgery than initially planned from July to December, so it was an increase on what they had proposed to be able to deliver.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Frankston!

Mary-Anne THOMAS: This of course included 100 per cent of all category 1 surgeries being performed within the clinically recommended period of 30 days. So rather than continuing in the same old fashion, talking down our health services, talking down our healthcare workers –

Peter Walsh: On a point of order, Speaker, on the issue of relevance. Obviously Professor Michael Henderson is totally wrong – the minister is effectively calling him a liar when he is saying there are implications for patients who are not getting their surgery. I would ask you to bring her back to actually answering the question about what advice the minister has had about the implications of surgery being cancelled for cancer patients.

The SPEAKER: Order! A couple of things, Leader of the Nationals. First of all, the use of that word is not appropriate in this house. Second of all, it is also not appropriate to repeat the question. The minister was being relevant to the question that was asked, and she was answering the question in the form of the minister’s response, which she obviously has knowledge of.

Mary-Anne THOMAS: Thank you very much, Speaker. I make this point: the Leader of the Nationals does himself no favours whatsoever in the way in which he has presented his point of order. I have nothing but the utmost respect for all of our healthcare professionals and, unlike those on the other side, we actually deliver. We saw our workforce increase by 26,000 people – nurses, doctors, allied healthcare professionals – and we have plans to recruit and train another 24,000 over the next few years. And let me tell you this, Speaker: the workforce – healthcare workers – know that there is only one party that can be trusted to deliver healthcare promises to support healthcare workers, and that is the Andrews Labor government.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, as the minister would know, there is a requirement that a question not be debated and that the response be succinct. Clearly the minister was debating and, at nearly 9 minutes in, this is now an essay, not a response.

The SPEAKER: The minister has concluded her answer.

State Electricity Commission

Jackson TAYLOR (Bayswater) (14:11): My question is to the Premier. Premier, the Andrews Labor government was resoundingly re-elected on the promise to drive down bills and bring energy back into the hands of Victorians by bringing back the SEC. Constituents in my electorate have been eager to tell their stories about what the SEC meant to them. Premier, can you please update the house on how this government is not wasting a day to bring back the SEC and drive down Victorians' bills?

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Frankston can leave the chamber for 1 hour.

Member for Frankston withdrew from chamber.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! Premier! Members will be removed from the chamber without warning. I ask members to follow the lead of the Speaker. The member for Frankston has been removed from the chamber for 1 hour.

Daniel ANDREWS (Mulgrave – Premier) (14:12): I am asked whether I can update the house on the fact that we are not wasting a day in delivering the new and improved SEC, and I am delighted to be able to receive this question from the member for Bayswater. In his opening, he noted that the government had been resoundingly endorsed and re-elected, and that is exactly right. It is great to have the member for Bayswater here, a great champion on behalf of his local community and someone who knows and understands that with the community supporting a new SEC – government-owned, renewable energy that is for people, not profit – what the community has endorsed also is the fact that privatisation of our electricity was a spectacular failure. It did not deliver lower prices, it did not secure jobs, it did not –

John Pesutto interjected.

Daniel ANDREWS: Some are supportive of privatisation, and whilst they find their voice in very few circumstances, they get very loud whenever you criticise the privatisation of critical utilities.

Members interjecting.

Daniel ANDREWS: Let *Hansard* reflect that the new Leader of the Opposition is a strident supporter of privatised electricity, just in case there was any doubt.

Members interjecting.

Daniel ANDREWS: Keep going, keep going. It can further be reflected in *Hansard* that the Leader of the Opposition is quite up and about to be called out on this. So the community got it wrong, it would seem, and the member for Hawthorn, the Leader of the Opposition, knows better. He knows better. Let the record reflect that. Instead –

Members interjecting.

A member: Just yabbering to himself.

Daniel ANDREWS: Pretty much. What I would say to the member for Bayswater and all Victorians is the government has not wasted a moment. In only these few months since being re-elected for a third term in office, we have appointed a CEO. We are in the process of reorganising that

entity that was on the shelf, as it were, having been shelved by we-know-who sitting opposite us now. Today the minister and I announced the appointment of a special advisory panel with experts in engineering and experts in energy policy, consumer advocacy, financial markets and private investment. All of those experts have agreed to be part of our concerted effort to re-establish the SEC. And what does that involve? What it involves is a fundamental recognition that if we wait for private industry to replace themselves, they will have no interest in doing so. The scarcer electricity is, the higher the price will be and the higher their profits will be. Apparently that is a concept that evades the logic of the Leader of the Opposition.

AGL have told us they are leaving. Well, goodbye to you. We are going to replace you with something better, and that is 100 per cent renewable electricity that is owned by Victorians. Profits that are generated as a community by our 51 per cent, our overall majority, interest in those assets will be reinvested in further renewable energy. Again, back to the central point –

John Pesutto: What are the profits on the other 49 per cent?

Daniel ANDREWS: From someone who supports 100 per cent of the profits going offshore. If you want a debate on this, bring it on. You are all over the shop. You are literally all over the shop. If you want to be Jeff Kennett's lackey, then just be that. You sold it. You should not have. No-one has benefited other than shareholders.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, the Premier would know that question time is not an opportunity to debate extraneous matter to the question, which he clearly is doing. I would ask you to bring him back to the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier will come back to answering the question.

Daniel ANDREWS: The catastrophic failure of energy privatisation is not extraneous. It is very relevant to every household, every business and every worker who was promised their job was safe and then got sacked. It is absolutely relevant to the fact that ever since this privatisation we have seen the degrading of skills and of the supply of skilled labour. We are bringing back the SEC. Some people are very much opposed to that. Today's announcements in relation to –

John Pesutto interjected.

Daniel ANDREWS: The Leader of the Opposition seems unaware that there is a difference between ownership –

John Pesutto interjected.

Daniel ANDREWS: Well, who owns the land titles office? Who owns registration and licensing of VicRoads? Victorians do. Who owns our electricity generation?

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, I again bring you to the point about debate. Clearly the Premier is debating the Leader of the Opposition. I am sure that there are other forms of the house for him to do that. Question time is not an opportunity for him to have a private debate.

The SPEAKER: I ask the Premier to come back to the question.

Daniel ANDREWS: It is a very public debate because it is about public ownership. Keep the points of order coming. It is about public ownership and it is about a fundamental recognition that the privatisation, the transfer of ownership – that is what privatisation means. You would think the biggest fans of privatisation would know what it actually was. It is called a sell-off and a sellout of working people – pensioners, families, businesses who struggle under offshoring of profits. We are about offshore wind, not about offshore profits, and that is why we will deliver in full, despite the noise of those opposite, what Victorians have voted for: a better way, a recognition that electricity privatisation has failed, public ownership of renewable energy, 100 per cent renewable electricity, Loy Yang A. And in the event that Loy Yang B needs replacing, we will replace that too. Whilst others are

absolutely wedded to privatisation and corporate profit making, the government will not deliver that agenda. We will instead deliver an agenda that Victorians have voted for, and that is the SEC – for jobs, for skills, for people, not for profit.

State Electricity Commission

David HODGETT (Croydon) (14:19): My question is to the Minister for the State Electricity Commission. Victorians are facing energy bill increases of up to \$1000 this year, adding further pressure to already stretched household budgets. By what date will the government's SEC plan actually reduce power bills for Victorian families?

Lily D'AMBROSIO (Mill Park – Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Energy and Resources, Minister for the State Electricity Commission) (14:20): I thank the member for their question, and I am absolutely delighted to take this question because we have a great record here on this side –

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition and the Premier, I would like to hear the minister.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: I think you just need to get your people to understand how to spell your last name, John, I think that is your challenge at the moment.

The SEC is absolutely going to be about government-owned renewable energy. Let me be really clear: we have not wasted a single day in government to reduce the pressures that every Victorian is facing because of increasing energy bills, absolutely. The power saving bonus right now, today, is available to Victorians to be able to get the \$250 power saving bonus. From March there will be another \$250 power saving bonus available to every single Victorian right across the state – 1.2 million Victorians have already got it. We know that the bonanza in jobs and energy creation that the SEC will drive – 59,000 jobs – will be driven by the involvement of a publicly owned State Electricity Commission in this state. Creating 59,000 –

David Hodgett: On a point of order, Speaker, the minister is debating the question. I asked a very specific question for the date, and I ask you to bring the minister back to answering that question.

The SPEAKER: The minister was being relevant to the question.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Thank you, Speaker. Can I make it really clear: every single day of this government is about reducing the cost-of-living pressures on Victorians – the power saving bonus, not selling off our energy assets for overseas profits, where \$23 billion could have come back to Victorians to reinvest in the energy system and put downward pressure on bills. There are some in this Parliament that are absolutely addicted to privatisation. We are about bringing back the SEC. We know that the more energy that we can create, renewable energy, and putting downward pressure on bills, putting downward pressure on our emissions, creating 59,000 jobs and all of the local supply chain and the 6000 apprenticeships and traineeships is about reducing the cost of living every single day. We are absolutely proud of bringing back the SEC, the SEC that –

Members interjecting.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: I think those opposite really have to have a look at the facts –

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, the standing orders do require the minister to be direct, and at 3 minutes in we are nowhere near a date, and Victorians are nowhere near knowing the date at which their commitment will be delivered. The date. The date, Minister. Direct – the date.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister is being relevant to the question that was asked.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have ruled on the point of order.

Mary-Anne Thomas: On a point of order, Speaker, it is quite difficult to hear the minister make her response here in this house because of the unrelenting muttering and disorderly conduct by the Leader of the Opposition, who did say that he was going to come in here with new standards, and yet he has disrespectfully spoken throughout the minister's contribution. I ask you to remind the Leader of the Opposition that he should be setting standards that he expects those on his backbench to follow.

James Newbury: On the point of order, Speaker, points of order are not an opportunity to just slight members of the opposition, as they are so keen to do throughout question time. I ask you to rule the point of order out of order.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Malvern! I remind all members about being respectful in the chamber, of not speaking over members who are on their feet. It is really disrespectful. I am having trouble hearing the responses to the questions. I ask you all to come to order when members are on their feet. Has the minister concluded?

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Thank you, Speaker. Just finally in my comments, I think Victorians made their judgement in November about which side of politics is on their side and not the side of the greedy gas producers and the fossil fuel industry that those opposite went off and had secret discussions with during the election campaign to take more money out of Victorians' pockets –

Daniel Andrews: To frack the whole place up.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: That is exactly right. This is one thing for sure: the SEC is back. The SEC will be enshrined in the constitution, and by doing that we will be delivering lower prices for Victorians, we will be delivering cleaner energy and we will be delivering 59,000 jobs. Victorians made their judgement about whose side is on the side of Victorians, and that is this side of the house. Every single day – yesterday, today and tomorrow – our focus is on cost-of-living pressures. We deliver what we say we will, and the SEC is back.

State Electricity Commission

Katie HALL (Footscray) (14:26): My question is to the Minister for the State Electricity Commission. Minister, the people of Footscray are very keen to know –

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would like to hear the question from the member for Footscray.

Katie HALL: Minister, the people of Footscray are very keen to know: how will the new SEC help Victoria reach its ambitious renewables and emissions targets whilst saving Victorians money on their bills?

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: The Minister for the State Electricity Commission, without assistance from the Leader of the Opposition.

Lily D'AMBROSIO (Mill Park – Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Energy and Resources, Minister for the State Electricity Commission) (14:27): I really am delighted and thank the member for Footscray for her wonderful question. I spent quite a bit of time with the member for Footscray, and I can tell you whose side she is on when it comes to representing the good people of Footscray in terms of their cost of living and absolutely the delight that the member for Footscray had in giving the great news to her community about bringing back the SEC. This is about the very heart of affordability, the very heart of cost of living. And let me be really clear: we had the ambition, and when we have had ambition we have delivered on every ambitious program and commitment that we have made.

The SEC will be no different. Of course what is really critical here is that we have wasted not a single day in getting the SEC up and running, having those informal conversations and market soundings that are kicking off in March this year.

Daniel Andrews: Ready to go.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Ready to go. The 59,000 jobs, the lower power bills, the lower emissions, the local supply chain that is being developed – all of this will be –

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister does not require assistance to answer her question. I ask members to cease interjecting while she is on her feet.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: We know that privatisation has been a massive fail, and that is why we have not wasted a single day in bringing back the SEC. I am very pleased to update the house that just this morning with the Premier we were able to announce that six of Australia's most pre-eminent energy, finance and engineering leaders have agreed and have actually been so excited about joining our expert advisory panel. This will guide the SEC's work to make sure that it delivers the maximum benefits of public ownership to Victorians – 100 per cent renewable energy, absolutely. This will lower power prices, this will reduce our emissions and this will of course grow the 59,000 jobs and the 6000 apprenticeships and traineeships. All of those together will mean that Victoria will remain the leader of renewable energy for the country. We will be kicking off the formal market soundings from March. We have already had many, many informal engagements across industry, across global investors that are prepared to –

Peter Walsh: On a point of order, Speaker, I just wonder if the minister could inform those very good people of Footscray as to when their bills might actually go down.

The SPEAKER: That is not a point of order.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: The power saving bonus, Solar Homes, the solar hot water – we have wasted no time over the last eight years in delivering bill savings. All they have been able to deliver, those on that side, are massive job losses, privatisation that has taken \$23 billion of profits offshore and record disconnections under Kennett. And guess what – those opposite that were part of the Baillieu government delivered double disconnections for Victorians during their term, and some of them are still sitting over there. They are absolutely addicted to privatisation.

But let us get on with the great news. We have got a \$424 million training and skills package for people today to move into renewable energy, but also our young people – the future – have a future in the SEC. Thousands of people were trained and had apprenticeships. They are fantastic jobs – lifelong jobs, many of them. You cannot do that from privatised assets – you cannot do it. That is why the SEC is coming back: not only of course to lead the way, as we have been, to meet our nation-leading renewable energy target – 95 per cent renewals by 2035, net zero emissions by 2045 – but this state is also leading the way in decarbonising our energy system and making sure every single Victorian gets a stake in that future. The stake in this future is about public ownership of electricity generation, the skills that come with that, the apprenticeships that come with that, the 59,000 jobs, the lower power bills. We know if you leave it to the private market, they will have scarcity of energy, and when you have scarcity of energy, you have got higher prices and you have got higher profits – not for Victorians but for the mates that those over there look after every single day.

Make no mistake, we are absolutely getting on with it. There are some who are addicted to privatisation. Then there are those on this side who are bringing back the SEC. Every single day the more energy we have in our system – that will be driven by the SEC – the more it will drive down the power of electricity and of course deliver bill savings for every Victorian. It is no wonder that in November Victorians voted for a return of the Andrews Labor government, because they voted for a

return of the SEC, and that is exactly what we are going to be delivering: lower power bills, more jobs, lower emissions – yesterday, today and every day into the future.

The SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Lowan can I acknowledge the former MP for Dandenong and former minister the Honourable John Pandazopoulos in the gallery.

Mental health

Emma KEALY (Lowan) (14:33): My question is to the Minister for Mental Health. In 2016 the Andrews Labor government released the 2016–25 suicide prevention framework with a single goal: to halve the number of suicides in Victoria by 2025. Tragically last year 100 more Victorians took their own life than seven years ago. In the three years remaining what will the government do differently to achieve the goal of halving Victoria’s suicide rate by 2025?

Gabrielle WILLIAMS (Dandenong – Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Ambulance Services, Minister for Treaty and First Peoples) (14:33): I thank the member for Lowan for her question. I want to say at the outset that each death by suicide is one too many in our community, and many of us in this place will know only too well the impact that suicide has on families and friends and loved ones of those individuals and indeed on communities. It is so very devastating. I also want to acknowledge the lifelong impacts that these incidents have, and I say this as somebody who has experienced this in my own family very recently, and I know that it is an issue very close to the hearts of many in this place.

The factors that contribute to suicide we know are very, very complex, and I want to point out that many of the deaths that have occurred, say, last year, are still very much under investigation. I want to be very mindful not to get into speculating around causes of deaths. But to the member for Lowan’s question around what we are doing into the future on this, I think we have got a very good story to tell on this side of the house, and I am very proud to be able to tell it. In the 2021–22 budget this government committed some \$173.4 million to responding to the royal commission recommendations specifically for suicide prevention and response. That of course forms a part of some \$6 billion that we have so far invested in implementing the Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System’s final report recommendations – \$6 billion. We should be proud of that investment, and we know that we have a lot more work to do to make sure that we are breathing life into the vision that was outlined in those royal commission findings.

But in terms of that specific response that was targeted towards suicide, both prevention and response, it went to expanding the hospital outreach post-suicidal engagement program. It went to co-designing and developing a new suicide prevention and response strategy with, very importantly, people with lived experience of suicide at the very heart of that strategy. We know that it is critical to delivering the outcomes that our community expects and deserves long into the future. It also goes to implementing a distress brief intervention program pilot, which provides a 14-day intervention for people experiencing psychological distress. Building on this – that was 2021–22 – in 2022–23 we provided a further \$21 million to support community-wide suicide prevention and response efforts. We have as a part of targeted programs around Aboriginal communities allowed those communities to co-design self-determined suicide prevention and postvention initiatives. We have had programs targeting our LGBTIQ community; it is particularly important at the moment that we mention that in light of Midsumma and our huge turnouts at Pride on the weekend. We also have invested in co-designing a statewide pilot peer call-back service for families, carers and supporters who are caring for people experiencing suicidal behaviour, among many other things, including of course further boosting that HOPE program to 21 sites across our state. We have been doing an enormous amount of work in this space, and we will continue to do an enormous amount of work in this space because we recognise how important it is and we recognise how important it is to continue investing.

We made that point very clearly in our response to the Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System. Sadly, the mechanisms that we put in place to ensure that there would continue to be strong investment in our mental health system were not wholly supported by the opposition, who had

significant issues with the government's actions to ensure that we enshrined solid investment in our mental health system.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, this is a very sensitive issue, and it was a very clear and straight question. I am sure we would all appreciate the minister not doing the house a disservice by debating the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! Was the minister speaking on the point of order or returning to the question? This is a sensitive issue. I do ask the minister to come back to answering the question and not debating this particular issue.

Gabrielle WILLIAMS: Thank you, Speaker. We have not wasted a single day in working to rebuild this state's mental health system, and we will not waste a day going forward. Our work and our commitment remain strong to deliver on every single one of the commission's 74 recommendations, including those that pertain to suicide prevention and response. You have my personal commitment to that work of course. As others have pointed out in their responses today, Victorians have made their views very clear, and they know that only an Andrews Labor government can be trusted to deliver on very significant generational reform to our mental health system. Those opposite, quite frankly, have zero credibility on this issue. We will continue to be focused on delivering outcomes for our community, the outcomes that they need and deserve, and the outcomes that we committed to delivering when the royal commission handed down its report.

State Electricity Commission

Sarah CONNOLLY (Laverton) (14:39): My question is to the Minister for Education representing the Minister for Training and Skills. Minister, this government's commitment to the skills and training sector has helped thousands of people in my electorate of Laverton re-skill and land a solid job. How will the publicly owned SEC support people of all ages to skill up and train as part of our renewables workforce?

Natalie HUTCHINS (Sydenham – Minister for Education, Minister for Women) (14:40): Thank you to the member for Laverton for her question, which comes to me as the minister acting for the Minister for Training and Skills in the other place. I know that the member for Laverton herself understands that bringing back the SEC here will not just drive down bills, will not just boost renewable energy but will create thousands of highly skilled jobs, high-paying jobs, for Victorian workers. We know that this is going to deliver. Bringing back the SEC will be a key component of Victoria achieving its renewable energy targets, as outlined by our fantastic minister, delivering 65 per cent by 2023 and 95 per cent by 2035.

I am so proud to say that this government has invested and is committing to \$424 million in energy and training packages to help workers upskill, and not only that, to bring new people into about 6000 new positions for apprentices, for trainees – key elements in bringing back the SEC. I am proud to say this is not just about the SEC. You will find that this is about training the next generation of tradespeople: tradesmen, tradeswomen, maintenance workers, electricians, welders, painters, mechanics – mechanics that we desperately need. The SEC will be a game changer for young people in Victoria, and this government is offering those pathways through this commitment.

As the Minister for Education, I am very excited that this government is already reforming the two years of senior secondary with the introduction of a VCE vocational major that has started to roll out this year. This will support the transition of students through vocational pathways to meet the needs of many growing industries, which is why we can add clean energy to the list of VCE majors, giving Victoria's students the opportunity to take advantage of Victoria's investment in renewable energies. Across government schools the SEC will be at careers nights. They will be recruiting the workers of the future, highlighting employment opportunities in the renewables sector.

We will also support 10,000 secondary students to undertake a week of work experience in the clean energy sector. This is a fantastic commitment – 10,000 students having that opportunity to see what it is, firsthand, that SEC jobs can offer them. The focus on clean energy will be underpinned by our commitment to invest \$116 million to open six new cutting-edge TAFE and tech schools, utilising Victoria’s TAFE network and giving secondary students a head start on a hands-on experience.

Emma Kealy: On a point of order, Speaker, the minister appears to be reading notes. I ask her to make those notes available to the house.

The SPEAKER: Is the minister reading notes?

Natalie Hutchins interjected.

The SPEAKER: The minister is referring to her notes.

Natalie HUTCHINS: I know those opposite would not care about what we are investing with TAFE into registered training organisations, into industry to be able to deliver the experience of clean energy to the future workforce that we have here in Victoria. We are putting that front and centre with our commitments that I am taking the house through today. The government is doing what we can – that is, providing what matters to young people, with the skills and training they need so the jobs of tomorrow will be available to them now and into the future.

Bail laws

Tim READ (Brunswick) (14:44): My question is for the Premier, asked on behalf of Uncle Percy Lovett – the partner of Veronica Nelson – who is in the Parliament today. Uncle Percy believes no-one should be in the position that Veronica was on that New Year’s Eve when she died in 2019. So he wants the key recommendation of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, that imprisonment only be used as a last resort, to finally be implemented, especially for those who have not been found guilty of any criminal offence. Premier, will you commit today to remove any presumption against bail, to repeal offences against the Bail Act and to amend the Bail Act to ensure that no-one is ever remanded when charged with an offence that is unlikely to result in a sentence of imprisonment?

Daniel ANDREWS (Mulgrave – Premier) (14:45): I thank the member for Brunswick for his question. First and foremost, let me add to some comments I made outside this place in the wake of the coroner’s findings in relation to the tragic death of Veronica Nelson. It is a tragedy. It is a catalogue of errors that are unacceptable to all fair-minded Victorians and unacceptable to me as the leader of the government and the leader of the state. In Veronica Nelson’s memory, and in support of other vulnerable Victorians and all Victorians who may for one reason or another find themselves in the criminal justice system, we will act to not only make appropriate reform to the Bail Act but also ensure that regardless of the circumstances in which a person comes to be in custody, if and when they need health support and care they are taken seriously, they are respected, they are valued and they are given care. I think it would be wrong for us to see this simply as a matter of bail, as important as that is. There are bigger and broader issues that go to fundamental and catastrophic failures in the provision of services and in the protection of the human rights of both Veronica Nelson and potentially others. This is a bigger issue than just bail reform, as critically important as that is.

Turning to that element of the member’s question, I am not today going to provide guarantees other than this: the government has already well begun the process of drafting changes to the Bail Act to better reflect the fact that there are key differences between violent offenders – alleged – and those who are alleged to have committed non-violent crimes. The point that the honourable member makes in relation to the unsustainability and the fundamentally flawed nature of a system that removes all judicial discretion in effect and sees a person in custody awaiting the establishment of their innocence or otherwise for an offence that, if proven, would almost certainly not involve a custodial sentence is a point well made, and we will seek to address that imbalance and the fact that there is a clear imperative to reform and change.

I was asked, though, to provide a guarantee that there would be no presumptions against bail. I am not in a position, and nor will I ever be in a position, to say that there would never, ever be for some categories of offending – alleged – no presumptions against bail. We need a system, we need a framework and we do need to make sure that keeping the community safe guides that framework. A better balance and a better recognition in our law that there are key differences between violent offenders and offences and those who are not accused of or charged with violent offences – we need that better recognition. That is exactly what the government is working to deliver, and we will soon have more to say, I think in the first instance in terms of principles. Then beyond that a bill will be introduced into this place, and we would look forward to working with any and all members of Parliament who want to engage with us in order to get the best possible legislative framework. Hopefully we can have a situation where the Parliament, acting at its best, can come up with a new set of laws that do properly strike that balance.

Nothing I say can take away the pain that those who loved Veronica Nelson carry with them every day. What we can do and what we must do is make the necessary change in statute and in practice to ensure that it does not happen again.

State Electricity Commission

Michaela SETTLE (Eureka) (14:49): My question is to the Minister for Health, representing the Minister for Regional Development. Minister, the history of the SEC is embedded in regional Victoria. How will the creation of the SEC support regional Victorians?

Mary-Anne THOMAS (Macedon – Leader of the House, Minister for Health, Minister for Health Infrastructure, Minister for Medical Research) (14:50): Can I thank the member for Eureka for her question. It was a great honour to serve in this government as Minister for Regional Development and to be one of the many, many Labor MPs that represent regional Victoria. Indeed it was fantastic at the recent election to see yet another member for regional Victoria join our ranks, and that of course is the member for Ripon. As the member for Eureka knows, the SEC has touched so many families across rural and regional Victoria and is and has been a much-loved institution – indeed definitely in the Latrobe Valley, but I have got a bit more to say about that in my response. I want to say this: I know that all members of the house, each and every one of you, heard a lot about the SEC on pre-poll, and I am sure those on the other side might regret how popular it was. We on this side of the house look forward to delivering on our commitment to the people of Victoria to put the power back in the hands of the people, where it belongs.

This is great, but I want to talk particularly about the impact for regional Victoria, and in doing so I want to share a story from my own family. I have talked about the way in which the SEC touched so many people. My brother was a trainee distribution officer with the SEC quite some time ago, and that was seen for young men predominantly at that time as a great career pathway for a school leaver. Can I tell you that during his time as a trainee distribution officer he had the opportunity to work in Tallangatta, Myrtleford, Kyneton, Sunbury – where is my good friend; there he is – Hamilton and Wangaratta. So he had the opportunity to work right across rural Victoria until Jeff Kennett, who cruelly sold off the SEC, abandoned the people of the Latrobe Valley and the very many young people right across Victoria who had chosen this career pathway. All the young people who had chosen –

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: The minister will resume her seat.

Mary-Anne THOMAS: this career pathway were cut off at the knees by the former Kennett government.

The SPEAKER: The minister will resume her seat! I think everyone is deaf in here today.

Peter Walsh: On a point of order, Speaker, on the issue of relevance, the minister keeps pointing to the member for Gippsland South as being the Latrobe Valley. Could I remind the minister that it is actually the member for Morwell, who is sitting behind me, who is the member for that area.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! If members are going to raise a point of order, make it a point of order. That is not a point of order.

Mary-Anne THOMAS: Thank you very much, Speaker. As I was saying, the SEC has played such an important, vital role in rural and regional Victoria, and it will do so again, and it will do so under the Andrews Labor government. Indeed the people of Gippsland and the Latrobe Valley will benefit from our government's investments in re-establishing the SEC in the Latrobe Valley, where the power of this state has always come from. We are putting in \$20 million to support and prepare the SEC to establish its new home in Morwell. This is an initiative that we are very proud to be working on. I congratulate the Minister for the State Electricity Commission on the delivery of this really once-in-a-century reform that could only ever be delivered by a Labor government. We look forward to the many career opportunities, job opportunities, that will be there for young people in rural and regional Victoria. All those offices I mentioned before – will I list them all again? I will not, but let me just say, right across rural and regional Victoria the previous Liberal government, led by Jeff Kennett, closed every single one of those offices and cut short –

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, this is not an opportunity to debate the question. At nearly 6 minutes in, this is just getting ridiculous. This is embarrassing from the Leader of the House. It is embarrassing from the Leader of the House.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would ask members to keep their points of order succinct. The minister to continue. She is being relevant.

Mary-Anne THOMAS: Thank you very much, Speaker. I will conclude by saying that the people of Victoria look forward to our government delivering on its commitments, as it always does, with power back to the people, led by our fantastic minister for the SEC and our Andrews Labor government.

Education funding

John PESUTTO (Hawthorn – Leader of the Opposition) (14:56): My question is to the Minister for Education. Last month's Futurity Investment Group cost of education index revealed that Melbourne is the most expensive location in Australia to receive a government school education, with families paying an average of \$102,807 per child. Meanwhile, new data released today from the Productivity Commission confirms the Victorian government spends the lowest amount per child on school education of any state or territory in the nation. Why should families spend the most whilst the Victorian government spends the least on educating Victorian kids?

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! When the house comes to order I will call the minister. Question time could go for an hour and a half today. The Premier will come to order.

Natalie HUTCHINS (Sydenham – Minister for Education, Minister for Women) (14:57): I welcome the opportunity to talk about what it is that we are delivering here in our state schools. We are very proud on this side of the house because we believe that every child deserves the same opportunity for a quality education.

A member interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition asked the question. I expect him to listen to the answer. The constant across-the-table is unacceptable.

Natalie HUTCHINS: Thank you, Speaker. We believe that no child should be left behind, and I find it extraordinary that the opposition would quote a private company's report into spending that is really based on parents in this state choosing to have private tuition for their kids in place, when actually this government has extended its successful tutor learning initiative, something that everyone on this side of the house is absolutely proud of. This is somewhere we have stepped up to give that very vital individual support to those kids most in need across our state school system. As students went back to school last week, many of them were introduced for the first time to tutor learning, and I can tell you now from the visits that I have made to about a dozen schools in the last week I hear constantly from parents, from teachers and from principals the benefits of having tutor learning in our schools that is funded by this government.

This absolutely goes to the heart of addressing cost-of-living issues for our families, but that is not all we are doing. It is not just the employment of almost 6000 tutors that we are rolling out across our schools. It is not only that. We are also proud to support affordable uniforms through the wonderful work of State Schools' Relief that is being done across our school system. We are testing the eyesight of our most vulnerable kids and providing free glasses to those kids in place, giving them the support they need to make sure they get the best education possible, not to mention the breakfast programs that this side of the house has watched roll out now for many years – 28 million breakfasts are supplied to students in schools across our school network, a fantastic achievement. Can I thank our partners at Foodbank for the work that they have done in not only helping us get the essentials out for breakfast but also the fantastic job over the summer in providing around 6000 packs to families who were in desperate need of some support in meeting the demands and the cost of living.

We have also covered the cost of course materials for VET classes as this new school year has rolled out. We heard loud and clear that this was something that our kids needed in order to be properly equipped in their VET classes, and that is something I know that many of us are very proud of seeing in our schools. And of course we are supporting where it is needed: for the most vulnerable families who are the most financially stressed, free camp support and excursion support. I have got to say, it is a bit of a game changer, the Positive Start initiative. It reached nearly 6000 students throughout the 2022 school year. That will continue to roll out into this year – free camps, sports programs, cultural experiences – making sure that no kid is left behind. That is in stark contrast to those opposite who did nothing but cut our school system – cut Free Fruit Friday. They have done nothing in the space of –

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, the minister is now straying into debate. I would suggest she go back to the talking points.

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister was being relevant, but I do ask you to come back to the question, Minister.

Natalie HUTCHINS: We are absolutely committed to seeing that our kids get the resources they need across our public schools, and we will continue to deliver in 2023.

State Electricity Commission

Daniela DE MARTINO (Monbulk) (15:02): My question is to the Minister for Employment. Minister, almost everyone in here has heard a story about the lifelong jobs the SEC used to provide. How will bringing back the SEC create thousands of jobs for Victorians and grow our renewables workforce?

Ben Carroll interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! Wait until you are called, Minister. Everyone is out of practice, I can see.

Ben CARROLL (Niddrie – Minister for Industry and Innovation, Minister for Manufacturing Sovereignty, Minister for Employment, Minister for Public Transport) (15:03): Thank you for the call, Speaker. I want to thank the member for Monbulk for her question because it is such a great question, and it goes also to what the Minister for the State Electricity Commission was talking about – lifelong

jobs at the SEC. I know the evening is getting on, but I do want to also highlight – and I have brought it in – that my father worked at the SEC. I have even got his job application right in front of me, believe it or not. It paid \$27,000 a year in the late 1970s and early 1980s. It says:

Electricians ...

Looking for a Change?

Do you want a job with security, promotion prospects, superannuation and good working conditions?

My dad successfully got that job. Sadly, years later he lost that job when it was privatised by the Kennett government.

John Pesutto interjected.

Ben CARROLL: I will take that up, because we have got a new opposition leader that walks both sides of the street. He loves to talk about his dad and that, but he loves to be a Liberal first and a Victorian second – pro privatisation.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will direct their comments through the Chair.

James Newbury: On a point of order, I beg you, Speaker, to please bring the minister back to the question, to stop debating extraneous matters. I mean, this is just getting long, and I do not know when it is going to end.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister will continue.

Ben CARROLL: I have got four years –

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the minister to come back to the question.

Ben CARROLL: I have got four years of talking about jobs, jobs and jobs – 59,000 jobs in areas like manufacturing, solar, wind and emerging industries. Six thousand of those jobs will go to trainees and apprentices – 6000 lifelong jobs creating the SEC. But we are also going to bring the Victorian community with us on this important journey. Later this year we will be holding a renewable energy skills and workforce forum. We will bring together employers, unions, training providers, peak bodies and traditional owners. We will ensure we have the skills and the match readiness to create a workforce pipeline for the SEC. I am looking forward to working with my colleagues the Minister for Training and Skills in the other place and the minister for the SEC.

There are alternatives out there, and I have brought another article in with me. It is here, the *Australian Financial Review*, 15 January, headed: ‘Pesutto may tear down SEC to rebuild Liberals ...’.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Manager of Opposition Business is warned.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, clearly the minister is now debating the question, and we are going for the record of the longest question time, I think ever. This minister is at 5 minutes, and I would ask you to bring the minister back to the question.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! I am happy to sit here for question time to go a little longer. The minister will continue, but I ask him to cease debating the question.

Ben CARROLL: You cannot make this up. It was sewerage at the state election, and now they are already lining up the SEC in the second question time after the election. But let me finish the quote so it is on the *Hansard* record, which we can replay for the next four years. The article states:

... Mr Pesutto argues the state government does not need to intervene in the building of renewables infrastructure because there is enough private capital to do the job.

The Liberals first and Victorians second.

Bills

Human Source Management Bill 2023

Introduction and first reading

Anthony CARBINES (Ivanhoe – Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Racing) (15:09): I move:

That I introduce a bill for an act to provide for the registration, use and management of human sources by Victoria Police, to provide for the external oversight of the use of human sources, to consequentially amend the Victoria Police Act 2013 and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

Read first time.

Ordered to be read second time tomorrow.

Health Legislation Amendment (Information Sharing) Bill 2023

Introduction and first reading

Mary-Anne THOMAS (Macedon – Leader of the House, Minister for Health, Minister for Health Infrastructure, Minister for Medical Research) (15:10): I move:

That I introduce a bill for an act to amend the Health Services Act 1988 to establish a centralised electronic system to enable public hospitals and other specified health services to share specified patient health information, to make consequential amendments to the Health Records Act 2001 and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

James NEWBURY (Brighton) (15:10): I ask for a brief explanation of the bill.

Mary-Anne THOMAS (Macedon – Leader of the House, Minister for Health, Minister for Health Infrastructure, Minister for Medical Research) (15:10): This bill seeks to amend the Health Services Act 1988 to allow for health information sharing between specified health services via a secure platform operated by the Department of Health and to amend the Health Records Act 2001 to ensure it operates consistently with the proposed amendments to the Health Services Act. This will support clinicians working in Victoria's public healthcare system to share information securely and in a timely manner while continuing to recognise patients' rights to confidentiality and privacy.

Read first time.

Ordered to be read second time tomorrow.

Members

Acting speakers

The SPEAKER (15:11): Under standing order 20 I have tabled my warrant appointing the following members to preside as acting speakers: Juliana Addison, Christine Couzens, Bronwyn Halfpenny, Paul Hamer, Meng Heang Tak and Jackson Taylor.

*Announcements***Deputy Clerk of the Legislative Assembly**

The SPEAKER (15:12): I am pleased to advise the house that the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly has appointed Vaughn Koops to be Deputy Clerk of the house under section 18 of the Parliamentary Administration Act 2005. Vaughn's appointment follows Robert McDonald's appointment as Clerk of the Legislative Council in 2022. Congratulations, Vaughn.

*Business of the house***Notices of motion****Notices given.***Documents***Judicial Commission of Victoria***Report 2021–22*

Anthony CARBINES (Ivanhoe – Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Racing) (15:13): I table, by leave, the report 2021–22 of the Judicial Commission of Victoria.

Documents**Incorporated list as follows:**

DOCUMENTS TABLED BY COMMAND OF THE GOVERNOR – The Clerk announced that the following documents had been lodged for presentation by Command of the Governor:

Magistrates' Court of Victoria – Report 2021–22

Supreme Court of Victoria – Report 2021–22

Ordered to be tabled.

DOCUMENTS TABLED UNDER ACTS OF PARLIAMENT – The Clerk tabled:

Benalla Health – Report 2021–22

Board of the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission Chair – Report 2020–21

Casterton Memorial Hospital – Report 2021–22

Central Highlands Rural Health – Report 2021–22

Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978:

Order under ss 17B and 17D granting a licence and a lease over Mount Doboobetic Bushland Reserve

Order under s 17B granting a licence over Point Cook Coastal Reserve

Order under s 17D granting a lease over Yarra Bend Park

Dhelkaya Health – Report 2021–22

Drug, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981 – Amended Poisons Code under ss 12 and 12E

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 – Education and Care Services National Amendment Regulations 2022 under s 303(1)

Education and Care Services Ombudsman, National Education and Care Services Privacy Commissioner, and National Education and Care Services Freedom of Information Commissioner – Report 2021–22

Financial Management Act 1994:

Report from the Minister for Environment that she had received the report 2021–22 of the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Trust

Report from the Minister for Industry and Innovation that he had not received the report 2021–22 of the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions

2022–23 Quarterly Financial Report No 1 for the quarter ended 30 September 2022 – released on 23 December 2022

Gippsland Southern Health Service – Report 2021–22

Grampians Health – Report 2021–22

Kilmore District Health – Report 2021–22

Kyabram District Health Service – Report 2021–22

Land Tax Act 2005 – Report 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022 of Land Tax Absentee Owner Surcharge Exemptions

Omeo District Health – Report 2021–22

Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre – Report 2021–22

Planning and Environment Act 1987:

Infrastructure and Development Contribution Levies – Report 2021–22

Notices of approval of amendments to the following Planning Schemes:

Ararat – C42

Boroondara – C390, C393

Cardinia – C270

Darebin – C170, C203, C212

Glenelg – C106

Greater Bendigo – C271

Hume – C253

Manningham – C133

Mansfield – C48 part 1

Melbourne – C420, C422, C445, C446

Moreland – C227

Port Phillip – C184, C204

Surf Coast – C133

Towong – C37

Whittlesea – C270

Statutory Rules under the following Acts:

County Court Act 1958 – SR 131/2022

Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009 – SRs 1, 2

Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Act 2011 – SR 3

Land Conservation (Vehicle Control) Act 1972 – SR 6

Magistrates' Court Act 1989 – SR 134/2022

Public Interest Monitor Act 2011 – SR 4

Supreme Court Act 1986 – SRs 132/2022, 133/2022

Victorian Inspectorate Act 2011 – SR 5

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 – documents under s 15 in relation to Statutory Rules 97/2021, 153/2021, 171/2021, 37/2022, 81/2022, 93/2022, 111/2022, 124/2022, 134/2022, 3, 4, 5, 6

Victorian Institute of Forensic Mental Health – Report 2021–22

Victorian Public Sector Commission – Report 2021–22.

Bills**Racing Amendment (Unauthorised Access) Bill 2022***Appropriation*

The SPEAKER (15:16): I have received a message from the Governor recommending an appropriation for the purposes of the Racing Amendment (Unauthorised Access) Bill 2022.

Motions**Lord's Prayer**

Ellen SANDELL (Melbourne) (15:16): I desire to move, by leave:

That the ongoing resolution regarding the Lord's Prayer agreed to on 4 October 1928 be rescinded.

Leave refused.

The SPEAKER: Do you wish to give notice of that instead?

Ellen SANDELL: I give notice of the motion.

Joint standing committee on road safety

Danny O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) (15:16): I desire to move, by leave:

That:

- (1) A joint standing committee be appointed to inquire into, consider and report to the Parliament on any proposal, matter or thing concerned with:
 - (a) road trauma
 - (b) safety on roads and related matters;
- (2) Such committee consist of four members from the Legislative Assembly nominated by the Leader of the House and the Manager of Opposition Business and three members from the Legislative Council nominated by the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council and the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council;
- (3) The members be appointed by lodgement of their names with the Speaker and President no later than 28 February 2023; and
- (4) A message be sent to the Legislative Council requesting their agreement.

Leave refused.

Danny O'BRIEN: I give notice of the motion.

Standing and sessional orders

Mary-Anne THOMAS (Macedon – Leader of the House, Minister for Health, Minister for Health Infrastructure, Minister for Medical Research) (15:18): I move, by leave:

That, subject to the sessional orders proposed in government business notice of motion 1 being agreed, the following issues be referred to the Standing Orders Committee for consideration, inquiry and report:

- (1) the possible inclusion of the sessional orders and ongoing resolutions in the standing orders; and
- (2) any other identified improvements to the standing orders.

Motion agreed to.

*Business of the house***Adjournment**

Mary-Anne THOMAS (Macedon – Leader of the House, Minister for Health, Minister for Health Infrastructure, Minister for Medical Research) (15:18): I move:

That the house, at its rising, adjourns until tomorrow at 9:30 am.

Motion agreed to.

Program

Mary-Anne THOMAS (Macedon – Leader of the House, Minister for Health, Minister for Health Infrastructure, Minister for Medical Research) (15:19): What an honour it is to stand here today as the Leader of the House of the third-term Andrews Labor government and to advise the house that we are hitting the ground running with a great agenda and indeed a full program of business.

The SPEAKER: Order! Can I ask the Leader of the House to move the government business motion.

Mary-Anne THOMAS: I move:

That, under standing order 94(2), the orders of the day, government business, relating to the following bills be considered and completed by 5 pm on 9 February 2023:

Building and Planning Legislation Amendment Bill 2022

Racing Amendment (Unauthorised Access) Bill 2022.

As I said, in the excitement of getting back here in 2023 and delivering a legislative program and a government business program here in this house, as you noted, Speaker, a few of us may have forgotten some of the forms that we use in the house over the summer break, but we intend to get on with a very busy business program.

As noted, we will be debating both the Building and Planning Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 and the Racing Amendment (Unauthorised Access) Bill 2022. These two bills build on our agenda of the last term in government and extend our work improving the efficiency of Victoria's building and planning systems as well as ensuring that we protect both the wellbeing and the life, indeed, of racegoers and horses as a consequence of unauthorised access to racetracks here in Victoria, and I know that members in the house will look forward to making a contribution to that debate.

The other matter of course that we gather together for at this time is to hear the inaugural speeches of so many of our new members. I know that those of us that have been in this place now for some time reflect on the significance of that moment and the trepidation that is quite normal to feel, everyone. But once you have got up and you have made your speech, you will be up in your seat regularly, and we look forward to hearing all of your contributions from all sides of the house. Indeed I know that other members would join me in saying how we appreciate it when all members listen to our inaugural speeches too and cheer one another on in what can be quite an intimidating environment on a day that is so special to so many members and indeed for their families.

We will also be shortly having a debate on the sessional orders, and as indicated by my earlier motion – and I thank the Manager of Opposition Business, the member for Brighton, for granting leave on that motion – it is our intention now, after two parliamentary sessions, to look to make some more permanent changes to the standing orders, reflecting of course that here in Victoria we want to be a modern Parliament, one that better represents the people that we exist here to serve. In doing so, it is really important that we stay attuned to changes to people's expectations and that we work to deliver working hours that ensure that particularly those with parental responsibilities are able to fully participate in not only everything here in Parliament but also their lives and to be there with their children, something that I am sure everyone will agree was denied to so many previous members of Parliament. And one would also obviously observe that in previous times most of those members of

Parliament were blokes – no surprises there – so we will be having that debate. It is all about ensuring the smooth operation of our Parliament and ensuring that we maximise the participation of all members and indeed that we have an efficient Parliament as well. I am sure when we go to that debate later we will hear a little bit about some of the inefficiencies that may have occurred under previous standing orders that saw people sitting until very late in the evening.

Once again, it is great to be here in the first sitting week of 2023, the third term of the Andrews Labor government, to have a really terrific government business program to be able to present to the house. I look forward to joining colleagues in listening to the inaugural speeches, perhaps a shorter question time over the next couple of days – who knows, we will see how we go – and of course debating bills on Thursday before we head back to our electorates, where so much of our really important work happens.

James NEWBURY (Brighton) (15:25): I would like to start on a point of unity and concur with the comments from the Leader of the House. It is so incredibly awing as you walk into this place, as you walk into the building and the surrounds, and you know that your community has elected you and offered you the incredible privilege to represent your community in this place. And as you walk in you meet and see the wonderful staff in this place; they are the first thing you see as you come into this building. You interact with the incredible staff. I know that it is something the new members have spoken to me about, and I remember myself coming in as a new member, meeting the staff as they greet you on the way in and as you work through your position in this place, the various departments and areas, the advice they give you, or as you come across people who look after the offices and look after the corridors of this building. When the chamber sleeps, when the Parliament is not sitting, they are here, and it was incredible not only to walk into this building but also to reconnect with those parliamentary staff members who have been here over summer making sure this place works and making sure that our offices, for those that have been privileged enough to return, are ready. These things do not just happen, and I put on record our thanks to the staff of this place.

But also to meet the new members of this place and talk to them about their perspectives on both sides of the chamber, all sides of the chamber, their communities' wants and wishes – it is an incredible honour to talk to the new members about that. As the Leader of the House said, we will have the great privilege of hearing their first thoughts, their first contributions in this place, and I would certainly encourage all of this place and my colleagues especially to come in and listen to the new members of all parties, to hear their perspective, the perspective of their community, because it is a humbling privilege. I remember very, very well, as I stood up in the back corner and gave my first speech, the honour of talking about the wants and wishes of my community in this place.

I also would like to note the comments and speak to the motion moved by the Leader of the House in relation to standing orders and adopting sessional orders. I know that we will have a more substantive debate later in the afternoon, but it is true that we need to look at the standing orders and sessional orders of this place and say, 'Could we do it better? Could we represent the communities better in the way that this house operates? Are there ways that we can do things differently, that we can modernise, while keeping the traditions of this great place? Can we do that?' I welcome the government's moving for an inquiry into these issues. I think it is important for this place to consider, and I think it is important to consider some of the findings of some of the committees over time on how this house operates. I know there have been some wonderful suggestions put by committees that have not been picked up. They would enable this place to connect better with the community and allow greater debate and opportunities for different types of debate, and you need only look at parliaments around Australia to see the other ways that you can do things.

So I finish where I started by saying that we welcome the opportunity for new members to deliver their inaugural speeches and to hear what they have to say on behalf of those communities, and the opposition will not be opposing the government business program.

Sarah CONNOLLY (Laverton) (15:29): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise to speak for really the first time in 2023 and speak on the government business program. Before I start I do want

to say to you, Deputy Speaker, it is an absolute pleasure to see you in that chair and be able to refer to you not just as Acting Speaker in the last term of Parliament but now as Deputy Speaker. Congratulations to you.

I think it is pretty clear that this is a really new Parliament. There are so many new faces in this chamber and in the other place. I feel like there is a bit of a buzz and a hum that happens in the first sitting weeks of the first term of a brand new Parliament, the 60th Parliament. Usually that hum and energy that is happening is from a lot of new colleagues, new MPs, on this side of the house and on the other side of the house who are nervously awaiting the moment that they are invited to deliver their inaugural speech. I am very much looking forward to hearing inaugural speeches here this week. It is a really important part of discovering who a new colleague really is, regardless of what side of the house they are sitting on, but also getting to know colleagues who are part of your own party and getting to know why they decided to run, what they stand for and a bit about their background and their history.

I know it is a time when people who have been here for a while are sitting and listening intently as newbies talk about the trials and tribulations and sometimes the tragedies, loss and triumph that really have made them a whole person as they begin to talk about their life and what led them to run for the Victorian state Parliament. I know it can be a time for tears. There can be lots of laughs, and it will be great to listen to some of those this week. I do want to wish all of the new members, particularly those making their inaugural speeches and delivering them this week, the best of luck. As I tell my children and I tell kids at school when they have to get up and do public speaking and are unsure what to say: when in doubt, just breathe out. I think it is a good one to remember. So for any of those newbies listening on the screen: when in doubt, breathe out.

As part of the new Andrews Labor government and the 60th Victorian Parliament, we are not wasting a day. It is an absolute honour to be re-elected as the government of the day, and we are going to just get on and deliver all the wonderful things that we promised as part of the 2022 election. I have no doubt that this term of government will see, again, a very ambitious, meaty legislative agenda full of legislative reform to go ahead and make Victoria a much more equitable, fairer society for all Victorians.

Of course we are kicking off by debating two bills this week. They were introduced in this place at the end of last year. The Building and Planning Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 – I am going to be speaking on that. I am very much looking forward to having that debate. People in my electorate are consistently talking to me about issues around building and planning, and I love making those contributions. We are also going to be debating the Racing Amendment (Unauthorised Access) Bill 2022. Having recently spoken to the Minister for Racing, I know he is indeed very excited about the bill being debated here in the house this week.

I would also like to acknowledge that we have just heard the condolence motion for the Honourable John Landy, former Governor of Victoria. I join my parliamentary colleagues in paying my respects to Mr Landy and his family. I know they will miss him very much and so will all Victorians. He leaves behind a wonderful legacy as that champion athlete we heard so many contributions refer to today and as Governor for this great state. Indeed as the member for Eildon pointed out – and it stuck with me because my father was a milkman and used to deliver milk to people's homes many years ago – I am sure the milkman that John followed or ran with as he did the milk run would have been absolutely honoured. I know my father would have loved the company of someone like John at 3 o'clock in the morning when he delivered milk to people's homes.

This is a great first government business program as we kick off a really big year for 2023. I wholeheartedly commend the program to this house.

Roma BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (15:34): I too am pleased to rise to talk on the business program today, this being probably the first time I have spoken in the 60th Parliament – I actually cannot remember the 20th of December last year – and certainly in 2023. There is always a lot to do

in the Parliament. There are always unintended consequences when bills get shaken up so they are a better fit for today's world or when there are new things that we have to address. It is very pleasing to be here to be able to start that program for the 60th Parliament. I do take this opportunity to say welcome back to everyone who is here again and welcome to everyone who is new. It is a great honour to represent our communities and one that is certainly not lost on me. After three elections now, I am back here to represent my community in the role of being their voice – their strong voice – so that people understand the value that we contribute to Victoria from south-west Victoria, in our people and our production. It is just a great part of the world.

It is a very busy program this week with many inaugural speeches, which are a wonderful part of the program because we do get to know our colleagues and understand their values, their intent and what they would like to see occur for their electorates. I look forward to that and wish them well with their inaugural speeches.

There are also two bills that will be debated this week in the Parliament. These are two bills that actually lapsed in the 59th Parliament and have been reintroduced in the 60th Parliament. One of those bills is the Racing Amendment (Unauthorised Access) Bill 2022, which I look forward to speaking on, given that racing is a huge part of my electorate's history and given that in the next few weeks we will be celebrating in Warrnambool the 150th year of the Warrnambool Racing Club. I look forward to talking on that bill and expressing the importance of racing to my part of the world. There is also the Building and Planning Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, which again was one of the bills that lapsed in the 59th Parliament. I am sure there will be lots of points that will be made, because this is an area which does cause many people grief and it is very important that we get these things right.

It is a pity that we only have 16 weeks of sitting over the next 12 months on the sitting calendar, because that is why we see bills lapse – with the Parliament not finishing those of the 59th before the 60th. We could sit some more, and it does seem a bit of a shame that there are only 16 sittings. I think there were 17 last year, and there were lots of comments in the media around how that was not as many as there had been in the past. There seem to be less and less sitting weeks. Maybe the government thinks they do not need to have debate in the Parliament. Maybe they think they do not need for us to go back and consult with our constituents, like I do in South-West Coast. Maybe we will see more of what we saw in the last Parliament, which was no opportunity, because often we were not given time to actually consult properly. It is something I hope we will see less of, and I urge the government to be more transparent with our opportunity to debate.

That brings into my memory the fact that during the last Parliament we had to beg for consideration in detail to take place. In fact up until about the third year I think we had only been into consideration in detail once. Finally, towards the end of the four-year term we got a second bill where we were able to go into consideration in detail. It is so important that this chamber uses the opportunity to debate and thoroughly engage in understanding what the consequences will be of legislation. So I urge the government to take the opportunity to be very transparent, far more than I have seen in the seven years to date, and please – please – let us go to consideration in detail when we need the opportunity to do so to make sure, with the legislation that we are bringing in for the community to have to embrace and take on and live with, that we do not get unintended consequences that we do not want simply because we could not really debate it effectively.

I look forward to a Parliament over the next four years that is inclusive and considerate. I sincerely hope that during the debate this afternoon, if it takes place, we set some changes to the sessional orders that will see more understanding of the way our current community operates and how we can find ways to be able to consult with them more effectively. I welcome the opportunity for us to have an inquiry into doing that, and I look forward to today's debate.

Darren CHEESEMAN (South Barwon) (15:39): Thank you, Deputy Speaker. It is fantastic to see you in the chair today, and I wish you congratulations on becoming the Deputy Speaker. It is a hard-earned honour, and I look forward to working with you in that capacity.

Today's government business program, in my view, has really five significant components. The first was some fantastic condolence speeches earlier today for John Landy, a magnificent Victorian who contributed in so many different ways to the state of Victoria. I must say that often condolence motions bring the very, very best out of the Parliament of Victoria, and I certainly very much enjoyed every one of those contributions as we grieved for our loss – the loss of John Landy to the state of Victoria and of course to his loved ones.

We also, as one of the first sitting weeks of this Parliament, have that great opportunity to hear so many inaugural speeches delivered by people across this chamber and indeed in the other chamber as well. I certainly find those inaugural speeches a real insight into the individual and their story and their journey to this place. It certainly is a great way for them to put their stake in the ground about their values and what helped shape their values and their journey to this place, and I certainly look forward to hearing some of those fantastic contributions from those individuals as we all come together and listen to their inaugural speech, and of course the new energy that new members inevitably bring to the Parliament.

We also have that opportunity to contribute to the sessional orders, and we saw the motion moved just a little while ago by the Leader of the House in this chamber. I think in so many ways our standing orders do need reform. That is why we have used that instrument of establishing sessional orders to make sure that we do have family-friendly arrangements in this chamber to enable people to be able to get back home and to make sure that we have hours of work that are safe so that people can safely go about their work and can safely then drive home to wherever they may live. Importantly, this chamber through the course of this week will debate two bills. I think they are important bills, particularly for regional Victorians, and I look forward to listening to, I hope, many great contributions from across the chamber on those bills, and I look forward to those bills passing this place indeed later on this week as we move through and debate these important bills. I very much look forward to hearing everyone's contribution through the course of the week, and I commend the government business program to this chamber.

Danny O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) (15:43): Congratulations, Deputy Speaker.

It is good to rise to speak for a brief moment on the government business program as we come into the serious business of the term, having got the official proceedings out of the way and the swearings in and everything done on 20 December last year. This elected government, now with a massive majority again, comes in with two bills that go –

Sorry, Hansard, you probably cannot really quote that, but there is not exactly a dynamic, reformist zeal coming up in the things that are on the agenda this week for the government.

Mary-Anne Thomas: That's not fair.

Danny O'BRIEN: That is pretty fair, I think, Leader of the House. I mean you have plucked out the Racing Amendment (Unauthorised Access) Bill 2022, which was actually one that lapsed last term. It is good bill, and I look forward to debate on it. We have got the Building and Planning Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, which has a number of aspects to it. But neither of those are going to set the world on fire. Sometimes these sorts of things show what the government is going to be. They have come in and they have said, 'These are all the wonderful things we're going to do for Victorians.' They bring a couple of things back from last term, and the biggest policy we have heard about today has been a policy from the 1920s. We are bringing back the State Electricity Commission – the 1920s. I remember hearing during the election campaign, when it was launched, that it was launched to a song called *Sing It Back* from 1998. So we have got songs from the 1990s and we have got policies from the 1920s that this government is bringing, and they are trying to say that they are reformist and bringing us forward.

Mary-Anne Thomas interjected.

Danny O'BRIEN: Oh, I am cheery. I am very cheery. The Nats have done very well over here. The Nats are very excited to be here. As the member for South Barwon said, I am looking forward to inaugural speeches because there are going to be some rippers this afternoon. I strongly encourage people to hang around. We have just heard a very good inaugural speech from Gaelle Broad in the other place. I was glad I could duck over and see that, and I thank the member for South-West Coast for stepping in for a moment so I could hear Gaelle's speech. It was very good.

We have got the member for Kew coming up shortly, but I am particularly interested to hear from the member for Shepparton – tomorrow we have got the member for Euroa, who has replaced a former Nat, and the Nationals member for Shepparton – and particularly the Nationals member for Morwell. Morwell did not get a mention in all the debate about the SEC during question time, maybe because they realised that the member for Morwell was sitting on this side, not that side. So, the area that knew the SEC best did not buy the government's SEC policy. I am very much looking forward to a blue-collar plumber from Morwell giving his inaugural speech shortly. I have got to say there is a little bit of personal interest there. I have known Marty Cameron, the member for Morwell, for a long time – since I was a little boy. He was a footy player, but he was also a plumber. He understands the trades, he understands the real world.

A member: Hello, excuse me, sparkie here.

Danny O'BRIEN: Yes, but he comes straight from the tools: Marty just got out of his hi-vis, put a suit on and walked in, literally about an hour ago. I am really looking forward to that because, as I said, I have known the member for Morwell for a long time. Member for Eastern Victoria in the other place Ms Bath and I were very focused on the Morwell campaign. Indeed, there was a photo of us when we got back here together after the election – there was a photo of the member for Morwell doing a little media conference and the member for Eastern Victoria on one side behind him and then me on the other side. We looked like doting parents; we were that excited to have the member for Morwell here. I am genuinely looking forward to his speech and those of the Nationals member for Shepparton and the Nationals member for Euroa. We have already had the Nationals member for Mildura's, which was a ripper. Wasn't that a great victory too?

But anyway, I digress. Those inaugural speeches – jokes aside – are important. I say to all members, to government members, to the member for Richmond, who has not done hers yet, I do not think, and to all the Nationals and Liberals as well: it is a very big privilege to be in this place, so when you get up and give that inaugural speech and you tell us a bit about yourself and a bit about your electorate, remember it, savour it, bring it out every couple of years and have a read of it to think what it was like before you got into politics. I look forward to those inaugural speeches, and I look forward to the business program going ahead this week.

Motion agreed to.

Members statements

Michael Boland

Steve DIMOPOULOS (Oakleigh – Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events, Minister for Creative Industries) (15:48): It is with deep sadness I pay tribute to Michael Boland – a strong leader of the union movement, a lifelong Labor supporter and a devoted husband and father. Michael was 'Mick' to his Irish friends, 'Mike' to his union mates, but to us all he is an inspiring migrant tale. Born in 1931 in Ireland on a small farm near a small town with no electricity and limited access to education, Michael rose to become a leader of the largest trade union in Australia and to found a fund with over \$100 billion in investments. But it is more than the founding of Hostplus or leading of the Australian Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union that gives music to this migrant's tale.

Michael helped establish the Gaelic Club and was also secretary of the Gaelic Athletic Association. He loved the Irish game of hurling as much as he loved the Aussie game of football. He lived here for

70 years. He loved and served Australia and never lost his accent. Like Mick, may we all never lose our accent. Like Mick, may we understand that to give is not to give up and that we are better off if we share both profits and perspective.

Michael had a gentle nature, a natural intelligence, a clever altruism and a generous spirit. It is these traits that saw him become a towering figure in the labour movement and in the Irish community, a man with many friends and a hero to his family. I thank Michael Boland for all he has done for the labour movement, for his community and for his beautiful family. He was a loving husband to Maureen, beloved father to Michelle, Liam and Kieran, and adored grandfather to James and Connal. Vale, Michael Boland.

Woodchop events

Peter WALSH (Murray Plains) (15:50): One hundred and fifty years of woodchopping history will end this year unless there is a change to the Andrews government policy on the provision of logs for woodchopping. Since 1870 there has been woodchopping in Victoria. There are between 80 and 100 woodchopping events held every year. They were guaranteed timber back in 2006 by the Bracks government. That guarantee has continued up to this year. This year there may not be any woodchopping at the Melbourne show. There will not be any woodchopping at all the other events around Victoria because there are no logs to chop. Brad Meyer, the president of the Victoria Axemen's Council, is really, really beside himself as to why this is. It is all about government policy, and I would urge the Andrews government to make sure that logs are made available at a reasonable price to the woodchoppers of Victoria.

Floods

Peter WALSH (Murray Plains) (15:51): The people on the Tyntynder Flats in Swan Hill have lived through another flood event where their levee banks were not properly maintained and where this time the army came in to save them with sandbags. They want to see the Andrews government put in place a program where levee banks are maintained before there is an emergency so they do not have to suffer the stress of worrying as to whether their houses are going to flood, whether their businesses are going to flood or whether the roads are going to be closed because there is not proper maintenance to those levees. I urge the government to please address that issue on their behalf.

Kalkallo electorate schools

Ros SPENCE (Kalkallo – Minister for Prevention of Family Violence, Minister for Community Sport, Minister for Suburban Development) (15:51): It has been an exciting start to the year in the Kalkallo electorate with the opening of two new schools with the Minister for Education: Mickleham Secondary College and Wayi School in Craigieburn. This makes nine new government schools that the Andrews Labor government has delivered for the communities I represent, with at least another five on the way.

Mickleham Secondary College is the first secondary school in the rapidly growing suburbs of Mickleham and Kalkallo, which is so important for local students and families. During my visit Achelle, Benjamin, Avinoor and Mikayla helped cut the ribbon and joined the tour of their new school, which provides a modern learning environment for them to learn, grow and thrive. Congratulations to principal Lian Davies and her team, who will guide these students through this important year and beyond.

As the first specialist school in the outer north, students will receive a first-class education at Wayi School. 'Wayi', a Woiwurrung word meaning 'us', perfectly encapsulates the school's vision. Thanks to Karina and Violet for leading the tour of their brand new campus and also to Cemre and Adelle for helping with the ribbon cutting. I am sure you will make the most of the new facilities and embrace all that Wayi has to offer. This school is particularly important as families previously needed to travel to Broadmeadows as the closest specialist school, and now they can save hours of travel each week and have brilliant education opportunities close to home. Congratulations to principal Leanne Sinnadurai and her team for establishing this school committed to an enduring legacy of inclusiveness

and community. I look forward to working with both schools to get the best possible outcomes for students and families.

Rural and regional roads

Richard RIORDAN (Polwarth) (15:53): I rise today in my members statement to bring to the house's attention the appalling state of roads in regional Victoria, but most particularly of course in my electorate, which covers the Surf Coast shire, the Colac Otway shire and the Corangamite shire. Residents right across my region are writing to me on almost a daily basis with photographic evidence, stories of disaster and costs associated with the poor condition of Victorian roads. What we are seeing is that the money, the investment and the long-term commitment to providing safe, stable roadways have just been given up on by this government. Country people are tiring of the fact that they are listening to the news at night, and they are hearing figures of \$70 billion, \$80 billion or \$100 billion being spent on railways in Melbourne and not one extra dollar being spent on country roads. We have heard this week that a 3-kilometre section of the Hamilton Highway across the northern part of my electorate is the biggest regional road repair job in the entire state for the year. That is laughable. There are literally hundreds of thousands of kilometres of roads that need to be fixed up right across rural and regional Victoria. People want to see the water drain from the road and they want to see the edges cleared, but most importantly they want safe roads for themselves, their families, their work and their farms.

Clarinda electorate

Meng Heang TAK (Clarinda) (15:54): Thank you to the voters of Clarinda. I am extremely humbled and proud to be re-elected as your member for Clarinda. Together we have achieved a lot since 2018, and I am very excited for the opportunity over the next four years to continue delivering for our community – delivering a strong and positive government agenda. Thank you to everyone that came out to participate in the democratic process – voting, campaigning, observing and otherwise. There are some really exciting new commitments for our district: a \$12.45 million upgrade to Clayton South Primary School, which will see a rebuild of the main classroom wing and new playground; more than \$500 million to massively upgrade Monash Medical Centre, delivering a new operating theatre complex, intensive care unit and birthing suites; Kingston fields, with \$1 million secured for the master plan for a sporting precinct in Kingston, delivering new sports and recreation facilities that the whole community can be proud of; and more support for the Keysborough Learning Centre, Greek Victorians, Vietnamese Victorians, the Springvale Lunar New Year Festival and Alex Wilkie and Alex Nelson reserves – amazing. Thank you again to all my constituents, volunteers, colleagues and friends for all of your support. I will continue to work hard to serve our community and deliver the support that we need.

Pest control

Roma BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (15:56): South-West Coast is home to some of Victoria's most productive agricultural land and majestic national parks. I encourage all members of this house to hop in the car and drive west to see for themselves this wonderful part of Victoria. Unfortunately South-West Coast has experienced an explosion of pests and noxious weeds. Blackberry, gorse, boxthorn, serrated tussock, ragwort and Paterson's curse abound on the sides of the roads and throughout the national parks. Colonies of rabbits and droves of wild pigs are destroying our beautiful native environment and fertile pastures. Foxes are killing and maiming livestock and native fauna alike. The explosion of pests and weeds is not just confined to South-West Coast, it is happening right across this great state. The Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 provides that all landholders, including the Crown, have responsibility for managing and controlling noxious weeds and pest animals. Private landholders are doing their bit, but this government has dropped the ball. For 18 of the past 23 years this government has not prioritised the management of Victoria's Crown land. I ask the Minister for Environment to share with my community what she is doing to manage the noxious weeds and pest animals on Crown land, particularly rabbits and pigs. I call on the minister to urgently address this, I

call on the minister to immediately activate emergency measures to eradicate noxious weeds and pest animals from Victoria's Crown land and I expect the minister to answer, please.

Sunbury electorate

Josh BULL (Sunbury) (15:57): I am thrilled – absolutely delighted, in fact – to be back in this great house after being successfully re-elected for a third term as part of this progressive, strong, dynamic, inclusive Andrews Labor government. I will make more formal thankyou and acknowledgements at a later date, but I do want to take this opportunity to thank my community for their support and of course the broader Labor team. To continue to deliver in roads, in rail, in schools, in health care and to continue to do the things that matter – upgrading local facilities, making sure that we continue to invest in all of the services that a growing community needs – is something this government will continue to do. I am immensely proud and incredibly grateful for the support and humbled by the victory. But what we do with this victory is what matters. That can be building the multideck carpark, upgrading Sunbury Road, upgrading our local bus terminal, continuing to deliver a huge upgrade to Gladstone Park Secondary College, delivering a brand new splash park at the Sunbury aquatic centre and of course upgrading Goonawarra Neighbourhood House. These are just some of the projects that this government will continue to get on and deliver, but we were resoundingly re-elected because we get things done; we do the things that matter. Today and every day going forward we will continue to be a government for all people across this state.

Mount Beauty Secondary College

Tim McCURDY (Ovens Valley) (15:59): Like most MPs I had a busy Australia Day schedule. Mount Beauty was my first port of call, and after a fantastic ceremony I discovered via some locals that the drinking water at Mount Beauty Secondary College is atrocious. Apparently the maintenance staff need to run the water for an hour prior to the school beginning to remove the stained water before it is acceptable to drink. I will be writing to the Minister for Education to seek funding for a suitable filtering system. Some of the most pristine water in the world begins in beautiful townships like Mount Beauty; I think it is only fair that our students get to sample the best and purest water available to them.

Roadside vegetation

Tim McCURDY (Ovens Valley) (15:59): I visited Jack Hoare of Yarroweyah last week, who has had a tree that belongs to Regional Roads Victoria fall over his fence. Jack is an older member of the community, and he has been refused support from Regional Roads Victoria to have the tree removed. Jack cannot put stock in his paddock, as the fence is damaged, and he is not able to remove or repair the fence. It is disappointing that Regional Roads Victoria do not take responsibility for their roadside vegetation when it causes damage to private property. I am sure if one of Jack's trees were to fall on the Goulburn Valley Highway he would be handed the bill for a clean-up very quickly. I will seek further support from the Minister for Roads and Road Safety.

Black Dog Ride

Tim McCURDY (Ovens Valley) (16:00): The Wangaratta Black Dog Ride is coming up on Sunday 19 March. As a motorbike rider myself, I always look forward to the Black Dog Ride to show my support for depression and suicide prevention. Mayor of the Rural City of Wangaratta Dean Rees will be joining me and the many, many others who converge on Wangaratta to take part. Kurt Dissegna is the coordinator, and I dip my lid to his hard work and effort. I will again be riding a Harley, but let me assure you if there are any other bikes, colours or models that want to join us – ride your Vespa if you want to be part of it. If you cannot ride, at least spend the 30 bucks, show your support and join us for the barbecue.

Paul Richardson

Gary MAAS (Narre Warren South) (16:00): I rise today to speak to the sad and recent passing of Labor comrade and union official Paul Richardson. Paul began his work in union life as a 23-year-old kid at the federated storemen and packers in 1988. He had a stellar 34-year career as an official. He was instrumental to what later became the National Union of Workers and more lately the United Workers Union. I came to know Paul, aka 'Richo' to some, 'Grumpy' to others, when I started work in the NUW office in 2003. He was as outstanding an advocate for working people back then as he was to the day he died. I was a recent graduate lawyer from private practice at that time and one whose knowledge of industrial relations was virtually non-existent, and I am pretty sure he took some pleasure, particularly in the early days, in him being right and me not even knowing if that was the case or not.

Like many union officials, Paul liked a good blue. He loved the theatre that came with having a verbal stoush, whether it was with the boss or with another official, quite often in the middle of the office. His arguments would be well reasoned but always about the issue and not the individual. I know of some bosses of multinational companies who could not quite believe after the fact what they had agreed to with Paul. He was persuasive, but he took members with him too. His intellect was sharp, as dry as his humour could be. He was very well read, forensic in his analysis of all things, had a great work ethic but was a deeply private individual. He is greatly missed. Deepest sympathies to Susie, Katya and his family. Vale, Paul Richardson.

Rosebud Hospital

Sam GROTH (Nepean) (16:02): Health care on the southern Mornington Peninsula is in crisis. Despite a rise in emergency room admissions of between 6.5 and 9.8 per cent for the December–January period compared to last year, there has been no commitment from the government to address the dated infrastructure or inadequate facilities at Rosebud Hospital. The issues include operating theatres closed, holes cut in doorways to fit hospital beds, no lifting tracks to ensure safe patient movement, poor ventilation and the morgue being located next to the kitchen. Add to this the lack of maternity services and the statewide ambulance response issues.

In 2022 the coalition made an election commitment of \$340 million to finally see Rosebud get the hospital rebuild it desperately needs, only to be met with silence from those on the other side. So dire is the funding support for Rosebud Hospital that the emergency department has now for seven years been forced to run a fundraising drive hoping to raise \$117,700 to fund its own new fleet of emergency department trolleys. The staff, nurses, doctors and volunteers at Rosebud Hospital do an incredible job, but they deserve the best possible working conditions to be able to deliver the best possible care. Where else in so-called metropolitan Melbourne are residents required to travel 45 minutes for public healthcare services, time which in some cases is a matter of life and death. I am committed to continuing the fight for the rebuild of Rosebud Hospital so that we have world-leading facilities on the Mornington Peninsula, ensuring locals can access maternity, emergency and other lifesaving services on their doorstep.

Bancoora Surf Life Saving Club

Darren CHEESEMAN (South Barwon) (16:03): I would like to acknowledge members of the Bancoora Surf Life Saving Club for their work keeping our community safe this summer. The Bancoora Surf Life Saving Club was first opened in 1962 and has been serving and protecting our community since then. In the 2020–21 season they recorded over 2000 hours of patrols, completed over 3000 preventative actions and made 13 rescues. Bancoora Beach is a beautiful surf beach located in the Breamlea community and is utilised heavily by the Armstrong Creek community and many visitors to my community. I would like to thank members of the Bancoora Surf Life Saving Club for their work in ensuring everyone's safety on their beach, and I look forward to working with that club in the near future to help improve the facilities that they have.

Prahran electorate

Sam HIBBINS (Prahran) (16:04): I rise to thank the residents of Prahran for re-electing me as the member for Prahran – it is a huge honour – and to thank the volunteers and the supporters who worked so hard and lent a helping hand on our campaign. It is deeply appreciated. I am really looking forward to working with our community to progress our local priorities: upgrading public housing; accessible, safer, climate-friendly transport; creating a Prahran arts and education precinct; reviving our local shopping strips; and the many others.

When I look at this Parliament, with more Greens than ever elected to the lower house and a progressive upper house, I really do think of what is possible: criminal justice reform, First Nations justice, legalising cannabis and drug law reform, ending homelessness, making sure that everyone has got a safe and secure place to call home, stopping new coal and gas projects, going further and faster to 100 per cent renewables, ending duck shooting, stopping logging of our native forests, systemic reform to reduce the cost of living like rent controls, genuinely free public education and increasing wages for our essential workers, not suppressing them. All this and more is possible in this Parliament. In fact we have never had a better opportunity to achieve progressive change for the people of Victoria. I really encourage all members to seize the moment.

Jane Satchwell

Tim RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) (16:06): Today I rise to thank and acknowledge Jane Satchwell, an outstanding educator in our local community who has recently concluded as principal of Chelsea Heights Primary School. Jane has been a wonderful leader, supporting and guiding our students, families, teachers and education support staff on an incredible journey at Chelsea Heights Primary. While Chelsea Heights Primary has always been an outstanding place of education, Jane led the school through a period of transition and greatly lifted education outcomes, standards and aspirations. This made Chelsea Heights Primary School a school of choice and a place where you would move to support your child's education into the future.

When you first meet Jane you are struck by her warmth, her passion and her deep dedication to improving the lives and outcomes of our youngest Victorians. I fondly remember our first meeting in 2015, when Jane passionately laid out the case for the education and needs of her students, putting excellence and equity at the heart of everything the school stood for. I have greatly valued working with Jane over the years to achieve wonderful upgrades of the June Elliott Centre, which is a state-leading example of inclusive education, as well as delivering major upgrades to classrooms and learning spaces in 2022. Without Jane's passion, dedication and advocacy these upgrades would not have been possible, and they are a wonderful legacy for the future. In 2018 Jane was recognised with one of the highest education honours in Victoria, named the Outstanding Primary Principal Award. On behalf of our local community, our kids, students, families and educators, thank you for everything you have done, Jane Satchwell.

Family violence

Ryan SMITH (Warrandyte) (16:07): Today I would like to bring to the house's attention a very important issue within my electorate. A local constituent fleeing a domestic violence situation has now been bouncing around various government agencies for close to 12 months and is now with Refuge Victoria awaiting permanent housing. For the protection of my constituent I cannot reveal her name, but I have raised her issue now with seven separate ministers, with her first contact being to her then local member, who personally guaranteed me near the conclusion of the last Parliament that there would be further action. But since then nothing has eventuated. Recently I have written to the new portfolio ministers – the Minister for Housing, the Minister for Women and the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence – and again have not received a response from any minister which has led to a satisfactory outcome. It is startling that a government that brags about its commitment to fairness is actively ignoring people who are in crisis. I raised this matter in the house last year with no result. I am hoping there is more compassion for this woman and her daughter this time around. If any

one of these ministers, who have all had information from me sent to them, would like further information in order to help her, please feel free to speak to me directly, and let us work together to achieve the right outcome for this woman and her daughter.

Melton electorate infrastructure

Steve McGHIE (Melton) (16:09): As we return from the summer break, hopefully well rested, the Andrews Labor government has been busy in the Melton electorate. In our commitment to deliver world-class education the government will invest \$10.7 million into Kurunjang Secondary College and \$8.8 million into Melton Secondary College to modernise and redevelop their technology blocks and build a brand new rugby pitch at Melton Secondary College. Melton South Primary School will receive \$21.32 million to modernise existing and construct new classroom blocks. Additionally Toolern Vale and District Primary School will receive \$6.42 million for school upgrades and new facilities, and on top of this Al Iman College is set to receive a new crossing on Rees Road, with a \$400,000 government commitment. This project is attributable to the community's commitment to safety. They presented Minister Carroll at the time and me with a petition of 250 signatures. Also the Melton TAFE college will begin construction in 2024, and last Friday I attended the opening of the brand new Thornhill Park Primary School, welcoming over 300 prep to grade 6 students this year. Looking ahead, the government will build three new schools in Melton, including the planned opening of Brookfield primary school in 2024, Weir Views primary school and a public secondary school in Cobblebank. Free three- and four-year-old kinder has had a 100 per cent uptake across Melton, and Hope Street will receive \$870,000, helping them continue to provide vital youth services. Melton will be level crossing free and receive a brand new Melton railway station with line upgrades, including longer trains, more services and V/Line fare caps. Public transport is set to improve in the Eynesbury community, with a new bus service, and with the Premier announcing expressions of interest for the tender of the Melton hospital, plans are well underway to deliver the much-needed 24-hour emergency for Melton.

Thomastown electorate schools

Bronwyn HALFPENNY (Thomastown) (16:10): I had the great pleasure on Monday 6 January, together with the Minister for Education, of attending the opening of two brand new schools in the electorate of Thomastown. Barrawang Primary and Wollert Secondary College are state-of-the-art new schools. We toured a number of magnificent specialist classrooms and were guided by student leaders together with principals of each school. Classrooms were full of activity and excitement and inspiration. Facilities were second to none. Congratulations and thank you to all those involved in the building and organisation of these schools.

Our government knows about the hard work and planning that goes into new schools. We know because we have been providing the funds for so many since our re-election, starting in 2014. In the electorate of Thomastown alone we have been funding and building seven brand new schools, and 10 established schools have been rebuilt or are under construction, demonstrating how strong the commitment of the Andrews Labor government is to supporting student learning and the right to have modern facilities for that learning.

Thank you so much for the dedication and hard work of school leaders, staff and parents that contribute to the most important aspect of the school, which is the work that goes on inside. Special thanks to Barrawang Primary School principal Alisha Campbell and student leaders Amanat, Shiloh, Kirtvir, Mohammed and Simone and to Wollert Secondary College principal Melissa Lozanovski and student leaders Jaideep, Minuri, Andrew and Ariana. I look forward to visiting the school often and celebrating very important milestones in the students' journey of learning.

Lunar New Year

Paul HAMER (Box Hill) (16:12): Thank you, Deputy Speaker, and it is a real delight to see you in the chair this afternoon.

Congratulations to the Asian Business Association of Whitehorse for organising another successful Lunar New Year festival in Box Hill on Saturday 28 January. The New Year festival has not occurred since 2019 due to the pandemic, so it was fantastic to see it roar back this year, with the huge local attendance enjoying the rich variety of food, music and dance on offer.

For over 20 years the Asian Business Association of Whitehorse has provided support and leadership to the many Chinese businesses across Whitehorse and has been the driving force behind the New Year festival. I congratulate the ABAW president Bihong Wang, vice-presidents Tim Chen, Richard Shi and Stephen Zheng and all the other members of the ABAW executive and committee involved in putting on this great celebration. I would also like to pay thanks to the Prime Minister, the federal and state ministers for multicultural affairs and my many parliamentary colleagues, including yourself, Deputy Speaker, who came to the Box Hill Lunar New Year festival to help celebrate this special occasion.

Emi Luppino

Paul HAMER (Box Hill) (16:13): Congratulations to Emi Luppino for being recently named the City of Whitehorse Citizen of the Year. Emi has been an active member of a number of local community organisations in the Box Hill area for many years. These include vice president of Greenlink, an indigenous plant nursery in Box Hill North, secretary of the Doncaster Community Gardeners group and volunteer at the Box Hill Community Bakehouse, a service run by the Box Hill Baptist Church to reduce food waste and feed the community. Congratulations, Emi.

Belinda Young

Daniela DE MARTINO (Monbulk) (16:13): I rise to acknowledge the outstanding contribution being made by a local community member, Belinda Young. In 2015, Belinda had an idea to use social media to connect and combat feelings of social isolation and loneliness for mothers across the Dandenongs. Seven years later her group, Mums of the Hills, has over 5000 members and is recommended by local maternal and child health professionals. It has supported mothers in identifying and seeking treatment for postpartum depression, responding to natural disasters and escaping family violence.

Belinda is a collaborator, working with key agencies and organisations to advocate for telecommunications, resilience, natural disaster preparedness, childcare services and mental health support. As if that is not enough, she is also a PhD candidate, studying bushfire prevention through collective action in California and Victoria. Belinda is the very deserving recipient of Victoria's Australia Day Local Hero award for 2023, and I congratulate her on this wonderful achievement.

Ash Wednesday commemoration

Daniela DE MARTINO (Monbulk) (16:14): I would also like to acknowledge the upcoming 40th anniversary, next Thursday 16 February, of Ash Wednesday. Across the Dandenong Ranges alone over 11 000 hectares burned, 545 buildings were destroyed and, tragically, 27 people lost their lives. This Sunday I will attend the 40th anniversary commemoration at the Ash Wednesday Bushfire Education Centre in Cockatoo. It will be a day of reflection to pause and consider the tragedy which occurred, to give thanks to those who risked their lives to save others and to mourn those who were heartbreakingly lost.

Bayswater electorate

Jackson TAYLOR (Bayswater) (16:15): It is the greatest honour and privilege to continue to serve as the Labor member for Bayswater and to represent this community that I love in our state Parliament. Four years ago I said I would never take for granted this opportunity, that I would be a strong voice

for our community and that I would get things done. I said I would get out there and listen to you about what matters most, and I believe I have done exactly that, because our community deserves nothing less. Thank you so much to the community that I represent for again putting their trust in me.

The work to continue to deliver each and every single day for Knox has already begun, and there is lots of stuff already underway that I want to give the community a quick update on. We have delivered a portable building for Mountain Gate Primary School with two new classrooms. Construction is nearing completion at Our Lady of Lourdes Primary and St Bernadette's Primary. Major works on the Angliss expansion start this year. Lupton Way streetscape next to Boronia station is now complete and the Erica Avenue renewal is soon to kick off. Construction on the JW Manson pavilion is soon to start on site, and construction of the McMahons Road intersection in Ferntree Gully is set to start this year. With well over \$500 million in projects delivered last term, there is now more to do, and I look forward to delivering every single local election commitment, from the upgrade of Boronia station to upgraded schools and the Maroondah Hospital upgrade.

Elaine Wilson and Cheryl Sampson

Jackson TAYLOR (Bayswater) (16:16): After 30 years Elaine Wilson, principal at Wattleview Primary School, has moved into a well-deserved retirement. Elaine had been principal at Wattleview Primary for the past 15 years. Cheryl Sampson started her career at Mountain Gate Primary School in 1978, and she never left. Cheryl was deputy principal of the school for 10 years and has been principal for the last eight years. Congrats to these two amazing educators who have given their working lives to support so many young people to achieve and grow.

George Pearson

Jackson TAYLOR (Bayswater) (16:16): In the last 10 seconds I would like to pay tribute to my grandfather George Raymond Pearson, who passed away on 14 January 2023, this year – the finest man I have ever known. I will miss him greatly.

Ripon electorate public transport

Martha HAYLETT (Ripon) (16:16): Rural and regional Victorians deserve their fair share of public transport options, and that is why I am so proud that the Andrews Labor government is getting on with expanding access right across Ripon. We are making V/Line fares equal to metropolitan Melbourne's by capping a daily full-fare ticket at \$9.20 and \$4.60 for concession from 31 March, and across the network the Labor government will add almost 200 extra weekend services on major train lines in regional Victoria. This includes five additional weekend return services on the Ararat line. We have already delivered four new additional weekend rail services for Maryborough too. I was lucky enough to be on the first extra service to Ballarat on 4 December with Central Goldfields Shire mayor Grace La Vella, Cr Chris Meddows-Taylor and Rail Revival Alliance president Noel Laidlaw.

We have also delivered more bus services across our growing outer areas of Ballarat, with a new bus service linking Cardigan Village and Lucas kids with their local schools and a new bus route linking Smythesdale, Haddon, Smythes Creek and Snake Valley to Delacombe town centre. The Andrews Labor government is getting on with improving our rural and regional transport network, and there is more to do. I cannot wait to get to work.

Quarters Primary School

Pauline RICHARDS (Cranbourne) (16:18): Deputy Speaker, this is an opportunity to congratulate you on your new role but also to acknowledge the extraordinary new primary school, Quarters Primary School, in Cranbourne West. It is a supported inclusion school, and I was really delighted to have the opportunity to visit with the Minister for Education. The new principal Liz Davey is providing extraordinary leadership. We are very fortunate to have this sort of experience.

Business of the house**Sessional orders**

Mary-Anne THOMAS (Macedon – Leader of the House, Minister for Health, Minister for Health Infrastructure, Minister for Medical Research) (16:18): I move:

That the following sessional orders be adopted, to come into operation with effect from the next sitting day:

1 Days and times of meeting

Unless otherwise ordered, the House will meet each Tuesday at 12.00 pm, and each Wednesday and Thursday at 9.30 am.

2 Interruption of business for adjournment

Standing Order 32 be suspended and the following to apply:

- (1) Subject to paragraphs (2) and (3), the Speaker will interrupt the business before the House at:
 - (a) 7.00 pm each sitting Tuesday and Wednesday;
 - (b) 5.00 pm on any other sitting day.
- (2) If a division is taking place when the time for the interruption arises, the division will be completed and the result announced. If the division is on a closure motion, and the motion is agreed to, the question or questions then required to be put to close the issue before the House will also be dealt with. The Speaker will then interrupt business.
- (3) If the time for the interruption arises:
 - (a) at the same time as the completion time set by the government business program; or
 - (b) after the interruption for the completion time of the government business program, but before all business on the program has been dealt with –
all business on the government business program will be completed first. The Speaker will then interrupt business for the adjournment.
- (4) After the interruption:
 - (a) before a motion for the adjournment is proposed by the Speaker, a minister may move that the sitting be continued. That motion must be put immediately without amendment or debate. If it is agreed to, the House will resume debate at the point at which it had been interrupted; or
 - (b) if a motion is not moved, the Speaker will immediately propose the question ‘That the House now adjourns’. Any business under discussion and any other business not concluded at the time of the adjournment will be listed on the notice paper for the next sitting day. Any member speaking at the time of the interruption may, when debate resumes, continue his or her speech.

3 Order of business

- (1) So much of Standing Orders 36, 38, 39, 41 and 55 be suspended so as to enable the following order of business on:

Tuesdays

Formal business

Statements by members

Government business

Question time (2.00 pm)

Government business *continued*

General business

Wednesdays

Formal business

Disallowance motions

Statements by members

Statements on parliamentary committee reports

Government business

Question time (2.00 pm)

Government business *continued*

Matter of public importance or grievance debate (4.00 pm)

Government business *continued*

General business

- (2) So much of Standing Orders 38 and 39 be suspended so as to enable:
 - (a) at 4.00 pm on Wednesday, unless a division is taking place, the Chair interrupts the business before the House and the bells are then rung for one minute;
 - (b) if a division is taking place at 4.00 pm:
 - (i) it will be completed without interruption and result announced;
 - (ii) if the division is on a closure motion, and the motion is agreed to, the question or questions then required to be put to close the issue before the House will also be dealt with;
 - (iii) business is then interrupted following the procedure in sub-paragraph (a);
 - (c) the Chair announces the grievance debate or matter of public importance, whichever the case may be;
 - (d) any business under discussion and not completed at the interruption will be resumed immediately at the end of the grievance debate or matter of public importance, whichever the case may be, and any member speaking at the time of the interruption may then continue his or her speech.
- (3) In Standing Order 39(9) for 'statements on parliamentary committee reports under SO 41' read 'government business'.

4 Answers to questions on notice

A reply to a question on notice delivered to the Clerk under Standing Order 54(3) must be submitted within 30 days.

5 Who may ask oral questions without notice

Only non-government members may ask questions without notice under Standing Order 55.

6 Supplementary questions without notice

- (1) At the conclusion of each answer to an oral question without notice, the questioning member may ask the responding minister a supplementary question to elucidate or clarify the answer.
- (2) Supplementary questions must actually and accurately relate to the original question, must relate to or arise from the answer and must not be a separate question on the same topic.

7 Ministers' statements

After each oral question without notice and any related supplementary questions, any minister may seek the call to make a statement of up to two minutes.

8 Constituency questions

- (1) At the conclusion of oral questions without notice and ministers' statements, five government members and five non-government members may ask one oral question each to ministers relating to constituency matters.
- (2) Replies to constituency questions must be given in writing within 30 days by delivering a reply to the Clerk. The Clerk must give the response to the member who asked the question and electronically publish the response.

9 Duration of question time

Standing Order 55(2) is suspended and the following to apply:

Question time will last until five oral questions and related supplementary questions have been answered, up to five ministers' statements have been made and up to ten constituency questions have been asked and where a question is ruled out of order it is, for the purposes of this sessional order, deemed to have been answered.

10 Time limits on answers and questions

- (1) The time limit for each oral question, supplementary question and constituency question is one minute.
- (2) The time limit for the answer to each oral question is three minutes, and for the answer to each supplementary question is one minute.

11 Content of answers

Standing Order 58(1)(a) is suspended and all answers to questions must be direct, factual, succinct and relevant.

12 Chair ordering member to withdraw – application during oral questions without notice and ministers' statements

Where:

- (1) a member is ordered to withdraw from the House under Standing Order 124 during oral questions without notice or ministers' statements; and
- (2) the time for oral questions without notice and ministers' statements ends before the end of the suspension period –

the member may return to the Chamber after the time for oral questions without notice and ministers' statements but must serve the remainder of their suspension during the next question time, subject to Standing Order 124(2).

13 Time limit for lead speakers

For the purposes of Standing Order 131, and subject to any agreement to the contrary, additional time provided for the lead speaker of any other party does not apply where such a party has advised the Speaker that it is in a coalition arrangement with another party.

14 Notices of motion

Standing Orders 140(1) and 141 are suspended and the following to apply:

- (1) A member may only move a motion to discuss a subject if he or she has given notice of that motion on a previous sitting day.
- (2) Copies of all verbal notices must be provided to the Clerks at the table before notices are called on by the Speaker.
- (3) Copies of all written notices must be provided to the Clerks at the table before the conclusion of formal business.
- (4) All notices given by ministers must be verbal.
- (5) Verbal notices must be read to the House. They can only be given before the House proceeds to the business of the day as set out in the notice paper.
- (6) All notices, except notices given under paragraph (7) given by members who are not ministers, must be given in writing. Members may give notice by lodging a copy with the Clerks in accordance with paragraph (3).
- (7) A motion by a member expressing no confidence in the Premier and ministers, in the terms set out in s 8A of the Constitution Act 1975, may only be given verbally.
- (8) The Clerk must notify the Speaker of a notice of a motion by a member to disallow a statutory rule to which Standing Order 151 applies, and the Speaker will report details to the House at the first convenient opportunity.

15 Procedure for a division

Standing Order 164(1) is suspended and the following to apply:

When a division is requested, the Clerk will ring the bells for four minutes as indicated by the timer.

16 Redactions

The Standing Orders Committee (the Committee) is empowered to authorise redactions from a document published by the House, Assembly Hansard, official broadcast footage of the Assembly Chamber or an Assembly Committee, a petition, or a document tabled under Standing Order 171 on safety or security grounds using the following process:

- (1) A person, including a member of Parliament, may write to the Clerk and request the redaction including details of the nature of the safety or security risk and how redaction would reduce or remove this risk. The Clerk will then forward that request to the Committee as soon as practicable.

- (2) If the Committee is satisfied there is a safety or security risk and the redaction is warranted, the Committee may approve the request. All members present at the meeting must unanimously agree for the Committee's decision to be effective.
- (3) The Clerk will inform the person who made the request of the Committee's decision. Where the Committee unanimously approves the redaction, the Clerk must take all necessary steps to give effect to the Committee's decision.
- (4) A redaction does not affect the protections provided by ss 73, 74 or 74AA of the Constitution Act 1975.
- (5) The Clerk must include a statement of the number of redactions made and the type of document they were redacted from, excluding any identifying information, in the annual report of the Department of the Legislative Assembly.
- (6) The Committee may issue guidelines on the operation of this sessional order.

17 Electronic petitions

- (1) A person (the sponsoring petitioner) may lodge a request to start an electronic petition (e-petition) with the Clerk for publication on the Parliament's website.
- (2) Standing Orders 45 to 52 apply except in relation to the requirement for a petitioner's signature.
- (3) The sponsoring petitioner must provide the following information to the Clerk:
 - (a) the issue (maximum 200 words) and action requested (maximum 120 words);
 - (b) their full name and address; and
 - (c) the name of the member sponsoring the e-petition.
- (4) Before the e-petition is published, the Clerk will review the wording of the e-petition to ensure it conforms with standing orders and confirm that the sponsoring member has agreed to sponsor the e-petition.
- (5) The sponsoring member must nominate a period (the posted period) that the e-petition will be available to sign on the Parliament's website and:
 - (a) the posted period must be a minimum of one week and a maximum of six months from the date of publication;
 - (b) if the Assembly is due to expire under s 28(2) of the Constitution Act 1975 within six months from the date of publication of an e-petition, the Clerk will determine the maximum posted period;
 - (c) the sponsoring member may request the Clerk to change the posted period before it ends, provided the maximum period is not exceeded.
- (6) A member must not sign an e-petition they have sponsored.
- (7) Once published, an e-petition cannot be altered but the sponsoring member may request the Clerk withdraw it.
- (8) Residents of Victoria may become signatories to an e-petition by electronically providing their name, address and signifying their intention to join the e-petition.
- (9) The Clerk will table the e-petition on the next sitting day after the posted period has ended.
- (10) E-petitions about the same issue and requesting the same action are not allowed simultaneously. However, once an e-petition has been tabled, a new e-petition can be started.

18 Motion to disallow a pandemic order and requirement for a joint sitting

- (1) After a member has given notice of a motion to disallow in whole or in part a pandemic order or instrument in accordance with s 165AU of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, a minister must move a motion to hold a joint sitting to consider the disallowance motion. The minister must move the motion by the end of the next sitting day after notice of the disallowance motion is given.
- (2) A motion to hold a joint sitting can be moved without notice or leave at any break in business.
- (3) Debate on a motion to hold a joint sitting will last for a maximum of 30 minutes or until six members have spoken, whichever is the shorter.

The proposal before the house is that we agree to extend the existing sessional orders and that they be applied to this Parliament at this time. But as I have already indicated this morning in a separate motion, we will refer the sessional orders to the Standing Orders Committee in order for that

committee to consider what of those sessional orders should be incorporated into standing orders. We do that on the basis that the sessional orders that have been in place have served us well for the last two Parliaments. I recognise of course that there are members in the chamber who have other ideas on ways in which the sessional orders could be more reflective perhaps of a modern Parliament, and I think that the Standing Orders Committee is the appropriate group or body to which to refer those matters for consideration. I did just want to be quite clear about that at the outset – that with the passing of that motion this afternoon that is the process that will happen.

Those of us that were around after the 2014 election, and indeed those on this side of the house who were in opposition, were doing some thinking about what sessional orders might look like should we have the good fortune of forming government at the 2014 election, which of course as we all know we did, and chief amongst our concerns as a Labor Party working to win government was to ensure that we have in this place sessional orders that support a workplace that enables the participation of a more diverse group of parliamentarians. Of course that includes parliamentarians with small children, and I am delighted that we have so many of them. It is so wonderful. I think about all the babies that have been born in the time that I have been a member of Parliament. The member for Mordialloc over there and I are locking eyes because we all remember when little Paisley was born. Then most recently we have had the Minister for Mental Health and Minister for Ambulance Services give birth to little Ruairi, not only during Parliament but during an election campaign as a sitting member. I am sure everyone in this house takes the opportunity to wish all of our new parents the best. I might point out that the member for Melbourne is sitting up there as well. The member for Melbourne has had two babies –

Ellen Sandell interjected.

Mary-Anne THOMAS: Three! In the time that she has been a member in this place she has had three. The member for Melbourne has had three babies in the time that she has been a member of this place. That is wonderful news, and we congratulate you, of course, with all of our best wishes.

But we want to ensure this for family members, people with parental responsibilities and indeed others. I am beyond having parental responsibilities, but I still have a family, and I still have a family that I like to see and connect with from time to time. As a regional member of Parliament, and I know regional members on the other side of the house will agree that a 10 pm finishing time – well, firstly, we generally have to stay in town anyway, but nonetheless you can still have time after Parliament to connect with either friends or colleagues or to do something that at least gives you a break from this place before you reappear the next day. I think it is no secret that sessional orders that saw a 10 pm adjournment really saw very little productive work occur in the evenings.

A member: A bit of social work.

Mary-Anne THOMAS: Yes, quite a lot of socialising, but the debates were perhaps not as thoughtful as they could have been. I do not want to speak for anyone, and indeed I was not a member of the house at that time, so let me be clear about that.

It is all about having a modern Parliament and sessional orders that really let the people of Victoria know that we strive to be a sensible and inclusive workplace. As I have already said, we will refer to the Standing Orders Committee the existing sessional orders – elements of those – to be incorporated into the standing orders. But in the interim I do propose that we adopt in their entirety the sessional orders that have served us so well over the last two parliaments until such time as the Standing Orders Committee has had an opportunity to make some deliberations on what might serve us well into the future.

I have talked a little bit about family-friendly working hours, but I think it is also important to understand the importance of the adjournment on Thursdays at 5 pm. I think I will have agreement from the regional members opposite on this one, that for most members – but not all; it is a long way to Mildura – it does enable many regional members to get back home on Thursday night. I recognise

that for many it can be a long drive, but nonetheless it is still an opportunity to get home, ready to serve our communities in our electorates from Friday. So these are sensible sessional orders.

The sessional orders include a number of clauses that assist with the sensible running of the Parliament. I believe the Manager of Opposition Business and I agree, and indeed I suggest that the spokesperson for the Greens would agree, that time limits on questions and answers can be a good thing. We are very happy to support that we do have time limits on questions and answers, and indeed in question time itself the sessional orders actually give the opposition more opportunities to ask questions of the government, because not only do we have question time but there is the inclusion of constituency questions. So our government in negotiating the existing sessional orders has worked to also make sure that the opposition has plenty of opportunity to scrutinise the government.

We also know, and I think this was an excellent move – Speaker, I am sure you will agree – that members who refuse to behave appropriately in the house – and of course we would never condone that – will be removed from the house and they will have to serve their entire time. It flows over into the next day. If you are suspended for an hour and you have only got 15 minutes left of question time, you will serve the next 45 minutes of your suspension the following day. That is a good move that really serves to nudge members to behave appropriately during question time.

The bells ring for an extra minute, recognising that there is now a very beautiful members wing at the back of the Parliament. I know that Labor members of the house, myself included, were very pleased to move out of the chook house and into the new parliamentary wing, but we have extended that time to 4 minutes in order to enable plenty of time for people to come to the chamber for divisions.

The other points that I wish to raise, which are to further enable the smoother running of the Parliament, include sessional orders facilitating the tabling of e-petitions. Who would have thought that in 2023 we could do e-petitions here. This is excellent news. It is good to move with the times, again seeking to be a modern Parliament. The sessional orders also allow for the Standing Orders Committee to authorise redactions when necessary.

I have taken the time today to talk through what I see as some of the most important reasons why I suggest that the house today agree to allow sessional orders from the 58th and 59th Parliament to continue into the 60th Parliament. I expect that other members will agree that those sessional orders do provide for a much better functioning Parliament.

I am going to give the Manager of Opposition Business the opportunity to make a contribution shortly. I am very conscious, I might say, that because we are operating currently under standing orders, we had a longer than expected question time, which has pushed out our preferred timing for today. I am very conscious that we have a number of members that will be making their first speeches, and I know that they will have family and friends coming in to see them. I certainly do not want to throw the timing out for those.

On that note, I look forward to these sessional orders being adopted by the chamber so that they can come into force from the next sitting day – tomorrow – and we can, dependent upon the outcome, look forward to a question time with the opposition having the opportunity to ask the ministers substantive questions and then supplementary questions and for ministers statements to return. Ministers statements have time limits on them, and that enforces some discipline on all of us. I am sure they will be a welcome return should these sessional orders be adopted today. I commend them to the house.

The SPEAKER: Order! Before I call the Manager of Opposition Business, I just want to make a statement on this. The Leader of the House has moved this motion, but I want to make a statement about how the debate on the sessional orders will be conducted. Because the motion is a long one and there may be amendments to it, I have decided that, in accordance with past practice, we will treat the debate like a bill being considered in detail. If members wish to move amendments, I ask members to announce them and request that they be circulated now that the Leader of the House has moved and spoken to her motion, as is the case for circulating amendments during a second-reading debate.

Members with amendments will then need to formally move the amendments when speaking to the motion, but all members may speak to the motion and amendments once circulated.

After the general debate has been concluded, the house will deal with each proposed sessional order as each is called on. I will put the question for any relevant amendment moved to the motion. I will then put the question for each of the sessional orders moved by the Leader of the House. When all of the orders have been called, considered and dealt with, I will put the appropriate question that the motion be agreed to or that the motion as amended be agreed to. If there are any members who wish to circulate amendments, I ask that they do so now.

James NEWBURY (Brighton) (16:32): I will seek to move two amendments to the sessional orders in my name. Can they be circulated please.

Amendments circulated under standing orders.

Ellen SANDELL (Melbourne) (16:33): I ask that the amendments in my name also be circulated.

Amendments circulated under standing orders.

James NEWBURY (Brighton) (16:33): I move:

That the sessional orders motion be amended as follows:

Sessional Order 3

- 1 After 'General business' where second occurring insert the following new paragraph:

'Regional sitting days

Question time

Formal business

Statements by members

Government business

General business'

Sessional Order 11

- 2 Before 'Standing' insert '(1)'.
3 After 'relevant.' insert the following new paragraphs:

'(2) The Speaker may determine that an answer to an oral question without notice or supplementary oral question is not responsive to the question, and may accordingly direct the minister to provide a written response to the question and lodge it with the Speaker by 2.00 pm the next sitting day. The Speaker will forward the written response to the member who asked the question and the Clerk must electronically publish the response.

(3) The Speaker will determine the adequacy of a written response to a question provided under this sessional order. The Speaker may determine that a written response does not appropriately answer the question and may direct that the minister provide another written response by 2.00 pm the next sitting day. The Speaker will forward the written response to the member who asked the question and the Clerk must electronically publish the response.'

I would like to start my contribution by noting that there will be inaugural speeches shortly so we will be reasonable in the time we spend speaking to these issues.

I would like to start on a principle often leaned on by the clerks in the federal Parliament in Canberra, and that is that changes to the operation of the Parliament go to enlivening the debate of the chamber. It is a concept that is integral to the way the chamber operates, and improvements are often brought in to the federal Parliament with an eye to improving and enlivening debate in the chamber. I think this debate today is an opportunity to look to what this Parliament can do to enliven the debate of this chamber. Before coming to this place I worked in the federal Parliament and had the honour of managing the parliamentary business of the Liberal Party in Canberra. In that role I spent some time working on standing order changes to the federal Parliament's lower house in 2010 and then again before leaving in 2013. Throughout that process, with a Labor government and then a Liberal

government, both governments recognised the need for the standing orders and the operation of the house to enable the contribution of the then 150 members of that place, and it struck me that it was at the core of the operation of that chamber. I refer the house to a statement given by the now Prime Minister, who was Leader of the House in 2010, after all parties and independents developed a substantive reform to the standing orders of the house then. He said:

This package of amendments seeks to make the parliament more accessible to all 150 members of the House of Representatives. It represents a transfer of power and influence in this place from a concentration in the executive, to bring a focus on the contribution that the 150 members of the House of Representatives can make.

That spirit was one that we saw not just in 2010 – and some might argue that it was independents and a minority government that led to those changes – but also in 2013, which was furthered in the operation of the place and the operation of question time to enable all of the members, and we have seen that more recently in the federal Parliament through some work done by the independent members. As I started with, those changes were about empowering all members but also enlivening the debate.

What struck me in first coming to this place and looking at the standing orders of this chamber was how tightly controlled they are in a way that all non-government members have referred to repeatedly over the years – the lack of capacity of a non-government member to fully represent their communities and put the views of their constituents to the Parliament, which is incredibly striking, the idea that not every member can move a motion. It is not uncommon in the federal Parliament for a suspension of standing orders to be moved on Thursday; in fact it is probably every second week we see it. In those instances those suspensions are discussions of matters of public importance, essentially.

One of the big changes where there is a difference between the Victorian Parliament and the federal Parliament is the amount of time that non-government members have to debate. Federally they have done that through a federation chamber. I know that this place, through committee work, has looked at the idea of a federation chamber or a second chamber, and what that chamber federally enables is non-controversial business to be considered in a second place which has equal standing but allows members more time for a members statement or to debate motions of importance to their local communities or to debate a petition of importance. These are not controversial things, but it enables that additional time to consider non-government business. I would hope that the government could take in good spirit as part of the review of the standing orders – which we obviously welcomed and supported – a consideration of how non-government business is dealt with and the time that non-government members are provided in this chamber. The review is an opportunity to do that. One way to do that is through a second chamber, and it is not too much and it is not too radical to consider the idea of a second chamber. I think a second chamber is one idea that we need to look at. It could run concurrently to the main chamber to enable members – I know that there are a lot of backbench Labor members listening on. They are just keeling over with enthusiasm for the time to go into a second chamber and debate issues of importance to their local community. I am being overwhelmed with interest, I must say, Leader of the House, from your side of the chamber, and I know we have –

The SPEAKER: Order! Through the Chair.

James NEWBURY: it on our side of the chamber too.

I did mention earlier that the opposition would move two amendments to the sessional orders. The first is the incorporation of the concept of regional sittings into the standing orders. Of course, in the last term we had great challenges with COVID and the operation of the Parliament, but, frankly speaking, we can do better at the Parliament sitting regionally. We can do better, whether that is once in a term, because I know – and from discussion with the clerks – there is a lot of work involved and a lot of expense, but in weighing that up we do need to understand the importance of doing so, moving the Parliament for a time to another area of Victoria to allow the community to become involved in what we do. I think it is so essentially important, and that is why I would say to the Leader of the

House and the government, through the Speaker of course, that that amendment is not a controversial amendment. It is a simple amendment, and I would hope that the government in good spirit would consider that amendment.

The second amendment proposed relates to the concept of relevance. I think any fair-minded person in this place would see that the responses in question time, frankly, no matter who is in government, stretch the concept of relevance now to the ridiculous. If you say the word 'health' in a question, that is about as close as you are going to get in your answer. So the second amendment being proposed is an adoption of, I understand, a practice that was originally in this place – it is still in the Council – whereby the Speaker has the capacity to direct a minister where they have not answered a question to within a sitting day provide a response to that in writing. I know, in speaking to people in the other place, that power – for want of a better term – is used reasonably regularly by the President in an impartial way. I think it is an important opportunity to provide the house with additional information and remove some of the politics from the question and the answer. We saw today – and I do not want to reflect on the member – a very important question on a very difficult issue, and there were comments in the response that were perhaps not direct in relation to the issue. A written response is not onerous, and it would provide the house with additional information on important topics. So those are the two amendments that the opposition will be moving.

In relation to the sessional orders more broadly, we certainly will not be opposing the adoption of the sessional orders. There are a number of things in the sessional orders that are important and that we support. I know the Leader of the House has spoken about the time constraints – the day and ensuring that we have family-friendly arrangements. Just before question time we saw one of the ministers walk in with her new baby, and it was beautiful to see. I think we all love seeing those things and ensuring that our Parliament encourages people to balance their lives. It is good for the community and it is also good for, frankly, the mental health of members. But there are other issues in the standing orders obviously that we support. Questions on notice – the sessional orders do in theory bring a time limit to questions on notice being answered. Sadly, I have a question on notice that I asked in the last Parliament that was two years out of date before the election. It is sad to say the former Minister for Planning, and he is not here to hear it, never responded. The new Minister for Planning, sadly, has had the issue raised with them, and I have not even received an acknowledgement from the current Minister for Planning. So I think even acknowledgement of genuine constituent questions is not unreasonable, and to know that the sessional orders will enable that is a good thing.

The Leader of the House mentioned the time limit for questions and answers. We saw today the worst offender for the day – I am keeping a tally – was the Leader of the House. I do not mean to name and shame the Leader of the House, but it was 9 minutes. I have seen worse: Kevin Rudd once did 13 minutes, and gee, that was a diatribe. But 9 minutes was not a lot better, to be frank, and on the first day we saw the Treasurer with a 9-minute response as well. So I would hope and plead, I think on behalf of every member both government and otherwise – opposition, independent et cetera – that we do not see questions and answers being without limit. There is only so much patience that we all have, and clearly there is no direction in the response provided.

But the other point the Leader of the House made in relation to petitions is important. I think further work can be done on petitions, not just in relation to the standing orders. The committee can look at areas in the standing orders that petitions can be enhanced with, whether or not potentially there is some formal process initiated in relation to petitions received so that the community know that when they are raising something they get a response – whether it be debate, whether it be executive response. All of those issues I think are ones that can be part of that review.

So the opposition, other than two slight amendments we are moving initially, will not oppose the adoption of the sessional orders. In fact in many ways we support them – in many ways. But if I can go back to the point that I commenced with – that is, everything we do in the operation of this Parliament should go to, as the clerks of the federal Parliament would say, enlivening the debate. I think that this place can do better at bringing in rules and procedures that bring in the community, that

respond to the community's views and wishes that are put to us as members, and I look forward to being part of the process to enable that to occur.

Will FOWLES (Ringwood) (16:48): It is my great delight to make my first contribution to the 60th Parliament. I concluded my contribution to the 59th in song; members will be relieved to know that I am not going to commence my contribution to the 60th in song. The member for Brighton did refer to a speech of Kevin Rudd's as a 13-minute diatribe, and I would simply note that the member for Brighton's speech was about 13 minutes.

We are dealing today with sessional orders, and those of us who were part of the class of 2018 find ourselves arguing vigorously for a status quo in circumstances where we have known no different. That is of course because these sessional orders were first adopted prior to the 59th Parliament and have been in operation, for a range of very good reasons, since indeed not long after the Andrews government came into being, and they are very, very good rules, most particularly to the extent that they adopt some core principles around family-friendly hours and making sure that, from the charade of Dorothy Dixers – much as I may well have enjoyed some of the Dixers, oddly, from both sides of the chamber today – we move to, yes, having ministerial statements but not needing to go through this Dorothy Dixer process.

But what I will say to those opposite is I find myself in the invidious position of advising them that the government will not be supporting these amendments today, and the reason for that is not one of substance. It is not one of any in-principle objection to what is being put; by the same token it is not in-principle support either. It is merely this: we have a Standing Orders Committee. This chamber is not a great place to crunch the nuance on things like sessional and standing orders, in my submission, and I think it is appropriate therefore that we let the Standing Orders Committee do its work. I am sure that committee will adequately enfranchise the views of members of the Greens, members of the Nationals, members of the Liberal Party – there are no independents left, of course, having all been vanquished by the Nats – but that everyone will have –

Peter Walsh interjected.

Will FOWLES: Well, you only got your old seats back, Walshy. That is the reality. Anyway, the opportunity will exist for all members to participate directly or indirectly in the Standing Orders Committee process, and it is for that reason that the government will not be taking up these amendments today, as will become apparent when we divide on this motion shortly.

Can I say that there are any number of matters that might very well be considered by the Standing Orders Committee. It does not just go to the matter of opposition business – or non-government business more properly titled – as the member for Melbourne has put her amendment to this motion, and it does not just go to determining whether answers to oral questions are insufficiently responsive and require a written answer be substituted therein. There are plenty of other matters that will be dealt with I am sure by the Standing Orders Committee.

It is no surprise to this chamber that we have seen reforms in many Westminster parliaments around the globe on a whole range of matters. I do not propose to litigate those today, because I am making the point, I hope clearly, that this is not the chamber or the time for that debate. It does not matter whether you are talking about prayers or acknowledgement of country or references to the Crown or all sorts of things, many, many matters are ultimately covered by standing and sessional orders. Many matters are the sorts of things that people in this place might very well have a stake in, and in one sense we all have a stake in, but there will be the opportunity to deal with and to address the concerns our constituents might have on some of these matters, because the symbolism of some of what goes on in here is important. I think the Standing Orders Committee will be able to function like any other committee in this place. They will be able to interrogate these matters. They will be able to take evidence on these matters. They will be able to explore these issues more fully and fulsomely than we

could possibly do in the context of a debate in this chamber. We are effectively dealing with amendments without notice.

On that point, I conclude my remarks. I am sure that the Standing Orders Committee will do a terrific job when they receive the brief on this, and I look forward to their fine work.

The SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Melbourne, I ask members to refer to other members by their correct titles and to direct their comments through the Chair.

Ellen SANDELL (Melbourne) (16:53): I just want to make a few short comments. Before I do so, I would like to move the amendments that were previously circulated in my name. I move:

That the sessional orders motion be amended as follows:

Sessional Order 3

- (1) In paragraph (1) omit '(1)'
- (2) In paragraph (1) under Wednesdays, omit 'Matter of public importance or grievance debate (4.00 pm)' and insert 'Non-government business (4.00 pm)'.
- (3) Omit paragraphs (2) and (3).

New sessional orders

- (4) Insert the following new sessional orders –

'19 Non-government business

In addition to the items set out in SO 34(2), government business also does not take precedence in relation to non-government business under this sessional order.

Standing Orders 34(2)(d), (e) and (f), 37, 38 and 39 are suspended and the following applies:

- (1) Non-government business includes notices of motion and orders of the day moved by members who are not members of the party or coalition in government.
- (2) Subject to paragraph (3), every sitting Wednesday, the Chair will interrupt the House at 4.00 pm and the House will consider non-government business for two hours.
- (3) If a division is taking place when the time for the interruption arises, the division will be completed and the result announced. If the division is on a closure motion, and the motion is agreed to, the question or questions then required to be put to close the issue before the House will also be dealt with. The Chair will then interrupt business.
- (4) Any business under discussion and not completed at the interruption will be resumed immediately at the end of the two hours, and any member speaking at the time of the interruption may then continue their speech.

20 Order of consideration of non-government business

- (1) On the sitting day immediately prior to each sitting Wednesday, a member who is not a member of the party or coalition in government may move, without notice or leave, a motion specifying items of non-government business to have precedence on the next sitting day.
- (2) Over the course of a parliament, the specified items proposed by each non-government party and independent member must be proportional to the number of independent members and members representing non-government parties in the House.
- (3) The debate will last for 30 minutes or until six members have spoken, whichever is the shorter.
- (4) If a motion is not moved or agreed to, the House will consider non-government business in the order it is set down on the notice paper under general business.

The main point that I want to make, and it is one that I have made many times in this house and also a cause that was taken up by the previous independent member for Shepparton, is that this house, the lower house of the Victorian Parliament, is in fact the only chamber in the entire Westminster system around the world that does not allow for non-government business time, and I think it is probably about time that changed. This is time when the crossbench, Greens, independents and even the opposition and government backbenchers – essentially anyone who is not a minister – can bring forward motions or bills for debate and vote. The reason we do not have it, I have been told – a bit of history – is a bit of sleight of hand by the Bracks government back in 1999 when they somehow tricked

the independents into getting rid of it. I am not sure quite how that happened, but it is what I understand happened. Since then no government has wanted to reintroduce it. Governments have preferred to silence some of those voices and control the chamber, and I understand that, but every representative in this place is elected by their constituents to come here and represent their communities, and really they should be able, as they are able in every other Westminster Parliament, every other chamber in the Westminster system, to bring forward matters for debate to be voted on. So my amendment essentially says let us get rid of the matters of public importance and the grievance debates and use that slot for substantive debates.

I understand that these sessional orders will be sent to the Standing Orders Committee; I welcome that. Overall I do think that they are an improvement on the current standing orders, so we are supportive of them, but we are also supportive of the couple of amendments that have been put forward by the member for Brighton around regional sittings and around allowing some ways to perhaps get ministers to answer questions – be a little bit more responsive in their answers. We are supportive of those amendments. I hope that our amendment gets up, and I also note that we have requested a seat on the Standing Orders Committee and hope that we will be able to participate in that process to improve some things – not just things that are pertaining to my amendments around non-government business time but things like whether it is appropriate that we start the day with the Lord's Prayer anymore in this day and age, a motion from 1928 that we are still relying on, or whether we want to replace that with something that is better reflective of the entire Victorian community. We will not be opposing the sessional orders, but we seek support for our amendment and we will be supporting the amendments from the opposition as well.

Tim RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) (16:55): It is a pleasure to rise and speak on the sessional orders motion and some of the amendments that have been put forward. We have seen across the 58th and 59th Parliaments a more contemporary Parliament in its sessional orders and support for members of Parliament in how they execute their duties. Indeed, being a more supportive place for families in this place has been a really important contribution. We have seen how question time, constituency questions and supplementary questions have added to the debate and discussion in this place, acknowledging that other Parliaments have a government question session, which can get a little tedious. We have ministers providing an update as well.

One of the most shocking elements of some of these amendments and discussions, and one that has filled me with a lot of joy today, is the member for Brighton asking for an additional chamber in this Parliament. There are about 19 members on that side, and if you go through you can actually search the members' contributions in the 58th and 59th Parliaments. If you timed all of their contributions, all in one, they would not in one year across their eight years be enough to justify this chamber, let alone a second chamber. Some did not speak on a bill during their time for more than three years. The father of the house, the member for Rowville, at one stage was carrying the whole team. His back was so sore carrying the team, with 40 per cent of the bill contributions in this place for the first 18 months. It is an astonishing approach to say that we need a second chamber. Why don't those opposite who have not made meaningful contributions – who have gone down dark roads in contributions that they have made, to the lowest end of the road in public debate – step up, like the Leader of the Opposition suggested, lift the standards, participate and front up on behalf of their communities and make meaningful contributions? Maybe then we will see an argument for a second chamber. I think maybe he is having a lend of us. I think he is having a laugh today, the member for Brighton. But we will see – I do not think that one is going to get up.

But importantly with members' contributions I think constituency questions have been a great addition – to put more things on the record on behalf of our communities. The broadcast team at Parliament do a wonderful job in us being able to show the advocacy that we put forward as well. Those ministers statements have been really important, especially for issues of the day, for ministers to be able to stand up, if there is not an ability in the media, and share a perspective that might be in time. A number of the sessional orders that the Leader of the House has put forward have worked really well. The

Standing Orders Committee will be an appropriate place to consider anything else into the future. It is important to reflect on how far this Parliament has come since the 58th, the 59th and into the 60th Parliament as well, and the next journey going forward.

But for the second house I think the member for Brighton might just need to cool his jets and see how we go, and maybe give a bit of a rev-up. He has been up and about – 13 interjections today on points of order. He is up and about. He has started off really keen and waffling away, but maybe he just needs to give an inspiring rev-up in the Liberal caucus room, in the Liberal party room, about maybe contributing to the Parliament first and fronting up and actually doing something meaningful on the bills, and then maybe we can consider something a little further into the future.

David SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) (16:59): I rise to support the member for Brighton's sessional orders amendments to ensure we have more accountability and transparency in this Parliament. If you look at the website at 'What is Parliament?', it very clearly says that:

The Parliament of Victoria represents you when making decisions for our state. Its main roles are to debate, pass laws and hold the government to account.

We see a huge discrepancy between what happens in the Council and what happens in the Assembly. There are 48 days of sitting in our Parliament, and we have seen the hours of Parliament deteriorate in terms of being able to give the opportunity for debate time. We are all for family-friendly hours but we do want the ability to bring constituent matters into the Parliament, to raise those matters in an appropriate way. We have had the opportunity in the past, like they do in the upper house, to be able to challenge a question that has not been answered by the minister. This is really important because many of our constituents raise issues and certainly Victorians would expect the ministers to answer those questions. Today is an absolute example of that. The Minister for Energy and Resources was asked how much and by what date we would see energy prices come down. The minister could not answer that question. Not only did the Shadow Minister for Energy and Resources ask that question but we also saw the members for Laverton, Footscray and Monbulk ask questions about energy prices – when they would come down. The change to sessional orders that we had suggested by the Manager of Opposition Business would allow for those questions to be answered in written form when the minister clearly did not have an answer. So that is why we want to be able, as it says on the website everywhere in terms of what Parliament is for, to provide Victorians the ability to have those questions answered and to ultimately hold the government to account.

The final thing that I just want to raise in this contribution is about regional parliament. It is really important that this Parliament of Victoria is not the Parliament of Melbourne – that it does reach far and wide in every region and give constituents, locals in various regions, the opportunity to hear what Parliament does, to participate in the parliamentary process and for Parliament to actually do those tours. It happened in the last term of Parliament in the Legislative Council; it did not happen in the Assembly, and that is why I propose, as the member for Brighton rightly raised in these amendments, that this should be incorporated into the sessional orders.

Katie HALL (Footscray) (17:02): Thank you, Speaker, and congratulations on your election. I will be brief. I know that there are many families and friends waiting outside for inaugural speeches, and I am very much looking forward to those. I just wanted to make a brief contribution on the importance of having family-friendly hours in this place. I have heard many stories of the late sittings that used to happen in a bygone era for the Assembly, and it sounds like it was not a productive use of people's time but also pretty detrimental to people with young children in particular, with families that they want to get home to, and of course our regional MPs.

When I was first elected four years ago I had Ned, who was 12 weeks old, and I know that it has been really beneficial for me to be able to go home at a reasonable hour to have a cuddle with the kids and read a book, especially on a Thursday.

Paul Edbrooke interjected.

Katie HALL: I think, to take up the member for Frankston's interjection, we have enough toddlers in this place. We probably do not need Ned joining us when it can be avoided. But as a parliament we do need to walk the talk, and I know that I am very proud to be a member of a government that has many women in its ranks. We know that even though times have changed, women still bear the brunt of the parenting responsibilities often. I note the member for Melbourne and welcome her newest contribution. So it is really important that we evolve as a parliament and reflect the communities that we represent. I commend the continuation of these proposed sessional orders as they were in the last Parliament, and I believe that the Standing Orders Committee is the appropriate place to interrogate these matters further.

Danny O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) (17:04): I think the sessional orders as introduced in 2014 and proposed again to be introduced for this 60th Parliament have been an improvement on the standing orders, particularly things like supplementary questions during question time and the introduction of constituency questions. They have been good, and we certainly support that, but there is no question that we could do better. The fact that there is such little opportunity for non-government members, particularly the opposition, to raise issues, to have substantive debates about issues and particularly to introduce legislation is one of the failings that we have. Second is the fact that we rarely get the opportunity to go into consideration in detail; indeed in my time I have only had that opportunity once. I think we might have had two opportunities in the last term of Parliament, but that is a significant failing because often we are dealing with very complex legislation and we want to interrogate that legislation and ask the minister questions about it. The one time that we did get to do it, we got some answers that were useful for the community.

We all remember the former Leader of the House in the last term giving, whenever we asked just about every week, 'Can we go into consideration in detail on this particular legislation?', the same answer I give to my little girl when she wants a puppy: 'We'll see'. We always got 'We'll see' but we never actually got to do it. I think a Standing Orders Committee review is the appropriate thing to do, because, as the member for Brighton has indicated, there are some opportunities for us to introduce things like non-government business and to have, potentially, a second chamber. These are all things we should be looking at.

A member: Buy her a puppy.

Danny O'BRIEN: She's not getting a puppy. As a country MP, I remember coming into this place when family-friendly hours were introduced, and I did not really understand what it was all about, because for those of us from the country, we do not go home anyway. I do accept that it is –

Mary-Anne Thomas: It is not all about you.

Danny O'BRIEN: It is about you too, Leader of the House.

The SPEAKER: Order! Through the Chair.

Danny O'BRIEN: I think the amendments moved by the member for Brighton are very appropriate and should be pursued, and I will be strongly supporting those. We should be reviewing the standing orders and making sure that the Parliament operates more as a Parliament, not like an executive as it is run now by the Premier. That is important. The member for Mordialloc has come back. He had a bit of a critique of those of us on this side on bills. If we did not get 15 carbon-copy speeches on every bill, written by the Premier's office, from those opposite, we would save a lot of time.

Paul HAMER (Box Hill) (17:07): I would like to make a short contribution on the proposed sessional orders. Many of our contributors on this side are similar to me in being in the class of 2018 and knowing only these sessional orders. They certainly were procedures and processes that did work well for someone like myself who is a metro MP and who lives quite close to the Parliament. It does mean that I am able to get home and see my children on Tuesday and Wednesday nights.

One thing I do want to reflect on is that the change to the hours does not make a big impact in terms of the total hours of debate. I remember having a discussion with the member for Mornington about his experience pre 2014. The session on Tuesday would start at 2 pm and then would go through to 10 pm on the adjournment, but there would be an hour-and-a-half dinner break. Then on the following day it was the same; they would have the dinner break and they would have the lunch break. I do not think anything good comes after a 1½ hour dinner break, as I think has been mentioned previously by the Leader of the House. When you combine the total hours, the total hours that are spent debating the bills and doing what members of both sides want – to represent our communities and debate the important legislation that is before the Parliament – we are not actually reducing the total hours by having these sessional orders.

Also, as we could see today just in terms of question time – as fun as it was to ask my own question in the December sitting – we are all aware that having the answers of the ministers restricted to 3 minutes, having a question and a supplementary question and then having the availability of ministers statements to talk about the important issues of the day and the important issues in their portfolios is a much better use of the time, followed up by constituency questions, which I know all members on this side have used to great advantage in terms of pressing the most important issues in their constituency. I fully support the changes in the sessional orders.

Roma BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (17:10): I rise to make just some quick comments about the sessional orders. Firstly, I would like to endorse the amendments moved by my colleague the member for Brighton, and I will be supporting those. I think having the opportunity, when questions do not get answered properly and are not actually answered – the frustration that my community have expressed to me when they see that happen in the chamber in question time – to have members have to, like in the upper house, address the question and answer it properly by the next day would be an absolute improvement to the transparency and respect that the questions deserve.

The area I want to speak to really quickly about, though, is having the opportunity to refer to the Standing Orders Committee ideas that will improve our ability to communicate and connect and improve our ability to help people in the community understand how the Parliament works. One of those ideas is having regional sittings – bringing them back. They have been part of the Parliament in the past on both sides, whether it has been Labor or Liberal. It is something I would dearly love to see. I can absolutely see the people of Portland loving the idea of taking a session to Portland and people seeing the beauty we have there, having a parma in the pub at night together and people having the opportunity –

A member interjected.

Roma BRITNELL: A parma and a pot in the pub at Portland would be absolutely, I would think, a perfect way to show our beautiful part of the world and also listen to the people of Portland, who are really concerned about their health service and how they are going to continue to have that. The people in Terang would really welcome the opportunity. I am sure you would hear them saying how concerned they are and how worried – whilst the government is boasting about the energy issues that they think they are doing well in – that 80 per cent increases in their gas prices is what they are being told at the moment by their current provider. And guess what, there is no-one else that can provide any gas –

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member for South-West Coast to come back to the motion before the house.

Roma BRITNELL: So having the sessional orders changed to take the Parliament to the communities of Portland, Terang, Warrnambool and Heywood would be an absolute improvement, and I will endorse that opportunity if it gets put forward. I conclude by endorsing the amendments to the sessional orders from the member for Brighton.

Sessional orders 1 and 2 agreed to.

Sessional order 3

The SPEAKER: The member for Melbourne has moved amendment 1 in her name and I advise the house that if the amendment is not agreed to, all of the member's remaining amendments will fail, as they are consequential.

The question is:

That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the motion.

Members supporting the amendment moved by the member for Melbourne should vote no.

Assembly divided on question:

Ayes (78): Juliana Addison, Jacinta Allan, Daniel Andrews, Brad Battin, Jade Benham, Roma Britnell, Colin Brooks, Josh Bull, Martin Cameron, Anthony Carbines, Ben Carroll, Darren Cheeseman, Anthony Cianflone, Annabelle Cleeland, Sarah Connolly, Chris Couzens, Chris Crewther, Jordan Crugnale, Lily D'Ambrosio, Daniela De Martino, Steve Dimopoulos, Paul Edbrooke, Will Fowles, Matt Fregon, Ella George, Luba Grigorovitch, Sam Groth, Matthew Guy, Bronwyn Halfpenny, Katie Hall, Paul Hamer, Martha Haylett, Mathew Hilakari, David Hodgett, Melissa Horne, Natalie Hutchins, Lauren Kathage, Emma Kealy, Sonya Kilkenny, Nathan Lambert, Gary Maas, Alison Marchant, Kathleen Matthews-Ward, Tim McCurdy, Steve McGhie, Cindy McLeish, Paul Mercurio, John Mullahy, James Newbury, Danny O'Brien, Michael O'Brien, Kim O'Keeffe, Tim Pallas, Danny Pearson, John Pesutto, Pauline Richards, Tim Richardson, Richard Riordan, Brad Rowswell, Michaela Settle, David Southwick, Ros Spence, Nick Staikos, Natalie Suleyman, Meng Heang Tak, Jackson Taylor, Nina Taylor, Kat Theophanous, Mary-Anne Thomas, Bill Tilley, Bridget Vallence, Emma Vulin, Peter Walsh, Iwan Walters, Kim Wells, Dylan Wight, Belinda Wilson, Jess Wilson

Noes (4): Gabrielle de Vietri, Sam Hibbins, Tim Read, Ellen Sandell

Question agreed to.

The SPEAKER: The member for Brighton has moved amendment 1 in his name to sessional order 3. The question is:

That the amendment be agreed to.

Assembly divided on James Newbury's amendment 1:

Ayes (29): Brad Battin, Jade Benham, Roma Britnell, Martin Cameron, Annabelle Cleeland, Chris Crewther, Gabrielle de Vietri, Sam Groth, Matthew Guy, Sam Hibbins, David Hodgett, Emma Kealy, Tim McCurdy, Cindy McLeish, James Newbury, Danny O'Brien, Michael O'Brien, Kim O'Keeffe, John Pesutto, Tim Read, Richard Riordan, Brad Rowswell, Ellen Sandell, David Southwick, Bill Tilley, Bridget Vallence, Peter Walsh, Kim Wells, Jess Wilson

Noes (53): Juliana Addison, Jacinta Allan, Daniel Andrews, Colin Brooks, Josh Bull, Anthony Carbines, Ben Carroll, Darren Cheeseman, Anthony Cianflone, Sarah Connolly, Chris Couzens, Jordan Crugnale, Lily D'Ambrosio, Daniela De Martino, Steve Dimopoulos, Paul Edbrooke, Will Fowles, Matt Fregon, Ella George, Luba Grigorovitch, Bronwyn Halfpenny, Katie Hall, Paul Hamer, Martha Haylett, Mathew Hilakari, Melissa Horne, Natalie Hutchins, Lauren Kathage, Sonya Kilkenny, Nathan Lambert, Gary Maas, Alison Marchant, Kathleen Matthews-Ward, Steve McGhie, Paul Mercurio, John Mullahy, Tim Pallas, Danny Pearson, Pauline Richards, Tim Richardson, Michaela Settle, Ros Spence, Nick Staikos, Natalie Suleyman, Meng Heang Tak, Jackson Taylor, Nina Taylor, Kat Theophanous, Mary-Anne Thomas, Emma Vulin, Iwan Walters, Dylan Wight, Belinda Wilson

Amendment defeated.

Sessional order 3 agreed to; sessional orders 4 to 10 agreed to.

Sessional order 11

The SPEAKER: The member for Brighton has moved amendments to sessional order 11. I advise the house that if the member for Brighton's amendment 2 is not agreed to, the member's remaining amendments will fail as they are consequential. The question is:

That the member for Brighton's amendment 2 be agreed to.

Assembly divided on James Newbury's amendment 2:

Ayes (29): Brad Battin, Jade Benham, Roma Britnell, Martin Cameron, Annabelle Cleeland, Chris Crewther, Gabrielle de Vietri, Sam Groth, Matthew Guy, Sam Hibbins, David Hodgett, Emma Kealy, Tim McCurdy, Cindy McLeish, James Newbury, Danny O'Brien, Michael O'Brien, Kim O'Keeffe, John Pesutto, Tim Read, Richard Riordan, Brad Rowswell, Ellen Sandell, David Southwick, Bill Tilley, Bridget Vallence, Peter Walsh, Kim Wells, Jess Wilson

Noes (53): Juliana Addison, Jacinta Allan, Daniel Andrews, Colin Brooks, Josh Bull, Anthony Carbines, Ben Carroll, Darren Cheeseman, Anthony Cianflone, Sarah Connolly, Chris Couzens, Jordan Crugnale, Lily D'Ambrosio, Daniela De Martino, Steve Dimopoulos, Paul Edbrooke, Will Fowles, Matt Fregon, Ella George, Luba Grigorovitch, Bronwyn Halfpenny, Katie Hall, Paul Hamer, Martha Haylett, Mathew Hilakari, Melissa Horne, Natalie Hutchins, Lauren Kathage, Sonya Kilkenny, Nathan Lambert, Gary Maas, Alison Marchant, Kathleen Matthews-Ward, Steve McGhie, Paul Mercurio, John Mullahy, Tim Pallas, Danny Pearson, Pauline Richards, Tim Richardson, Michaela Settle, Ros Spence, Nick Staikos, Natalie Suleyman, Meng Heang Tak, Jackson Taylor, Nina Taylor, Kat Theophanous, Mary-Anne Thomas, Emma Vulin, Iwan Walters, Dylan Wight, Belinda Wilson

Amendment defeated.

Sessional order 11 agreed to; sessional orders 12 to 18 agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

*Address to Parliament***Governor's speech***Address-in-reply***Debate resumed on motion of Martha Haylett:**

That the following address, in reply to the speech of the Governor to both houses of Parliament, be agreed to by this house.

Governor:

We, the Legislative Assembly of Victoria assembled in Parliament, wish to express our loyalty to our Sovereign and to thank you for the speech which you have made to the Parliament.

Nina TAYLOR (Albert Park) (17:26): I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet and pay respects to elders past and present and to the enduring wisdom of the oldest continuous culture on earth.

My pathway to politics was not deliberate; rather, it evolved through a myriad of life experiences. Even in my early days of law school representing a community at local or even state level was not anticipated. Experience at AstraZeneca and Novo Nordisk greatly enhanced my understanding of the health system, research and development and the challenge of inspiring people to take care of their health. I also enjoyed my time as a teacher, albeit relatively brief, leaning on my knowledge of French and German languages and legal skills. I can vouch for the fact that teachers work extremely hard to bring out the best in their students. Volunteering for the women's legal service following the completion of articles and later working in the Community and Public Sector Union on federal matters represented a personal transition from the private sector to community-focused activity and work.

This brings me to the central tenet of my speech: what makes a great community and what is my role in driving the best outcome for others? My family instilled a strong sense of justice premised on the rationale that there is no community in any functional capacity without a shared vision and a willingness to effect the common good. Of course the pursuit of just outcomes has a requisite equaliser insofar as this pursuit necessitates a well-reasoned process, a delicate albeit imperfect balance of human experience and our natural world. From composting to nurturing plants without pesticides and beyond, my mother has inspired a respectful relationship with nature from childhood.

Historically industrialisation, though arguably a driver of jobs and commerce, purported to unfold ahead of proper recognition of the critical nexus between a healthy planet and the survival of humankind. This has created immense challenges, not the least being climate change effected by human behaviour. I am not suggesting an either/or scenario when it comes to meeting energy demands in a modern economy but rather a holistic approach aptly encapsulated by our Victorian government's 100 per cent renewable and government-owned SEC commitment. I literally shed a tear when the SEC announcement was made. Granted, I have a reputation for being easily animated by the mere mention of the words 'solar panel' or 'wind turbine' or 'energy efficiency'. You get the drift. However, one has to acknowledge that this massive energy reform will drive down emissions, creating clean jobs and curtailing energy costs. But most importantly I believe that our community genuinely wants to be part of the solution, and I am determined that collectively we can be.

Our sports clubs play an integral role in fostering a healthy community, and I am sure everyone in the chamber can relate. There are very high levels of sporting involvement in the seat of Albert Park – sailing, soccer, swimming, Australian Rules, rugby and so on – and there is such incredible devotion by so many volunteers, each reinforcing through the good deeds that everyone who takes part in the club has a purpose and they deserve love and support. I was fortunate to be exposed to the many benefits of community connection from a young age, and simultaneously a deep affection for the arts ensued. Initial shyness – hard to believe – was ultimately triumphed over by age 7. I have loved dance, indeed all art forms, ever since. While strictly speaking one would not classify dance as a sport, I contend it is sufficiently physical in nature to be comparable, and the dance teachers fostered great social networks too. Whilst I grew a little too tall for pas de deux, which is the traditional partner dance in classical ballet, the discipline, social benefits of being part of a community-based activity and an authentic sense of both the eternal sacrifice and love for the arts prevail.

The seat of Albert Park is renowned for its cultural and creative heart. A strong pillar of Labor values is an unrelenting commitment to and an inherent appreciation of the critical contribution of the arts to a civilised society. One in 11 Victorians is employed in the arts sector. The arts play an integral role in our community. It is embedded in our identity. The Melbourne arts precinct, for instance, holds treasured memories for me personally, as I am sure it does for so many Victorians – storytelling through dance, opera, symphony and theatre that enables a vital portal to express the deepest of human emotions and to experience the exhilaration of aesthetic and/or physical brilliance.

Live performance and cultural experiences also speak loudly through St Kilda's iconic venues, many of which have important historical significance. From the National Theatre, where I myself took ballet classes in adolescence, to the Palais Theatre, the Alex Theatre, Theatre Works – I could go on – each contribute to the intricate fabric of our performing arts industry. And let us not forget the phenomenal Luna Park –

A member interjected.

Nina TAYLOR: Yes. It only in December 2022 celebrated its 110-year anniversary as Australia's oldest theme park.

My sentimental nexus to St Kilda was founded not only through the arts but through regular frequenting of the former Scheherazade restaurant on Acland Street with my parents when I was growing up, established by the late Masha Zeleznikow, a Soviet refugee, and her husband. They

provided delicious Eastern European cuisine. I blame Scheherazade for my enduring obsession with borsch, cabbage rolls and pierogi. Importantly, Masha and her husband did much more than broaden the palates of locals. They showed great kindness and compassion. The restaurant provided a safe place for many single Holocaust survivors to eat and connect. That is what a community is all about. Whilst the restaurant is sadly no longer there, formidable Eastern European cheesecakes and other culinary masterpieces can be indulged along Acland Street to this day.

Indeed the seat of Albert Park has been the welcoming location for significant waves of migration. Since 1854, millions of new arrivals have been processed at Station Pier in Port Melbourne. I can only imagine the intense emotions that new migrants would have experienced as they disembarked, ranging from excitement to anxiety. I am so grateful for all that they have done for Victoria. Validation of different life experiences and perspectives through multiculturalism has fostered a better place for all of us to live, with the caveat that the benchmark has to be far greater than the mere tolerance of difference.

Whilst the demographics of the seat of Albert Park have changed significantly in recent years, the spirit of worker resilience in the face of harsh and often unforgiving conditions lives on today. Back in the 1800s in Port Melbourne it was not uncommon for stevedores to fall into a hold during loading and unloading or for workers to line up on the waterfront in all weather, not knowing on any given day if they were going to be selected for a shift, precisely demonstrating the crippling nature of insecure work. Port Melbourne was also identified as the crimping capital of Australia – crimping being the collusion between the ships' boatswains and boarding house keepers who kidnapped men, often drunk, and forced them aboard ships as crew against their will. A testament to the workers of that era, Port Melbourne is the location of the first successful seamen's union in Australia – something to be very proud of. Sharing stories of struggles endured by such brave agents of change is vital. The common good is denied where reckless indifference to worker health and safety leads to the untimely death of a parent, friend or colleague.

Of course no community can consider itself whole without equality for all. Victoria is ranked the most welcoming for the LGBTIQ+ community in Australia and the fourth worldwide. This is not by accident but through a concerted and united will backed by bold legislative and policy reforms and the majestic beacon of safe sanctuary and celebration that is a Victorian pride centre. The amazing feeling of unity amongst all at the Pride March just past was palpable. The struggle has been worthwhile.

I would like to pay respect to the community of Albert Park for your creative, cultural, environmentally conscious and compassionate heart and for caring deeply about the provision of safe shelter for all Victorians. Albert Park boasts a significant proportion of social and affordable housing, just as a healthy community should.

Before I express my thankyou, and there are a few, I seek to address the underlying purpose of my discussion today. Have I answered the question of what makes a great community and my role therein? I proffer that there is no one answer to this penultimate challenge. But what an incredible honour to serve in pursuit of the greater good. I am a hard worker, and I promise to give it my all in my service to our community as the first woman to be elected to the seat of Albert Park.

Now for the thankyou – and I apologise in advance: if I overlook someone, I will seek to address that. Thanks to the Premier for leading our united Labor team to another successful term of progressive government.

Thanks to the Attorney-General, Jaclyn Symes – no matter the hour nor the day, unrelenting in her dedication to pass legislative reforms through the red chamber. Thanks to the entire Labor cabinet and caucus for working together brilliantly and supporting equal representation of women in government. Thanks to the former member for Albert Park Martin Foley for showing the community what strong progressive leadership delivers and always saying the right thing to fire me up during the election campaigns. Thanks to the former member for Albert Park Professor John Thwaites AM. You have still got it, unwavering and unequivocal in your devotion to community and specifically to all things climate.

Thanks to Dominic Gonzales, Vicki Mastihi, Peter Tanti, Tyson Patterson, Zoe Nomikoudis, Ryan Batchelor, Matilda Grey, Francesca Nardii, David Donaldson, Ross Alexander, Jenny Whelan, Marty Fields, Janet Bolitho, Gillian Wood and Lukas Jamieson for all your unrelenting support and hard work. Thanks to other members of Parliament and other volunteers who spent hours in unforgiving weather, energised by a devotion to the betterment of the lives of others.

Thanks to the Community and Public Sector Union, Australian Services Union, Electrical Trades Union and the broader union movement. Every day matters in the life of a Victorian Worker.

Thanks to my brother Nicholas Taylor for your deep insights, strong intellect and for being a great support always. Thanks to my mother for your adventurous spirit, always pushing beyond the known with compassion, devotion and love. Thanks to my extended family and friends for your persistence, noting the challenge of catching up with my crazy schedule. And thanks to my late father, Robert William Taylor. Though you were taken too soon, I am grateful for your integrity, intellectual rigour and fantastic humour and that you were a loving and devoted parent. Thank you.

Members applauded.

The SPEAKER: Can I acknowledge in the gallery former Victorian MPs the Honourable Mark Birrell and Mr Ron Wilson and former federal MP the Honourable Josh Frydenberg.

Jess WILSON (Kew) (17:44): Speaker, it is an honour to address this Assembly as the eighth member for Kew and to contribute to the address-in-reply to the Governor's speech on the opening of the 60th Parliament. I congratulate you on your re-election as Speaker.

Kew is a special place. In Robert Hoddle's 1837 survey of the Port Phillip district, the Parish of Boroondara encompassed what would become Kew. Of course 'Boroondara' comes from the Woiwurrung language of the traditional owners, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation, and means where the ground is thickly shaded. Then, as now, the description is apt.

Kew is known for its leafy streets, its beautiful parks and its shady trails, with the Yarra River winding along its northern and western borders. Kew is known for its heritage homes, historic shopping precincts and vibrant local sporting and community organisations. From Kew to Balwyn, Deepdene to Canterbury and Surrey Hills to Mont Albert, the community spirit is inspiring. Kew is home to more than 30 schools known for educational excellence. It is no wonder that Kew's residents are among the most highly educated in Victoria.

Victoria is the most successful multicultural state in the country, and Kew is no exception. Almost a quarter of Kew's residents have Chinese heritage and over 60 per cent of residents have at least one parent born overseas. For so many of us then those that have chosen Victoria as their home make up part of our own family histories. My own paternal grandmother, a Scottish orphan who served in the British air force in World War II, came to Australia in 1946 as a war bride, having married an Australian airman. They came to Melbourne before settling in Mildura where, after two daughters, my father Ron was born.

Mum and Dad ensured that I was baptised into the three great faiths: the Catholic Church, the Liberal Party and the Collingwood Football Club. Dad was, as the Deputy Premier and the member for Rowville will recall, the member for Bennettswood in this place. Dad was my first political hero and while it might be said that I followed in dad's footsteps as president of Monash Liberal Club, as Victorian Young Liberal state president and now as a member of this Assembly, I have also carved out my own path.

I grew up in Mont Albert, attending Mont Albert Primary and then Strathcona Girls Grammar, also the alma mater of the fourth member for Kew, Prue Sibree. I studied arts and law at Monash University and was a Hansard Society scholar, studying at the London School of Economics and interning at the House of Commons. I was proud to have been admitted as an Australian lawyer in the Supreme Court of Victoria.

I am fortunate to have two people present in the gallery this evening that I am proud to call my professional mentors and my good friends. The Honourable Josh Frydenberg is a man of integrity and immense ability. Josh is a loss to Australian public life, but I know he has more to offer. Josh has showed me that there is nothing that can replace hard work in this place. From the time we first met, Josh invested in my future, and I thank him and Amie for their support.

I have spent the majority of my career in the private sector. From consulting on tax policy at KPMG to leading the policy team at the Business Council of Australia, I have had the privilege to work every day with many of Australia's most successful companies and our largest employers. I would not be here today without the mentorship of Jennifer Westacott, who put her complete faith in me at the business council. We have been through a lot together – energy wars, COVID restrictions and industrial relations debates. Jennifer is a force, and her intellect and leadership are things I can only aspire to. In the private sector I witnessed the combination of risk, talent, hard work and agility and the 'alertness' required to take advantage of entrepreneurial opportunity. It is business that creates jobs, not government. It is business that invests in the new technologies to deliver for consumers and that delivers returns to shareholders, including every Victorian with a super account. It is business that has the capacity to unleash human potential, so in this place you will find me a champion of free enterprise. Of course no business is perfect, but too often lawmakers make the fatal conceit of comparing imperfect markets with perfect governments. The 'Liberal idea', as the Honourable Dr David Kemp calls it, is the ideal of an individual's:

inherent and equal worth and the belief that this entitles each person to the liberty to pursue their own course in life.

The role of this place and the measure of its success is to what extent we lawmakers 'empower people to clarify and pursue their dreams'. I joined the Liberal Party because I strongly believe that individual freedom, free enterprise and limited responsible government under the rule of law is the best chance of securing prosperity for all Victorians.

Historically, the success of the liberal project in Australia can be attributed to the relatively high social trust in and integrity of our democratic institutions, but this cannot be taken for granted. It should concern honourable members that, according to the Edelman Trust Barometer, a majority of Australians believe that governments are a dividing force in society and think that Australians lack the ability to have constructive debates. Recently much has been said about integrity in politics, but integrity is more than a buzzword. Although bodies like IBAC and the Ombudsman play a crucial role, members of Parliament cannot outsource integrity. What can we do about it? First, we can maintain the integrity of the proper role of Parliament – to carefully debate legislation and hold the executive to account. Each year, thousands of pages of legislation and regulations are added to the Victorian statute books. Members of Parliament must ensure that those pages have proper scrutiny. We need effective legislation, not just more of it.

Second, we can maintain the integrity of this Parliament's sovereignty vis-a-vis the federal Parliament. In the 1891 convention debate leading up to federation, Samuel Griffith – later the first Chief Justice of the High Court – envisioned that 'states are to continue as autonomous bodies, surrendering only so much of their powers as is necessary to the establishment of a general government to do for them collectively what they cannot do individually for themselves'. This vision has been considerably compromised. Today there is almost no area of policy that is left undisturbed by the federal government, and that is to say nothing of the revenue disparity. Of course the federal Parliament rightly has authority, which state governments must respect and not, for example, enter into arrangements with foreign governments that undermine Australia's foreign security. A broken federation is a problem for integrity because it results in the constant blame game between Spring Street and Canberra. Integrity requires decision-makers to both take the credit and wear the cost of policy outcomes.

Third, we can maintain the integrity of political parties. Our democracy is stronger when voters have a choice between credible parties of government offering comprehensive and values-based policy

platforms to deal with real issues facing Victoria. Our democracy is weaker when some attempt to reduce the contest of ideas to riding the demographic wave of discontent.

I was honoured to be the Liberal Party's candidate for Kew at the 2022 Victorian election. My campaign for Kew was a community campaign. We ran a campaign based on a simple approach – listening to the community and earning their trust. This is my ongoing commitment: to listen, to act and to get things done for the people of Kew. Ultimately, though, 2022 turned out to be a confronting year for the Liberal Party. There is no point denying that we have a lot of work to do at both a state and federal level, but the values of liberalism and the Liberal idea remain relevant to each new generation. For those of us on this side of the house, the task is to translate those timeless principles into concrete policies that will have a meaningful impact on people's abilities to realise their own dreams.

In being elected to this place, I had the privilege of being named Shadow Minister for Finance, Shadow Minister for Economic Reform and Regulation and Shadow Minister for Home Ownership and Housing Affordability. On finance and the economy, it is concerning that recent Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia survey data shows that financial literacy is in decline across all age groups and most notably amongst people under 35 and women. Many important economic decisions are made early in our adult lives, and so this must improve. Financial literacy is not limited to understanding household budgets. The Victorian budget is in record debt at a time when magic pudding economics has pierced the psyche of younger generations. Improving financial literacy will be a priority for me.

On housing affordability, it is concerning that the rate of home ownership has been in decline for decades, especially amongst younger Victorians. It is not because Victorians no longer want their own piece of the Australian dream. Home ownership gives individuals and families a stake in their future and in their community. I know how difficult it is for my peers in their late 20s and 30s, working hard, saving for a deposit, being outbid at auctions and being hit with stamp duty as almost a second deposit. Victoria is addicted to property taxes, with 42 per cent of Victoria's total taxation coming from land tax and stamp duty alone. I also know the challenges that industry faces with rising costs, supply shortages and planning delays. A principles-based approach is sorely needed, prioritising home ownership, choice, tax reform and sensible planning reform to unlock supply.

Let me also say something on climate action, an issue which is important to me and the community in Kew. I spent the last five years working in energy and climate policy. I have helped to bring large businesses to the table to develop a policy agenda and work out solutions to achieving a net zero economy. We have seen an incredible acceleration in the transition over a short time, but we must be honest and acknowledge it gets harder from here. How we achieve the transition matters to Victorians' livelihoods. The transition must be a market-based approach, not through top-down regulation. Governments must take the least cost, most efficient pathway, not the politically convenient.

Honourable members will appreciate that anyone who finds themselves in this place has had help from many people. You forge many friendships in the trenches. Chief amongst these are Senator James Paterson and Lydia Paterson, true friends and political allies – in that order. Aaron and I would not be where we are today without their friendship. To Caitlin Hardy, my campaign manager extraordinaire and loyal friend, wise beyond her years – in equal measure she is compassionate and unflappable. The Liberal Party is lucky to have her, and I will always have her back like she had mine. To Liana Fisher and Clare Gunning, two women who I can call at any time of the day and know that nothing will be too much to ask – I thank them for their energy and strength. Thanks to my new parliamentary colleagues, in particular my friend and neighbour the member for Hawthorn, the member for Sandringham and the member for Caulfield, along with those in the other place – Georgie Crozier, Dr Matt Bach and Evan Mulholland. I am also grateful for the wise counsel of my family friend and a former member in the other place, the Honourable Mark Birrell. I pay tribute to my campaign team of community volunteers, including Ben Jessop, Natalie Stirling, Anna Cairo, Dan Cronin, Emma Nicholson, Sarah Nicholson, Phillip Healey, Lynne Robertson, Sue Leidler, Sam Ponsford, Nick Muraledaran, Simon Frost, Josh Worth and Georges Anjoul.

Our families are part volunteers and part conscripts. To my younger sister Sarah, my biggest cheerleader, and to Rob, Henry and Michelle: I thank them for all their love and support. I am excited that at the next election Henry will have a little brother or sister. To my mum Jo: by election day a too-common refrain from Kew residents was, 'I met your mum'. Others thought, to my great delight, that she was my younger sister. Mum is the Energizer bunny. Doorknocking, listening posts and pre-poll – nothing was too much, but more than that, she made sure life continued throughout the campaign. To my dad: our family and friends often remark that I have my mother's looks but I am my father's daughter. I only hope I can make him proud in this place. Finally, to my husband Aaron: politics is not easy at the best of times, but he has always been in my corner, my rock, the most decent person I know and my constant source of advice, even though I might not always listen or agree. I thank him for his unwavering love and support and for always putting me first. I hope I will be worthy of the trust my family, my friends, my party and most importantly the electors of Kew have placed in me.

Members applauded.

Colin BROOKS (Bundoora – Minister for Housing, Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (18:03): Just to clarify, this is not my inaugural speech but I am very pleased to make a contribution to this debate and allow time for people's families to enter the chamber ahead of the next member's first contribution. Can I start by acknowledging your election, Speaker. I have not had the chance to properly thank all the people who were involved in the running of the Parliament during my time as Speaker. I have not had the opportunity to really properly do that, so I thought I would take this opportunity during this address-in-reply to do that. I did want to thank you at the outset, Speaker, for a wonderful job as Deputy Speaker and now to see you in such command of the Parliament as the Speaker. I wanted to thank you not just for being a great friend and a great member of Parliament but for also being such a wonderful Speaker. So congratulations on that high office that I can see you are doing such a stellar job at.

I want to thank in particular all of the wonderful staff at the Parliament. I had the privilege of working with predominantly the Legislative Assembly team: the Clerk Bridget Noonan, the then Deputy Clerk Robert McDonald, who it is good to see has now been promoted to Clerk of the Legislative Council – if you can call that a promotion – Vaughn Koops, Sarah Cox, Paul Groenewegen and Kate Murray. It is a long list of people from the Assembly team and the whole department who do such a wonderful job. As well there are those from the other side, the other chamber – the former Clerk Andrew Young and Anne Sargent – and the whole team at Department of Parliamentary Services. I had the great privilege of being Speaker when we appointed not only Bridget Noonan as the first female Clerk of this chamber but also the first female DPS Secretary, Trish. As well as that there are the people who work over at DPS who provide services to members: Matt Smith, Paul Pamio and a whole range of others. I want to also acknowledge Jason McDonald, who worked in my office when I was Speaker and just does a stellar job – I know for the current Speaker as well in providing advice to her. I found him a great servant of the Parliament and someone who members from all sides of politics could engage with and who could help resolve issues that they might have. Also Jeremy – everyone is well acquainted with Jeremy – is such a great help around the chamber, and the wonderful staff here.

I want to acknowledge former President Bruce Atkinson, who was the first President that I served with as a presiding officer. I found him to be a very strong mentor despite the fact we are from different sides of politics originally. Bruce is a great parliamentarian, and I appreciated his support through those early stages of my speakership.

I want to also acknowledge Shaun Leane. There is not someone I can think of who has a stronger commitment to vulnerable Victorians than Shaun Leane, who has found his way back to be President of that chamber. I cite the meals program that the Parliament ran during the COVID lockdowns. The well over 1 million meals that were served to vulnerable Victorians through a range of charity partners is a classic example of something that Shaun drove.

Also to Nazih Elasmr, we wish him well after his service as the President of the upper house. Again, I do not think many members got to see Nazih's service to the Parliament in welcoming delegations from overseas. His command of a number of different languages was of great assistance in that respect, and he was a consummate professional. I thank him and wish him and his wife Heam all the very best for the future.

I think one of the things that the Parliament achieved over that period of time was working together. We did take steps to improve the internal governance of the Parliament, our audit processes, the level of professionalism and capacity here. Security and OH&S were a couple of areas that I would cite where there were significant improvements made. Deputy Speaker, I should take the opportunity before I move off the parliamentary officials to congratulate you as the new Deputy Speaker in that role, and I am sure that you will do that role really well as well.

I am very grateful to the Bundoora community for re-electing me again. I want to thank the whole community for their support. I feel very privileged to have been re-elected. I want to thank those people who worked on my campaign, in particular – and I cannot name everybody – certainly the co-chairs of my campaign committee Brian Smiddy, who many people in the labour movement will know, and also Michael Hildebrand, who was co-chairing in that role, and my campaign manager Matt Arturi. A whole team of people worked with those people to deliver a really well run campaign.

In my electorate there is more happening now than I can say has happened in decades. The North East Link is literally changing the face of transport in the north-east of Melbourne – a massive project. It gives me great pleasure to see in local shopping centres so many people, particularly young people, with boots and hard hats on, working on a project and going in to buy their lunch, supporting local businesses. There is the ability to direct so many young people who come to my office looking for work and training opportunities to the jobs hub at North East Link in Watsonia, where they can find out more about working on that wonderful project. Alongside that is a great public transport project, the Hurstbridge line upgrade, which the member for Eltham and I are keenly involved in in terms of communicating the benefits to our local community. That involves a brand new station at Greensborough, a brand new station at Montmorency and more trains running more often. The combination of a North East Link, when it is finished, that takes trucks off local roads and gets them onto that link and a better public transport system in the north-east cannot be underestimated.

Along with that there are a whole raft of schools that are in different stages of redevelopment or upgrades in my electorate. Greensborough College has been completed. That is a college that was mentioned in the Treasurer's very first speech when the Andrews government came to office along with, I think, Essendon Keilor College if I am correct. They were the two schools that were mentioned as being quite run down and in need of being rebuilt. In the spirit of the Andrews Labor government in following through with its election commitments, we have delivered three stages of upgrades to the Greensborough College, and that has now been completed, along with new sports fields which were funded by the North East Link Program. There have been upgrades to Watsonia Heights Primary School, Watsonia Primary School, Watsonia North Primary School and Bundoora Primary School, and funding is being provided to Bundoora Secondary College for their upgrade as well. So this is a significant upgrade, and we know that there are more schools that need to be upgraded as well. Diamond Hills Preschool and Greensborough Preschool will receive upgrades as well, so these are significant investments in education and early education.

I was very pleased to see the investment of \$101 million in La Trobe University's sports precinct, which will become the home of the Matildas, the home of Football Victoria and the home of Rugby Victoria as well. Not only is this important for the benefits for sports and the students who study sports-related fields, but that funding was announced at a time that was so important for that university when during COVID the tertiary sector was in many ways abandoned by the then federal government. La Trobe University I know saw the investment of this funding and this sign of confidence from the state government in that university as so significant, so it is very pleasing to see that investment in that particular area and to see the development taking place at the moment.

There are a whole range of female-friendly change room upgrades throughout the electorate and election commitments to really important charitable groups in my area. Big Group Hug works right across the northern suburbs to supply vulnerable families with the goods that they need for children. Diamond Valley Community Support again provides support to vulnerable Victorians. A local scout group, Bundoora Scout Group, is receiving funding, and there are important upgrade works to our local war memorial reserve at Greensborough as well.

Bundoora is a wonderful place to live. It is no wonder that I saw today that A-listers John Cena and Zac Efron are coming out to Bundoora's bowling lanes on Grimshaw Street to film. I am waiting for the phone call to head down and play a role in that. I am not sure what the movie is about, but I am –

A member interjected.

Colin BROOKS: Yes, I have to check my messages. In terms of the portfolios that I have been provided, I feel so privileged to have been appointed as Minister for Housing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs. In particular, given the challenges in housing right across the country and here in Victoria as well and the need to provide more social and affordable housing to people who find the market very difficult at the moment with rising interest rates and the cost of living, to have the ability to have an effect on that is really I think quite a great opportunity. To come into this role off the back of the work of previous ministers, the member for Essendon and the previous member for Richmond, and into the middle of a \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build is so good – to be able to slip into that role as so many projects are coming out of the ground to deliver that very social and affordable housing that is required by the Victorian people. There are over 12,000 dwellings right across the state, and a quarter of the investment that I mentioned is in regional Victoria, so this is a massive investment. It is the biggest investment in social and affordable housing in the state's history and it is the biggest investment in social and affordable housing of any state or territory across the country. So it is a great privilege to be able to be behind the driver's wheel in relation to the Big Housing Build.

There was another one I wanted to mention in terms of housing. There was very little, if anything, good that came out of COVID. One thing that stands out as a potential positive was the From Homelessness to a Home program, where people who were rough sleeping were provided with what you might call a housing-first approach – put a roof over people's heads and then wrap the services around them – which is a slightly different approach than what has been taken in the past. That is a program that, despite it not being perfect, has provided ongoing support to people who were otherwise sleeping rough during COVID – and they continue to have a roof over their head. It is the first time this has happened in this state, and it is a model that we need to keep working on and keep improving. I am very proud to be assuming responsibility for that particular program.

And then of course there is multicultural affairs – what a great portfolio, particularly as a member of a Labor government. The Cain government established the Ethnic Affairs Commission back in 1982, which became the Victorian Multicultural Commission – a great reform led by Labor governments. The Bracks government introduced the Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001. These are great landmark reforms. And then there are the election commitments that this government has taken forward: \$40 million for multicultural infrastructure, \$12 million to support multicultural festivals and events, more funding to support African communities as they settle here in Victoria, \$3.5 million for the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria – I have got to make sure I get that figure right; I will have Eddie Micallef on the phone to me straightaway. There is support for multicultural media outlets, which is so important to ensure that we have a vibrant multicultural media sector, and there are many, many more commitments in the multicultural space as well.

I just want to finish by thanking my family for supporting me through another election period and signing up for another four years of being a member of Parliament. I really do look forward to serving the people of Victoria both as a minister and as the member for Bundoora.

Members applauded.

Kim O'KEEFFE (Shepparton) (18:16): I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of this land, this wonderful land where we meet today, the peoples of the Kulin nations. I would also like to pay my respects to the people from my land, the traditional owners, the Yorta Yorta peoples, and pay my respect to their elders present and emerging.

It is an honour and a privilege to stand here today, and following Jess, the member for Kew, just shows the opportunities for all. We come from very different backgrounds. My mum was born in Shepparton, and I am the fifth generation from the Doherty line. My parents moved away from Shepparton, firstly to Melbourne, then on to Sydney, where I was born. My dad was a talented musician who played piano. He was lured by the bright lights of Sydney and the dream of working with a big professional show band. After a period of time and with a growing family of five young children they decided this was not a life for a young family, so they decided to move up to Queensland, where they were told there was plenty of work in the mines and good money to be made.

My mum became homesick and wanted to return to her home town of Shepparton to be with family. I was four years of age when we travelled down from Queensland in a station wagon with five children, my dad's keyboard on the roof and minimal belongings. After staying with family initially, we moved into a small farmhouse, followed by a few months at the Shepparton lake caravan park. Apparently my parents were told if you moved into a caravan with five children it would increase your chances of securing a house. It worked. We moved into public housing in a neighbourhood filled with hardworking people raising their young families. My family grew, and I have four wonderful brothers and two sisters. I have such fond memories of the fun times growing up in this neighbourhood, and I have remained friends with many of them today. It is interesting when you look back at the housing model back then that gave young families the opportunity to purchase a home at an affordable price – opportunities that do not seem to exist today. Unfortunately my parents did not purchase their home, but many did.

My dad was a hardworking man, usually working two jobs to make ends meet. He worked in a number of jobs over the years, including the local abattoirs, factory work, retail and cleaning, as well as his musical gigs on the weekends. From around five years of age I started singing with my dad at the local pubs. A highlight was when we secured a big gig at a Lions Club convention. I was an excited eight-year-old dressed in red sequins, and we performed in front of over 600 people. These are my most precious and favourite memories with my dad. My mum attended to home duties and raising seven children. We had some family challenges, with my dad suffering from mental health issues and alcohol dependency. This led to family breakdown and to most of my brothers and sisters leaving the family home at very young ages.

I left school at 15, not by choice but by circumstances. I had moved out of home and begun working full time in a local retail gift store. My bosses, Olive and Brian Grey, were so kind and supportive, as were many others during that time. I moved in and out of a range of accommodation arrangements. Some arrangements were much better than others. At 18 years of age I took on the care of my 15-year-old sister. We both were working full time. I recall our first accommodation was a one-bedroom flat with bunks. We paid our bills and rent, and we did what we needed to do. My sister Keely is here today. I am incredibly proud of all of my brothers and sisters, who have supported each other and who have had successful lives. We were estranged from our parents for a period of time but rebuilt our relationship. Sadly, we lost my dad 30 years ago. He succumbed to his mental illness, and my mum died just a few years ago. She was enormously proud of her children. She was known for carrying my mayoral business cards in her wallet, proudly showing them when the opportunity arose.

After six years working with Olive and Brian I changed jobs, moving into the beauty industry. This was a great career that would span almost 30 years. I worked in pharmacy, which also included a role at a local television station as a make-up artist on the morning breakfast show with Jen Dean. I was contemplating a career move to Melbourne after being approached by a national cosmetics company, but destiny had other ideas. I met my husband Brendan, and as the saying goes, the rest is history. We married in 1986, and not long after I secured a traineeship at a local salon. As a trainee the position

was lower paid than my other job and also included having to travel to Melbourne and being away from home. We had a mortgage and I wanted to contribute. Brendan did not hesitate to encourage me to take that position; we would manage. We went on to have two wonderful daughters Emma and Olivia who are my greatest joy in life. One of my greatest wishes was to give my daughters the educational opportunities that I never had and a stable family. Brendan owned a small retail menswear business with his father Matt and a business friend for over 64 years, in which Brendan worked for 43 years and has recently retired – well earned, I say.

The region has a history of long-term generational, hardworking family businesses, both large and small, who have contributed so much to our region, people like Pat and Tina's much-loved local BP station now run by their son Joe and his wife Angela. They will soon celebrate 50 years in business. The thing I love about living in a small community is that we are so connected and we cheer each other on. I opened my own business in 1988 and not long after opened a training school. You could not train locally in the beauty industry, and in fact I was the first to offer this training in Shepparton. I went on to broaden my business nationally, securing work with other companies and brands as well as expanding into online learning in line with the changing times. It was an incredibly rewarding career and a reminder that you can have great success and opportunities in regional areas. It was a busy time in our lives, running two businesses and raising a family.

Brendan and I have invested our lives in a region that we believe in and love. I had a wonderful career, and I wanted the same for others into the future. I wanted to contribute to the success and progress of our region and for future generations. So in 2016 my next life experience and journey began when I was elected to local government. My six years in local government included almost four years as mayor. It was a steep learning but also an exciting realisation of the impact and the difference that I could make. The community saw my passion and determination, how hard I worked and my determination to make a difference – that same passion I bring here with me today.

I live in a very unique and culturally diverse community made up from those from many nations around the world. We have a very strong, long history of successful migration and the success and contribution of the many families making Australia and the Goulburn Valley their home. We have a deep connection to the land and the Indigenous people, and in fact we have one of the largest Indigenous populations outside of Melbourne. My very special friend Aunty Faye is from the stolen generation, and she continues to cheer me on, support, encourage and inspire me. If I need a friend or someone to lean on, she is there. I also acknowledge my childhood friend who grew up in my same neighbourhood and was recently elected to council, Cr Greg James, the very first Indigenous councillor elected to the Greater Shepparton region.

Our Albanian community shared their story through a documentary attracting worldwide acclaim and winning awards. They shared the story of their long history and connection to the region as well as their struggles, success and the opportunity they were afforded in this great place. Australia's first Albanian mosque was built in Shepparton back in 1960, and I acknowledge the recent retirement of Imam Eljam Bardi and acknowledge his amazing 41 years of service at the Albanian mosque and to our community, a very close friend of mine and supporter during my mayoral terms. Their story is similar to the many who came to the land of opportunity but who contributed so greatly to the future and the success of the region.

We are a bold, resilient and progressive region. One of my greatest aspirations has been to showcase the region as a great place of success and opportunity. We are a progressive and productive region that is growing, and with that comes the need for greater support and investment to reach our full potential. I love to share our story with others, and in 2019 we took over Federation Square in Melbourne for two weeks when Fed Square became Shep Square. We shared the many wonderful things about the region and living in regional Victoria. We took with us many local businesses and community members. It was a true celebration of who we are. We had cultural performances, and the many and varied industries came along. There was such a strong sense of pride that continued long after that event.

We also hosted an international beach volleyball tournament. We do not have a beach, so we trucked in tonnes of sand and made our own – of course we did. Both of these examples attracted investment and opportunity by putting ourselves out there. We must not put up roadblocks to success; we have to find a way to achieve the things we need, and that is what I intend to do right here in Parliament Cannatrek, a multimillion dollar investment in our region, came about through the international volleyball live stream where CEO Tommy Huppert saw me telling the reasons why business should invest and come to the region. It was a 42-degree day, I had no shoes on and was on the sand. I have a very loud voice, and I will continue to use that voice to help attract further opportunities.

The regional Commonwealth Games idea came from Shepparton, and it was Shepparton who progressed the business case, supported by a few other councils. Never say never, I say. We are proud to think that this idea will bring billions of dollars into regional Victoria, although we are disappointed we did not get a sports village. Perhaps the baton should leave the stadium and Shepparton be its next stop.

We are a successful region with many industries, including agriculture, horticulture, manufacturing, processing, transport and businesses both large and small. We are known as the food bowl for good reason – for example, 54 per cent of the state's apples, 78 per cent of pears, 57 per cent of apricots and 25 per cent of all Australia's milk, accounting for 2.3 billion litres of milk per annum. The recent floods have impacted on our farmers and their produce dramatically. It is critical that the farmers get ongoing support – as well as the many industries that have been affected – to get back on their feet. We also must protect our industries with water security and no buybacks. We have many wonderful, successful long-time companies and industries, such as SPC – recently celebrating over 100 years – Pental, Unilever, Campbell's soup, Tatura Milk, Bega Cheese, Freedom Foods, J Furphy & Sons and many more, who contribute to the history and the success of our region. You will see many well-known products on the supermarket shelves not only nationally but also internationally. We are very proud of our companies and industries and the contributions that they make. Many do not realise the enormous amount of products and produce that come out of my region. We might be a small region, but we are doing very big things.

Whilst we are on figures, 25 per cent of the state's trucks are registered in the Shepparton region, so as you can imagine, along with other large transport vehicles driving through the middle of Shepparton and Mooroopna, this equates to a great deal of traffic, with numbers constantly increasing. Can you imagine shopping or trying to park in the main street with a constant convoy of trucks and heavy vehicles belting past you? This is putting lives at risk and slowing down the efficient movement of transport. On pre-poll we witnessed a truck and car sideswipe each other right in front of the polling booth.

We saw the impact of having only one river crossing during the floods when the Peter Ross-Edwards Causeway was flooded and completely shut down, causing complete chaos at an already stressful time. We had the Australian Defence Force picking up hospital staff and healthcare workers to transport them through the floods and across the bridge to get them to work. We are the only major regional city without a bypass. The Nationals, under federal member Damian Drum, committed \$208 million to the Shepparton bypass, and the state government has invested over \$10 million into the business case. I am pleased that the Premier has announced he is committed to this project, and I look forward to seeing the next steps to make that happen.

I am proud of the community in which I live. We are a united community creating a sense of belonging and connection. During the pandemic, when we had 20,000 people in isolation, our community was incredible, the way we cared for and supported each other. The city of Shepparton basically shut down. I acknowledge my friend Azem and his wife Jeihan, who provided over 14,000 meals over three weeks with a convoy of wonderful volunteers. But it is not only in times of crisis that Azem supports our people. He supports the homeless and those in need every day, as well as the CFA during the bushfires and floods or wherever he is needed. I also would like to acknowledge our frontline workers, healthcare workers and the many amazing volunteers and organisations that have supported our community – and still are – during the pandemic and now during the floods.

We must address the cost of living, the housing crisis and homelessness. Affordable housing, rental affordability and housing availability – we are so far behind, and the problem will continue to grow without immediate action. Everyone deserves a place to call home and a roof over their head. Every day I see people struggling to make ends meet. I am shocked at the state of our crumbling and unsafe roads, and I urge for an increase in funding to address this. We are facing challenging times, with my region heavily impacted, as I said, by the recent floods and storms. As a matter of urgency, we need to do all we can to get people back into their homes and businesses supported and open. There is confusion and inconsistency, and almost every day I have people coming to my office asking for help. They know that my door is open.

We must address the health crisis, the elective surgery waiting list and the 000 responses. We have GP shortages and teacher shortages. We need more mental health support, and we have a burnt-out health workforce. We must ensure that regional Victoria is also considered, and please, we must consider looking at other ways and different ways to attract and increase the workforce. Let us look at some incentives. I urge investment into our region, including the final stage in the completion of the Goulburn Valley Health redevelopment, and it was pleasing to hear today that the Labor government are very supportive of doing that and, again, the Shepparton bypass.

We also have redundant school sites after merging four of our high schools. The future of these buildings and sites must be determined – and the return of choice in our secondary public school system. We need investment in the many ageing sporting and recreational facilities. I will continue to fight for the many needs of all of our towns and the future progress of our region. There is so much work to be done. The Premier has also said that he will govern and support all the people of Victoria – that must happen, and that regional Victoria receive our fair share of investment and support.

I want to thank the many people who supported me during my campaign. My committee headed by Lindsay Dan, Peter Ryan, Ian Powell, Don and Cheryl Kilgour and former National Party member Jeanette Powell, who encouraged me to stand. Jeanette was the first woman elected to the National Party and is a very close friend and mentor. It is wonderful now to have six women and five men in the Nationals.

A member interjected.

Kim O'KEEFFE: It is something we are very proud of.

I would also like to thank head office, the members and particularly the Nationals team – everyone has been incredibly welcoming and supportive as I take on this new learning but also share the same passion; my passionate volunteers and supporters, Azem, Jeihan, Cammy, Preet and Peter Le Sueur, who all worked hard in their communities to help ensure that people were aware of my commitment and passion; my amazing friends and volunteers who are here today – Sev, Robi, Alison, Cheryl, Sarah, Jodi, Carman and Mel, Barry, Anna, Helen and Gracie; and the many hundreds of volunteers – you know who you are. I would not be here without your incredible support, and I am so very grateful.

For those that donated and displayed my corflutes on their fence or in their businesses, thank you. Also thank you to everyone who put their faith in me. It is such a privilege and an honour to represent you in this Parliament.

Thank you to my two beautiful daughters, who have encouraged me and cheered me on. To my husband, Brendan – your commitment, positivity, love and support has never changed during the past 36 years. You are my biggest fan, cheering me along with pride, love and devotion.

Finally, I look back at my 15-year-old self. I am proud of what I have achieved. As I stand here in Parliament, yes, I pinch myself, but I know this is where I need to be. I will work hard every single day. Thank you.

Members applauded.

Katie HALL (Footscray) (18:39): I am honoured to have been re-elected as the member for Footscray, the community I love and live in. When I was thinking about what I wanted to say this evening, I looked back at my first speech in this place, and I am pleased to report that my heart is not beating as fast as it was on that day four years ago. But four years ago I had a 12-week-old baby when I was elected to this place. I think that that is a really useful marker of time for me because I can think about how much has changed in four years for little Ned. I had Ned at Sunshine Hospital, and now, four years later, we have the beautiful Joan Kirner Women's and Children's Hospital, where around 5000 babies are being born every year. Now little Ned is starting free kinder with many of the other thousands of little learners across Victoria. He is participating in the biggest economic and education reform this state has ever seen, and I am enormously proud of that. I am enormously proud to be part of a government that is delivering free kinder.

I would like to acknowledge that my electorate of Footscray, in Melbourne's beautiful inner west, is on Wurundjeri country and pay my respects to elders past and present. I note that the Maribyrnong River has always been an important meeting place for the Wurundjeri tribes of the Kulin nation and the Wurundjeri people and that I am also very proud to be part of a government that is leading the nation on the delivery of a treaty for our First Peoples. I am also proud and looking forward to be campaigning alongside my colleagues on a Voice to Parliament.

My first speech was a love letter to Footscray, where my family have lived and worked for six generations. In that speech I acknowledged the importance of heritage and history but that Footscray is a place of almost constant transition. In that speech I spoke of my driving passion for high-quality public education, the great leveller. I inherited that passion for public education from my mother, who taught in the public school system for 30 years. In the last four years we have seen a transformative upgrade of schools across the Footscray electorate, from the opening of Footscray High's three-campus model, with more than \$100 million invested in that transformation, to a \$16 million upgrade of Footscray North Primary, a school I was enormously proud to be a part of in terms of that upgrade. That was the school my father attended and many of my family attended, and I remember him telling me that when they played footy it was on a gravel oval. They did not have the kind of infrastructure that the children at Footscray North now have that has been delivered by the Andrews Labor government. There is a \$20 million upgrade of Footscray Primary School, which I was very pleased to visit this week in their 153rd year. This is an exciting new chapter for Footscray Primary School, a beautiful heritage school in my electorate. And there is so much more to come. I am excited that Footscray City Primary School's upgrade is underway and that an election commitment I was able to deliver for my community in Footscray West will be delivered, with a new gymnasium coming for that school next.

Four years ago we had a funding commitment for Footscray Hospital, and now coming out of the ground with the most cranes in the Southern Hemisphere is the spectacular \$1.5 billion Footscray Hospital. It was a pretty fantastic thing, I have to say, to be able to work with the community, to lead the community reference group and to deliver outcomes for the new hospital that the community has asked for. It is going to have a beautiful village green through the centre of it. It will be a leading piece of health infrastructure in terms of sustainability. It is going to have a childcare centre and a gymnasium. It is going to have 200 extra beds. It is going to be an enormous and fantastic facility for my community in Melbourne's west and take pressure off the entire health system in the region. I think it is a really wonderful thing that the community of Footscray is receiving the largest capital investment in health infrastructure in Victorian history.

Four years ago I spoke about my passion for public housing, and now it is wonderful to be part of a government that is delivering the Big Housing Build, the largest investment in public housing in the nation's history. I would like to acknowledge the former member for Richmond and his lifelong advocacy to deliver affordable and public housing to Victorians.

Tweddle, which is a public hospital – not many people know about Tweddle unless they have needed it, but you know about it when you need it – is an early parenting hospital. It looks after our little

people, our babies, up to the first crucial 1000 days. They do incredible work, and their upgrade, which I was able to announce early in my term, is now being delivered.

We have had our challenges over the last four years – most notably COVID of course – and it was great to be part of a government that saved institutions in our community like Pride of our Footscray. I was very proud to see Pride out marching on the weekend in St Kilda. It is a fantastic organisation and community space for our LGBTIQ+ community. We had a natural disaster in the floods that impacted Maribyrnong last year, and I will continue to work with my community in Maribyrnong and the residents there and be there for them every day to support them in the long road to recover from that disaster. We have saved so much together throughout COVID, from arts organisations to small businesses, and we stayed together apart very successfully in Footscray.

We are investing now in the most highly regarded community arts centre in Australia, the Footscray Community Arts Centre. I am very proud that I have been able to deliver as their local member of Parliament a massive upgrade, because the Footscray Community Arts Centre is at risk of being loved to death. It is always at capacity. It is an NDIS provider. It is a really special place for Footscray and for Victoria.

In my first speech I spoke about the need to get trucks off our local roads – streets that were designed for factories and freight. Our proximity to the port is wrapped up in our history, and I know that the West Gate Tunnel will be transformative. The West Gate Tunnel will arrive in 2025, and that is the same year in Footscray – a very big year for the inner west – when the Metro Tunnel will open. Footscray is one of the biggest beneficiaries of this huge public transport project. From Footscray you will be able to go through the new Metro Tunnel, or you will be able to go into the city to Flinders Street. It will add an extra 60 per cent capacity on the Sunbury line – something I know we need locally. More access to public transport is very important in my community. I have also worked over the last four years with a number of community activists – and I want to thank them – to improve the monitoring of trucks in Melbourne’s inner west, with the installation of cameras on key routes, and on an air quality initiative as well, which was an election commitment that Minister D’Ambrosio was involved in to make sure that the oldest trucks on our roads can be upgraded with a government contribution. That is something that organisations like MTAG in my electorate – the Maribyrnong Truck Action Group – have been calling for for many years.

Looking forward, I am very excited about the upgrade to Shorten Reserve. I worked with the footy club the Roosters and the women’s team the Bokkers to deliver an announcement to get that footy oval upgraded. It was a great thing to work with that community. It also services the Druids Cricket Club, and that is going to be a really exciting thing for my community in the years ahead.

I am also excited to work with my community on the future of the existing Footscray Hospital site. A community consultation process will start this year where everyone will be able to have a say about their hopes and their aspirations for a 6-hectare site in West Footscray. I look forward to keeping my community informed on that process when it starts. We also have upgrades happening at Yarraville Special Developmental School, a level crossing closure coming to Yarraville and of course the Footscray City Primary School upgrade, which has just started.

The Footscray electorate changed pretty dramatically in this election. Braybrook and Sunshine came out of the Footscray electorate, and Seddon, Yarraville and Kingsville came into the electorate. I hope that I served the people of Braybrook and Sunshine well. I will miss them, but I am also really looking forward to being the representative for Seddon, Yarraville and Kingsville.

I have many people to thank who believed in me and kept me going during a very challenging campaign: my electorate office team, who worked so hard, Sel, Linden, Fraser, Luke and Hannah; and of course my family and friends, my mum, Dan, Nick, Deb, Dylan, Leonie, Sam, Tilly, and Ned. I think there was one day on pre-poll where three Hall women managed to get into an argument with the Victorian Socialists, which is probably a record. It was a really challenging environment. I want to say that going to vote

should be easier than that. It was not a nice environment in Footscray, and I hope that the Electoral Matters Committee can make changes to the way that pre-poll operates for next time around.

I want to thank my amazing campaign team – Amy, Aman, David Moody, Julia-Ann, David Pepper, Sarah – and all of the amazing activists from the Footscray branch. A special mention to two dear friends of mine, Fiona Ward and Carla De Campo – the best friends you could have in your corner for 20 years. They delivered food; they helped me when I was feeling down and they kept me going throughout that campaign. And also my friends from outside the political world – for the new members, I highly encourage you to hold onto those people; they are very precious – who delivered food, looked after my kids and turned up to pre-poll to give me a hug. I know that the next four years will have their challenges in Footscray, but I am so excited to be your advocate and your champion in this place, and I will work hard for you each and every day.

Just finally, a big thankyou to the ministers who came and helped out. I had the Minister for the State Electricity Commission out doorknocking with me in West Footscray; I had the Deputy Premier with me in Yarraville talking level crossing removals; I had Minister Dimopoulos communicating in Greek for me, which was very helpful; Marty Pakula, who kept me entertained, Bill Shorten, Daniel Mulino and Nicola Roxon. Thank you. I am very honoured to be back here.

Members applauded.

Martin CAMERON (Morwell) (18:51): What a journey it has been over the last six months that has found me today standing here in front of you all for my inaugural speech. For a person whose political interest was hearing what the government of the day had proposed via TV or radio and talking about it with my family and friends; handing out how-to-vote cards for Russell Northe and Darren Chester many, many years ago; and talking with politicians in times of crisis after devastating floods and fire, my knowledge of the inner workings of the political arena is limited at best.

Now, do not get me wrong; I care about decisions made that affect myself, my family and the community where I live. Normally I am a 362-day-a-year shorts-wearing, hi-vis polo, workboot-walking plumber. Yep, I am a tradie. The change to a suit, fresh shirts, a tie and shoes with laces is certainly taking a bit of getting used to. Home is about 2 hours from here. I have lived all my life and raised my family in the best place possible. We are 40 minutes from the beach, 40 minutes from the snow and a couple of hours from Melbourne town. I live in the Latrobe Valley. For those in here who do not get past the Pakenham border, we are just a little further down the road, so please come for a visit.

How does a plumber end up here? How does someone who finished year 10 at school, who was an apprentice plumber for four years, who continued to work as a plumber up until two months ago, with no political training, get elected the first time he tries? Could it be that people can relate to my journey and have trust in someone who is outside the political arena, or is it because I am a small business owner and family man who has endured all the ups and downs of day-to-day life just like them? In my time working as a plumber I have been fortunate that when I knock on a door it does not matter who answers, they are happy to see me and say ‘Come on in’. It may be that I am unblocking their toilet or fixing their heater, but they are happy to let me in. This may be a different story from now on. After fixing their issue, it normally involves a cuppa, a biscuit or sometimes, depending on who it is, some hot scones. Then the conversation starts. I get to hear firsthand about the cost of living these days: rates, power bills, water bills, gas bills, insurances, school fees – the list goes on. How getting into a doctor can take up to a week, the state of our crumbling country roads, whether I will get an ambulance if I ring and how it takes three to six months to see a mental health specialist and even a dentist – all things that worry most mums and dads, old, middle-aged and young.

One of the other concerns I hear is the disconnect between the city and the country. We country people see all the money being spent on roads, tunnels and rail services for the city, and we are left with crumbling country roads that cost lives, a bridge that cannot be opened in Tyers, and our trains – well, they are called buses. Down in our part of the world we supply and maintain Melbourne’s power,

timber supplies, water, gas and, like other country areas, your food source. If you now look at a map of political seats, you can see the wagons are starting to circle, as the country have had enough of the biased inner-city spend. The valley's DNA is being tested at the moment. The work options for our mums and dads are in the process of being restructured or transitioned from secure employment to uncertainty and in many cases to no jobs at all. The power industry has served Victoria well to keep the lights on and power our manufacturing industry and allowed us all to live in the secure knowledge that when we turn on a light switch, plug in our phone, get our latte and nowadays plug in our electric car it is going to work. Everyone is committed to embracing the age of renewable power. Wind turbines and solar panels are going to be the way of the future. It is what people want.

We are told by experts who have crunched the numbers, processed all the data and done all the modelling that renewable power can stand alone to provide our power needs. The experts I have spoken to – and I want to make it clear, my experts do not sit behind a desk in Melbourne; they are the people that work around the clock in those power stations and have done so for the last 20, 30 and 40 years – are the same people who see the demands on baseload power needed to run the state of Victoria. Electricity to make our lives function as normal is going to fall a long way short of securing our state's power appetite. We have a chance to get the power challenge for the future right. Do not rush it to make political parties feel warm and fuzzy. Do it once and do it right for the people of Victoria. Our future and way of life is in play. Our children's and their children's futures are on the line. Let us get it right the first time.

The timber industry is another that is being closed. Generations of logging companies are on their knees. They have no work because of decisions made here – lock up the bush. Let us get serious; we have the best timber work practices and procedures in the world, yet, to be seen to be turning green, for want of a better word, we have started on the path of shutting down other industries that rely on our timber supplies. Builders are going broke, having to shut their doors because they cannot get timber to build houses. Prices are going through the roof. The Maryvale mill are making people redundant, and the white paper – that is what I have here – Australian-made paper, that I am reading from today has stopped, maybe never to be made again. Our country shows, and now the iconic Melbourne show, are in danger of not having the renowned and fan-favourite woodchopping as they cannot get access to timber for this year and more than likely the years ahead.

The decisions made now are affecting our way of life. Why can't we have the best of everything? We do have the assets to do it. Our manufacturing community in the valley is nervous. What is our future going to look like with our biggest employers closing at an alarming rate? Why can't we be the ones to make wind turbines and solar panels and not send them overseas to be made? The decisions on bringing forward the closure dates on coal-fired power stations and locking up the bush have far-reaching repercussions not factored in for our communities and our way of life.

The small business community have had it tough also. An unforeseen pandemic with lockdowns and now the aftermath of trying to reopen and re-engage staff is a real challenge. From trades of all descriptions, retail and hospitality to supermarkets, they are having trouble getting quality staff to service the customers, who have returned en masse. The pressures on the owners, who are mums and dads, are off the charts. They have to work 12 to 15 hours a day in the shops; then they go home and do bookwork for 2 to 3 hours to comply with all the rules and regulations thrown at them. They go to bed exhausted, and they get up and do it all again. Small businesses are closing. They need us to put our arms around them and tell them they are doing an amazing job and 'We've got you'.

How do I know this? I am a small business owner doing this day after day. I had to become a politician to work less hours. My job is to be the voice for the people of the Latrobe Valley, to bring their concerns to the forefront. I now work for them. I am not a person who points fingers and waves my arms and says, 'Why is the government doing that? Why don't they do this to make our lives better?' If you want to know the answers, stand up. Be the person to find out. Be the person to make a difference.

When I was deciding to run I asked myself what I think is a pretty simple question: if I was going to be able to raise the concerns of the Latrobe Valley and make changes, where would that be? Would it be using TV, would it be using radio, would it be using the newspaper or would it be via social media? All handy, but the answer was no. In my mind the only place I could work the hardest for the people of the Latrobe Valley and push for change was where I stand right now, in this chamber in front of all of you – nowhere else. It is here. I had to work my hardest to get here. Now I have the opportunity to serve the people of the Latrobe Valley. The privilege of being in this chamber will never be lost on me. We have the opportunity to secure Victoria's future. We have resources that are the envy of the world, so let us get it right.

Some thank-yous: to my children Mitchell and his partner Brooke, Bailey and his new wife of a week Tayla, and my daughter Alana, thanks for backing me and helping me. To my mum and dad, Fay and John, thank you. Dad always told me from a young age, 'When you meet someone, give them a firm handshake and look them in the eye and listen to them. Always respect their point of view, even if it is different to yours.' I still carry this advice with me today.

Special thanks to Gloria Auchterlonie, Bill Hemphill and Andrew Livingstone. To Leah and Andrew and Liesel and Tim, thanks for keeping me focused and grounded. To the people of the Latrobe Valley, I thank you for electing me as your member for Morwell. For those who did not vote for me, I will be working on you over the next four years. I will be working for everyone in the Latrobe Valley to make our way of life better. Thank you all who stood on pre-poll and on polling day to help hand out my how-to-vote cards. Thank you to the Nationals team, not just my colleagues in here but the team behind the scenes. We have major issues we need to deal with, but we are lucky we live in a wonderful state and country.

Inside these four walls we get to shape Victoria's future. The Latrobe Valley is back and up for the fight. I am unsure if a plumber from country Victoria has ever stood here and had the opportunity and privilege to represent their region. I hope that me standing here in this chamber can prove to people that no matter what your background or level of education or political understanding, anything is possible. As a plumber and small business owner I am used to working long and hard to achieve outcomes for the people I work for. Now as a politician I am working for the people of the electorate of Morwell to achieve and secure a better way of life. My work ethic will not change. The collective voice of the Latrobe Valley will be heard. Thank you.

Members applauded.

Anthony CARBINES (Ivanhoe – Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Racing) (19:07): I move:

That debate on the address-in-reply be now adjourned.

Motion agreed to and debate adjourned.

Ordered that debate be adjourned until later this day.

Business of the house

Postponement

Anthony CARBINES (Ivanhoe – Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Racing) (19:08): I move:

That consideration of remaining business be postponed.

Motion agreed to.

Adjournment

The SPEAKER: The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

Walshs Road, Goughs Bay

Cindy McLEISH (Eildon) (19:08): (11) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Environment. The action I seek is for the minister to work with the Mansfield Shire Council and invest in sealing part of Walshs Road in Goughs Bay. The investment to complete the required work is around \$1 million. The government is a key stakeholder in this project, as Walshs Road leads to a number of very popular camping grounds. Walshs Road runs 26 kilometres from the Goughs Bay township to the pristine camping facilities on the Delatite Arm of Lake Eildon, referred to as The Pines. The Pines is frequented by thousands of campers at all major holiday breaks and many weekends. This is a huge increase from the 261 residents living in Goughs Bay. There are 19 listed free camping ground locations along Walshs Road, with approximately 350 camp sites. It is very popular for camping, water access, fishing, four-wheel driving, mountain bike riding, horseriding and bushwalking. In 2017–18 the Mansfield shire documented 760 cars per day using the road between 22 December and 7 January. This is why the government has a key role in making this road safe and helping to deliver the funding, because it is beyond that of Mansfield shire alone.

Obviously since COVID and with people being desperate to get out after lockdown, people are holidaying in Victoria rather than interstate or overseas, because of the restrictions, so it is still very busy. Sixteen thousand campers were displaced from the Murray River this year due to floods. Not all went to Goughs Bay, but the visitor volume increased absolutely. Walshs Road is sealed from Goughs Bay for about 1 kilometre, then becomes a dirt road. The unsealed section of the road is heavily corrugated and potholed. Dust is kicked up when vehicles pass, covering residences on Walshs Road. The length that needs to be sealed is 1.9 kilometres, which passes a number of properties before entering the reserve. The road-sealing project has been an ongoing matter for over 20 years, but it has really taken a kick since 2017. The project to seal a section of the road has strong community and council support and certainly support from the Goughs Bay Area Progress Association, who are to be congratulated for their work and advocacy as they strive to drive and implement changes in this area. The government is responsible for the campgrounds, and the government needs to take action to ensure that the key section is sealed for the benefit of everybody in the area and those visiting the campgrounds.

Wendouree electorate infrastructure

Juliana ADDISON (Wendouree) (19:11): (12) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and the action that I seek is for the minister to provide me with an update on the progress being made to deliver the Keeping Ballarat Moving projects that are upgrading and improving key intersections across my electorate of Wendouree.

The Andrews Labor government is investing \$60 million to upgrade a number of Ballarat's busiest intersections in Alfredton, Lake Gardens, Lucas, Newington and Sebastopol. I am pleased that the works have been completed on a number of these important projects, including the Gillies and Gregory streets intersection at Lake Gardens near the Wendouree train station. The intersection upgrade supports the new east–west route, following the reopening of Gregory Street West, linking factories and industrial sites to Gillies Street and providing an alternate route from Alfredton and Lucas to Wendouree.

The upgrade of the Sturt Street–Russell Street–Morrison Street intersection in Newington is also making a real difference. The installation of traffic lights at this very business and dangerous intersection at Loreto College and Victoria Park has made it safer for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians, as well as students crossing over Sturt Street from the bus stop to enter Loreto and also students heading to St Patrick's College and Ballarat Clarendon College on bike or foot.

It was fantastic to see the traffic lights switched on at the Delacombe Town Centre intersection at Wiltshire Lane and Glenelg Highway before Christmas, greatly improving traffic flow for shoppers, as well as residents living in Bonshaw, Delacombe, Smyths Creek and Winter Valley.

I am pleased to see that the works are nearly completed at the Ballarat–Carngham Road–Learmonth Street–Wiltshire Lane–La Trobe Street intersection. With the significant population growth in Winter Valley, Alfredton and Lucas, as well as the important community services, including Ballarat West police station and the Lucas fire station, this upgrade is incredibly timely and important for traffic flow. As Ballarat continues to grow, the upgrades of these important intersections will make a real difference to the safety and connectivity of our city. I look forward to receiving the update from the minister on how the remaining Keeping Ballarat Moving projects are progressing and sharing this information with my community.

Albury Wodonga Health

Bill TILLEY (Benambra) (19:13): (13) I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Health. The action I seek is for the minister to provide an immediate solution to the crisis with beds and emergency presentations at Albury Wodonga Health. If that sounds familiar, it certainly should. It is the same question I asked in May, along with all the other correspondence, letters and emails that I have been putting through. Minister, you blamed COVID, albeit when you finally got around to replying five months later. People see through that. They call it for what it is, but I am not permitted to be able to use that common language in this place.

In late October you announced a staged plan to do a reno on the Albury campus. It will never be enough and frankly does nothing for the present crisis. In the past three months my office has been buried by horror stories, and I will give you some examples: a 10-day wait to fix a broken arm; a 79-year-old stuck in the ambulance while her family desperately searched for hospital wards, with ridiculous waits in emergency – the list is endless. All these are being addressed by the health service but still need to be raised here, and it is simply not good enough.

Victoria is the worst state in the nation for health, with the lowest level of available beds in public hospitals, fewer healthcare staff than all bar South Australia and emergency waiting times way above the national average. Tell me what I say to 83-year-old Jean Dudley, who waited 7 hours to be seen in emergency after a fall at home. She fell three times in the day after being sent home with some pain pills but told her son, ‘I’ll never go back to that place’. Wendy Hodgkin waited 3 hours with appendicitis. She could not be transferred for surgery from the Wodonga campus because there were no beds in the surgical wards over in Albury. Amy Carmody’s daughter Bailey was also admitted for appendicitis. She spent two days in hospital fasting, with promised and repeatedly deferred surgery. When she finally got to the table, the cause of the pain was found to be something completely different. Jess from Dartmouth suffered perianal abscesses in 2019. That led to complications and sepsis. There is surgery that will stop her repeated visits to emergency to treat the pain and the infections, but here we are in 2023, four years later, and Jess is still waiting. Jess got a call from the hospital last week just to see if she still needed the surgery. I think they were hoping that she had paid for private health and the problem had all gone away. But, no, Jess is still waiting – waiting for the backlog to clear. This is a category 1 surgery.

Seriously, you cannot make this stuff up, and it just goes on and on. What do you think the stories will be like when the emergency department and the wards are a construction zone for part of the reno at Albury base? Yes, you might reply, and turn around and say ‘New South Wales are involved in it’, but it is simply not good enough for the border region of Albury–Wodonga.

Mordialloc electorate schools

Tim RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) (19:16): (14) My adjournment this evening is for the Minister for Education, and the action I seek from the minister is to visit Mordialloc College with me to discuss the next stage of works with principal Michelle Roberts and our commitment to further upgrades from

the Andrews Labor government. When I reflect on the few years of Mordialloc College's journey in the time that I have been the member of Parliament there, it has been a wonderful transformation that has occurred in education on that site. Under the leadership of principal Michelle Roberts we have seen the school go from 572 kids in 2014 to well over 1150 now. That growth has come with significant challenges. Some of the building challenges and infrastructure challenges are things we have had to respond to, and there have been stages of works that we have been able to deliver over that time, whether it is the performing arts centre and basketball stadium or the new year 7 and 8 learning centres and upgrades to the main buildings. But the next stage is a really exciting opportunity. \$12.6 million has been committed. It is an exciting next chapter.

It is a snapshot of the investment that we are making across the region. Just recently we officially opened Yarrabah School, a specialist education setting, one of the first in recent school builds in the inclusive education space. Yarrabah was literally rebuilt brick by brick, something that the Premier and former Deputy Premier really strongly supported and worked on as well. There are upgrades at Chelsea Primary School; designs are just out recently. At Chelsea Heights Primary School we completed their build recently – their stage 1, \$4.5 million upgrades. There are upgrades that we have done at Edithvale Primary. We have delivered upgrades at Aspendale Primary. Then if we think about Parkdale Secondary College, their junior learning centre is nearing completion in the next few months. When we look towards the areas that we have taken into the Mordialloc electorate recently, Keysborough Gardens Primary School will see a substantial upgrade, the Andrews Labor government having delivered that school in 2020 with their first students going through.

So when it comes to education, when it comes to investing in the teachers, the education support staff and the principals that give our kids the very best opportunity, this is an example of living your values and investing in the future. I cannot wait to invite the Minister for Education down to Mordialloc College to meet Michelle Roberts. Of course Mordialloc College is a two-time Lindsay Thompson Award winner, the equivalent of the Brownlow Medal they took out back-to-back in 2019 and 2020. It shows the excellence in education on this site. We are really proud of the work that they do. We give them a big shout-out, and I cannot wait to show off the school with the Minister for Education when we get the opportunity.

Grampians Health

Emma KEALY (Lowan) (19:19): (15) Deputy Speaker, congratulations on your appointment.

My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Health, and the action I seek is for the minister to urgently intervene in the contract negotiations between Dr Adnan Rasheed and Grampians Health and to immediately undertake a review into all medical contract negotiations undertaken by Grampians Health, particularly those medical contracts which were not successfully negotiated. Last week the Stawell community was devastated to hear that Dr Rasheed, known as their friendly local GP Addi, would be leaving after more than 15 years of ongoing service to the Stawell community as an anaesthetist and general practitioner. Addi was given just a few days to consider a contract which included significant variations in conditions from the contract which had been in place for 15 years. The clauses in the contract are not equitable with other similar-level medical professionals working at the Stawell campus of Grampians Health and are not equitable with the conditions offered in hospitals and other GP clinics across rural Victoria. The contract offered is unfair, inequitable, vastly different from the contract that he has worked under for a long time and completely blind to the medical workforce crisis that so many hospitals and communities are facing right across Victoria.

Addi is highly respected by the medical community and the Stawell community alike. My office has been absolutely overwhelmed with calls from Stawell locals desperately concerned that not only are they losing a great GP and beloved community member but already the community is desperately short of GPs. No GPs in Stawell are taking new patients. It takes weeks to get an appointment even if you do have a family GP. The region is critically short of GPs per head of population, and with the

significant expansion of jobs in the local area in the near future this pressure will only increase – or the jobs simply will not be filled.

Some locals are speculating that this is the first step towards the closure of surgery in Stawell, because with no anaesthetists there will be no surgery. The locals have raised funds for the hospital, and the staff have done a fabulous job under very trying conditions over the past 15 months. They need confidence in the future of access to local medical services. This was what was promised by Grampians Health; it has not been delivered. The failure of Grampians Health to negotiate Addi's contract in good faith will have significant ramifications for the health outcomes of Stawell residents.

I realise this is not a usual intervention as an adjournment matter. However, given the critical impact of the loss of Addi as a GP anaesthetist in the Stawell community, I ask the minister to urgently intervene in this matter.

Warneet jetties

Jordan CRUGNALE (Bass) (19:22): (16) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Ports and Freight, and the action I seek is an update on our \$9.5 million election commitment announced to rebuild both north and south jetties in our beautiful coastal village of Warneet.

The collective action of the Save the Warneet Jetties campaign and everyone involved was heard loud and clear. Going back to March 2022, out of iso and with my love of a car boot sale – my first score being a lawnmower – it was actually the Warneet-Blind Bight fire brigade CFA fundraiser that was the drawcard and the opportunity to meet and chat all things local with locals. It is an amazing community, all heart and interwoven with the neighbouring coastal villages, who love and care about where they live and so effortlessly energise together, all to bring about change for the better, never stopping until it is realised.

The story unfolded and unravelled. The Warneet boating precinct developed with two jetties as the community's priority. I want to thank the minister for coming down and meeting with the local club and committee representatives mid last year. We sat down, walked the precinct, continued to listen and read the room well. From there we had online meetings, many phone calls, visits and doorknocks. I have learned so much about this area, its history, its value and the vitalness of its jetties and appreciate all the work done to date by Better Boating Victoria, the lead agency in developing the precinct plan and all the engagement in tow.

Minister, you have been relentless in your advocacy to get these two jetties funded for a complete rebuild; thank you. We are like two little mosquitoes, buzzing until we get what our community needs and deserves, and we got there.

Fast forward to 5 November, when the Deputy Premier came to Warneet and we announced that a re-elected Andrews Labor government would invest \$16.7 million in jetties, boat ramps and car park upgrades in Bass. Warneet would get a magnificent \$5.9 million to rebuild both jetties, and the remainder was for upgrades to Lang Lang, Tooradin, Inverloch and a jetty expansion in Cowes. The crowd kind of went quiet, and then it went wild.

A big, massive cheer to the Save the Warneet Jetties crew – what a collective campaign – and to the committee and members from Warneet Motor Yacht Club, Warneet North Boat Club, Warneet Foreshore Committee of Management, Warneet South Slipway club, the local businesses and services and all who I met with who attended meetings along the way.

Also to everyone that spoke to the jetties and their value, from Warneet's Craig on the corner, Sally in Pearceedale and Lawrence and Paula in the car park outside Tooradin FoodWorks to Patricia and her friends at the Cannons Creek Crop Swap that Zorza, a magnificent gem, organises and the stallholders at the fabulous Pearceedale market, just to mention a few: great things happen when we walk side by side with community.

Thank you, Minister, and we welcome you at any time to Warnet, Western Port and the electorate of Bass. I look forward to relaying your update to this wonderful community. Let us get this done.

Junk food advertising

Tim READ (Brunswick) (19:25): (17) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Public Transport, and the action I seek is that he ban unhealthy food and drink advertising across Victoria's public transport network this year. I met recently with Cancer Council Victoria, VicHealth and Deakin University's Global Centre for Preventive Health and Nutrition. All are members of the Obesity Policy Coalition, who are calling on the government to protect children from unhealthy food and drink advertising. Their research shows the average Victorian child sees upwards of 25 unhealthy food and drink ads every day, including on public transport and near schools, and that this advertising has a strong influence on what children buy or nag their parents to buy. We all know by now that eating too much energy-dense or ultraprocessed food causes tooth decay and obesity and its many complications, including type 2 diabetes and heart disease, all of which are more common in lower income suburbs. But what is less well known is that being above a healthy weight significantly increases the risk of more than a dozen types of cancer, including bowel cancer and postmenopausal breast cancer.

So why are we letting the processed food industry teach our children what to eat? Obviously the government did not consciously decide to help advertisers promote disease-causing products to our community. But this is not the first time this has been pointed out, and governments can only shrug and look away for so long before it starts to look like they do not care. Now all Victorians are wondering how we will deal with excessive outpatient waiting times, surgical waiting lists and even longer public dental waiting lists, and while we are waiting for what the government can do about this, a coalition of health organisations has come together to ask that our Department of Transport and Planning no longer allow disease-causing advertising on its property.

Let us not shrug and look away this year. The evidence is clear: banning junk food advertising works. In 2019 the City of London removed junk food ads from its public transport network and three years later researchers found the policy had reduced junk food consumption. And 73 per cent of Victorian parents agree that advertising for junk food should not be allowed on public transport. The ACT government has banned unhealthy food advertising on government-run transport, and the WA and Queensland governments are planning to act. The processed food companies do not waste millions of dollars; they spend this money on very expensive outdoor advertising because they know it works for them. So let us get moving and ban junk food ads from our public transport network.

Preston South Primary School

Kat THEOPHANOUS (Northcote) (19:28): (18) What an honour it is to stand here again as part of our progressive and proactive Labor government representing the good people of Northcote. I am delighted to direct my adjournment tonight to our wonderful Minister for Education, who has been doing a power of work ensuring every Victorian child has the opportunity to learn and to thrive. The action I seek is that the minister join me in my electorate of Northcote for the official opening of Preston South Primary School's brand new facilities.

One of my happiest moments as the member for Northcote was sharing the news with principal Leon Leonidas that Preston South was getting a \$14.63 million upgrade. I remember being on the Zoom call with Leon and his team in May 2020 as we laughed and cried together about this funding, feeling just so overjoyed that this resilient school was finally getting the modernisation it needed – and I say 'resilient' because Preston South has had it tough over the years, including two fires which drastically limited the space available for students. But in true community spirit they rallied and persevered and turned the fortunes of the school around. In fact they have thrived so much that enrolments have increased and the school has been bursting at the seams. Well, no longer, because Preston South Primary is about to open the doors on a brand new architecturally designed three-storey learning building which will deliver 200 new student places. Having been on site a couple of times during the

construction, I can tell you that this project is shaping up to be one of the finest school modernisations in the state.

Across the three floors there will be collaborative learning spaces, dedicated science and tech areas, outdoor learning, maker spaces and reading nooks. There will be new landscaping as well as new staff and admin facilities for the devoted team, who are so much a part of making this amazing school what it is. This is what our Labor government is about – the Education State. And it is not just Preston South seeing it in real time. In just four years across the Northcote electorate our government has invested over \$120 million in our local schools and kinders. Our secondary schools, Northcote High and Thornbury High, have major works underway to give more young people opportunities to pursue their passions in science and tech. Every primary school across Alphington, Fairfield, Westgarth, Thornbury, Northcote and Preston in my electorate now has a project completed or underway. Across my community we are saying goodbye to outdated facilities and embracing modern, workable, inspiring places – spaces that help kids learn.

I thank principal Leonidas for his leadership and passion; the staff, students and community for their patience with the construction works; and the project team who have brought this to life. I have been honoured to work side by side with you on this journey, and I look forward to showing the minister what we have achieved at Preston South Primary School.

Maternal and child health services

Richard RIORDAN (Polwarth) (19:31): (19) I rise this evening in my adjournment debate to ask the Minister for Health to come down to Geelong with me – I would happily host her in Geelong – to help explain to the Geelong community, the Surf Coast community, the Bellarine community and most importantly the Polwarth community why on earth the state government is allowing a 27 per cent reduction in maternity services in the Geelong region.

Sadly, the Geelong community and the Polwarth community learned in the last month that the Epworth private will be closing at the end of March. Normally we know that this government has no time for private enterprise; in fact we heard in question time today the government openly scorning private enterprise. However, the reality is the Epworth facility in Geelong is a not-for-profit service. It was built and constructed and purposely allocated the spot at Waurn Ponds near the university with both state and federal government support. It was identified as a way to help provide a broad range of health services to that growing area. In fact the area to the west and the south of Geelong is the fastest growing area in regional Australia.

The Epworth hospital currently does 600 to 700 births a year, growing at 20 per cent per annum. It has two brand new purpose-built obstetric services there, which for regional and country women is brilliant, because not only is it ideally located with the birthing suites but it is predominantly run by female obstetricians and gynaecologists. Those living in country Victoria know how important that is, because so many women throughout regional and rural Victoria do not have regular access to great female doctor services. These obstetric and gynaecological services were only signed up by Epworth HealthCare in the last six months. Multimillion-dollar clinics were invested in, built and put at that service for this very reason, and then, without any great warning or advance knowledge, they are now being closed and lost to the community.

I call on the minister and I call on the four Labor members in Geelong to stand up for their community and come down and tell the community what they are going to do about it. The state government is 100 per cent responsible for medical workforce planning. The excuse that there are not enough paediatricians in Geelong is no reason to close the four newest maternity services that are available to all women. As one of the gynaecologists and obstetricians from Corio – one of the tougher areas that really relies on public service – made clear in a public meeting, it will be the public patients who will pay the biggest price, because there will be even more pressure on the scarce public resources in health.

State Electricity Commission

Gary MAAS (Narre Warren South) (19:34): (20) The adjournment matter that I wish to raise is for the attention of the Minister for the State Electricity Commission, and strangely enough, it is regarding the State Electricity Commission of Victoria. The action I seek is that the minister provide any information on how the return of the SEC will benefit my constituents in Narre Warren South. It really is terrific to see the SEC coming back, and I know that on the campaign trail coming back to this place there were many constituents who spoke to me positively about the return of the SEC should an Andrews Labor government be returned for a third term.

In this state it has been known for many years that clean, reliable and renewable energy is the future. After years of going it alone, it is fantastic to see the new federal Labor government intending to support all of these new clean energy projects, investment and a clean energy future as well. The Andrews Labor government has already cut emissions by some 29.6 per cent below 2005 levels and has set targets of between a 75 and 80 per cent reduction by 2035 and net zero emissions by 2045. The SEC will help us to reach these targets.

Responsible government has to step up and indeed has stepped in to provide a true benchmark for the quality and value of services in order for the market to be truly competitive, just as this state government did with the Victorian default offer. The SEC likewise will be good for the energy consumer. I would appreciate any further information that the minister could provide on how the return of the SEC will benefit constituents in my electorate of Narre Warren South, and I look forward to sharing the minister's response with my community.

Responses

Anthony CARBINES (Ivanhoe – Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Racing) (19:36): I will certainly ensure that ministers respond to the range of requests and actions that have been asked in the adjournment debate. But just to cover off on some of those, the member for Eildon asked an action of the Minister for Environment to work with the Mansfield Shire Council to seal Walshs Road in Goughs Bay. I note the member for Eildon has left the chamber.

The member for Wendouree raised an adjournment matter for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and the action she sought was to provide an update on the progress of the Keeping Ballarat Moving project – the some \$60 million in intersection upgrades from the Andrews government across the Ballarat community. The member for Benambra asked an action of the Minister for Health regarding immediate solutions to matters at the Albury-Wodonga hospital. The member for Mordialloc raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Education, the action being to visit Mordialloc College and to discuss the next stage of works there. The member for Lowan raised an adjournment for the Minister for Health, and the action there was to urgently intervene on contract negotiations at Grampians Health for medical professionals.

Emma Kealy interjected.

Anthony CARBINES: As long as I don't have to spell it.

The member for Bass raised a matter for the Minister for Ports and Freight, and the action there was to provide an update on the \$9.5 million election commitment for the Warneet jetties, a significant commitment in the electorate of Bass. The member for Brunswick raised a matter for the Minister for Public Transport seeking action to ban unhealthy food and drink advertising. The member for Northcote raised a matter for action by the Minister for Education to join her in her electorate at Preston South Primary School for the opening of those new facilities.

The member for Polwarth raised an action for the Minister for Health to come to the Geelong region to explain to the community maternity services changes at Epworth private hospital. The member for Narre Warren South raised an action for the Minister for the State Electricity Commission to provide

ADJOURNMENT

Tuesday 7 February 2023

Legislative Assembly

149

any and further information on how the return of the State Electricity Commission will benefit his constituents in the mighty electorate of Narre Warren South.

I will ensure that ministers respond on those action items to members.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. The house now stands adjourned.

House adjourned 7:39 pm.