



Hansard

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

60th Parliament

Tuesday 20 December 2022

Office-holders of the Legislative Assembly

60th Parliament

Speaker

Maree Edwards

Deputy Speaker

Matt Fregon

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

David Southwick

Leader of the Nationals and Deputy Leader of the Opposition

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

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Tuesday 20 December 2022

Opening of Parliament

Opening of Parliament by commission

Proceedings commenced at 11:03 am.

The Clerk: The Governor has issued the following proclamation, which I will read to you:

I, Linda Dessau AC, Governor of the State of Victoria, acting under sections 8 and 20 of the *Constitution Act 1975* and all other powers vested in me, fix Tuesday 20 December 2022 at 11.00 am as the time for the commencement and holding of the first session of the Sixtieth Parliament of Victoria for the dispatch of business, at Parliament House, Melbourne. The Members of the Legislative Council and the Members of the Legislative Assembly are required to attend at that time and place.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the State of Victoria, at Melbourne, this 13th day of December 2022.

And it is signed by Her Excellency the Governor and the Premier.

The Commissioner, the Honourable Justice Karin Emerton, President of the Court of Appeal, entered the chamber and was conducted to the chair by the Serjeant-at-Arms.

The Commissioner: Members of the Legislative Assembly, the Governor has caused a commission to be issued under the seal of the state constituting her commissioners to do in her name all that is necessary to be performed in this Parliament. This will more fully appear in the commission, which will now be read by the Clerk.

The Clerk: The commission reads as follows and is addressed to the Honourable Justice Anne Ferguson, Chief Justice of Victoria, and the Honourable Justice Karin Emerton, President of the Court of Appeal:

Acting under all available powers and with the consent of the Premier, I commission each of you, on my behalf, to open the first session of the Sixtieth Parliament at 11.00 am on the morning of Tuesday the twentieth day of December 2022 and to do all other things that it is necessary or usual for me to do on the opening of a new Parliament (other than to give my speech).

GIVEN under my hand and the Seal of Victoria on this 19th day of December 2022.

It is signed by Her Excellency the Governor and the Premier.

Members

Members

Swearing in

The Commissioner: I have received from the Governor a commission to administer the oath or affirmation of allegiance to members of the Legislative Assembly. I will ask the Clerk to read the commission.

The Clerk: The commission is addressed to the Honourable Justice Karin Emerton, President of the Court of Appeal. It reads as follows:

Acting under section 23 of the *Constitution Act 1975* I authorise you, in the Parliament Houses, Melbourne, on the twentieth day of December 2022, to administer the prescribed Oath or Affirmation of allegiance to Members of the Legislative Assembly.

GIVEN under my hand and the Seal of Victoria on this 19th day of December 2022.

It is signed by the Governor and the Premier.

MEMBERS

The Clerk announced the receipt of return of writ issued by the Governor for the election of 85 members to serve for electoral districts set out below and endorsed to show the election of the following members:

District	Member
Albert Park	Nina Taylor
Ashwood	Matt Fregon
Bass	Jordan Crugnale
Bayswater	Jackson Taylor
Bellarine	Alison Marchant
Benambra	Bill Tilley
Bendigo East	Jacinta Allan
Bendigo West	Maree Edwards
Bentleigh	Nick Staikos
Berwick	Brad Battin
Box Hill	Paul Hamer
Brighton	James Newbury
Broadmeadows	Kathleen Matthews-Ward
Brunswick	Tim Read
Bulleen	Matthew Guy
Bundoora	Colin Brooks
Carrum	Sonya Kilkenny
Caulfield	David Southwick
Clarinda	Meng Heang Tak
Cranbourne	Pauline Richards
Croydon	David Hodgett
Dandenong	Gabrielle Williams
Eltham	Vicki Ward
Essendon	Danny Pearson
Eureka	Michaela Settle
Euroa	Annabelle Cleeland
Evelyn	Bridget Vallence
Footscray	Katie Hall
Frankston	Paul Edbrooke
Geelong	Christine Couzens
Gippsland East	Tim Bull
Gippsland South	Danny O'Brien
Glen Waverley	John Mullahy
Greenvale	Iwan Walters
Hastings	Paul Mercurio
Hawthorn	John Pesutto
Ivanhoe	Anthony Carbines
Kalkallo	Ros Spence
Kew	Jess Wilson
Kororoit	Luba Grigorovitch
Lara	Ella George
Laverton	Sarah Connolly
Lowan	Emma Kealy
Macedon	Mary-Anne Thomas
Malvern	Michael O'Brien
Melbourne	Ellen Sandell

District	Member
Melton	Steve McGhie
Mildura	Jade Benham
Mill Park	Lily D'Ambrosio
Monbulk	Daniela De Martino
Mordialloc	Tim Richardson
Mornington	Chris Crewther
Morwell	Martin Cameron
Mulgrave	Daniel Andrews
Murray Plains	Peter Walsh
Narre Warren North	Belinda Wilson
Narre Warren South	Gary Maas
Nepean	Sam Groth
Niddrie	Ben Carroll
Northcote	Kat Theophanous
Oakleigh	Steve Dimopoulos
Ovens Valley	Tim McCurdy
Pakenham	Emma Vulin
Pascoe Vale	Anthony Cianflone
Point Cook	Mathew Hilakari
Polwarth	Richard Riordan
Prahran	Sam Hibbins
Preston	Nathan Lambert
Richmond	Gabrielle de Vietri
Ringwood	Will Fowles
Ripon	Martha Haylett
Rowville	Kim Wells
Sandringham	Brad Rowswell
Shepparton	Kim O'Keeffe
South Barwon	Darren Cheeseman
South-West Coast	Roma Britnell
St Albans	Natalie Suleyman
Sunbury	Josh Bull
Sydenham	Natalie Hutchins
Tarneit	Dylan Wight
Thomastown	Bronwyn Halfpenny
Warrandyte	Ryan Smith
Wendouree	Juliana Addison
Williamstown	Melissa Horne
Yan Yean	Lauren Kathage

Members took and subscribed the oath or affirmation as required by law.

The Commissioner: The Governor will attend Parliament later this day to inform you and members of the Legislative Council of the reasons for calling this Parliament together. As it is necessary before you proceed with business that a Speaker of the Legislative Assembly be chosen, the Governor requests that you proceed to the choice of a Speaker.

The Commissioner retired from the house.

Speaker*Election*

Mary-Anne THOMAS (Macedon – Leader of the House, Minister for Health, Minister for Health Infrastructure, Minister for Medical Research) (11:30): I propose the member for Bendigo West, Maree Edwards, to take the Speaker’s chair. The member for Bendigo West has already demonstrated her ability to perform the role with aplomb. She is known as a person who always acts with integrity and who is firm but fair in her dealings with all members of the house. I move:

That the member for Bendigo West take the chair of this house as Speaker.

Chris COUZENS (Geelong) (11:31): I second the motion.

The Clerk: Does the member for Bendigo West accept the nomination?

Maree EDWARDS (Bendigo West) (11:31): I am honoured to accept the nomination.

The Clerk declared the honourable member for Bendigo West duly elected as Speaker.

Maree Edwards conducted to the chair by proposer and seconder.

The SPEAKER (11:32): I express my sincere thanks to the house for the great honour conferred on me by electing me as Speaker.

Daniel ANDREWS (Mulgrave – Premier) (11:33): Speaker, it is a great honour on behalf of the parliamentary Labor Party and the government to be here in such strong numbers and, on behalf of all my colleagues, to congratulate you on your elevation to such high office. As my honourable friend the Leader of the House just noted, your service to this place, firstly and with a great sense of pride as the member for Bendigo West, is well understood by all of us. It is deeply respected. Your passion, your commitment not just to your local community but to regional communities right across our state, your leadership in so many areas of policy and, most notably – I have made this point before, but I think it bears repeating – your constant advocacy, the fact that you are a champion for families of kids with special needs, children with disability, is well known, well understood and, I know, deeply appreciated by those families and deeply appreciated by me and all of our colleagues. We are so pleased – thrilled in fact – to think that a person of such character, such conviction and such courage in the pursuit of the values that you live large has been chosen by this Parliament to again fulfil the role of Speaker. It is a great honour, and on behalf of the government and members of the parliamentary Labor Party we commit to, as best we can, make the exercise of your considerable responsibilities as smooth as possible. To you, your staff and your family I say: well done. Be proud. We are certainly proud of you.

John PESUTTO (Hawthorn – Leader of the Opposition) (11:35): Speaker, congratulations on behalf of the opposition. I should say it has been some time since you and I last spoke in this place. I had to pop out for a bit, but being back, I am delighted to offer our congratulations to you.

I think this is a very solemn time. The role of Speaker in parliaments down the ages has been a critical one, and in terms of the deliberations of this house and the work of this Parliament, your role will be vital to that. On days like today, when we see so many young people in the gallery and so many young people in Queen’s Hall and so many young people are watching online and will read the deliberations of the work of this house, it will be incumbent on all of us under your leadership to ensure that the debates and those deliberations do them proud and encourage them to seek public office in the years ahead. I hope also those deliberations and the work of this house can demonstrate to all of those, young and old – everybody watching – that the role of Parliament is not only to undertake its own work but to serve as one of the critical branches of government and that it can do the work it needs to do where accountability is required and where scrutiny is required as well. We know that democracies flourish and the people’s confidence in people who occupy public office is improved and enhanced when the work of Parliament can be allowed to take its course. I know under your leadership, with our full support and I think the support of this entire chamber, we will be able to do the people watching us

proud and show that Parliament can apply that role of scrutiny and can exact the accountability that the public needs and that working together all branches of government can come together and do the people's work proudly. I know on behalf of my colleagues that you are going to do a great job in that. You will have our full support in that, and I join with the Premier in offering our warmest congratulations. Well done.

The SPEAKER (11:37): Can I, with the indulgence of the house, make a few comments. Can I thank the Minister for Health and the member for Geelong for their nomination and the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition for their kind words.

First, congratulations to all the newly elected members and to those who have been returned to their electorates. Being a candidate for election is a huge commitment. Election campaigns are long and sometimes arduous. Being elected to represent your constituents for the next four years is a momentous achievement and one that I am sure all members will commit to fulfilling to the best of their abilities. I hope that by the end of this term you will leave this place with a sense of achievement, knowing that you have learned a great deal and have had at the forefront your electorates and the people you represent.

Thank you also to members for their support of my nomination and for electing me to be Speaker of this, the 60th Parliament. It is a great honour to be elected as a member of Parliament and just as great an honour and privilege to be elected as Speaker. When I was elected Speaker for the last few weeks of the 59th Parliament I mentioned that I was only the fourth woman to be Speaker in the long history of this place. In acknowledging that history I am also thrilled to be the first woman re-elected as Speaker.

For a girl who grew up in Maryborough in regional Victoria on a bush block, who walked several kilometres to school every day with holes in her shoes, a girl whose parents worked hard in factories of the town to support me and my four siblings, and where sport was the centre of my world, I never dreamed of being a member of Parliament, let alone Speaker. I hope I have made my family and my home town proud.

I want to also acknowledge that we have our first woman as Clerk of the Parliaments and our first woman as Usher of the Black Rod. Sally West will make history today as the first woman to knock on the door of this chamber this afternoon to escort us to the Legislative Council to hear the Governor's speech. Congratulations, Bridget and Sally. It is also heartening to see so many women elected to this Parliament. I would like to acknowledge the clerks and all the staff across the Parliament, who have been preparing for the opening of this 60th Parliament for many weeks. A lot of work goes on behind the scenes to enable today to be a success. Thank you so much.

To my four children, their partners, my two stepsons and soon to be nine grandchildren, you are my inspiration and the great loves of my life. Being Mum and Grandma brings the greatest joy and is something I treasure. Thank you to my husband Steve – your love and support mean so much – and to my extended family and friends. Thank you for always standing by me and being there when I need you.

I want to make a special mention of someone who has been a constant in my life. To my cousin Marg Lewis, a former member of the Legislative Council, thank you for everything you do to encourage me, to back me in and to help out when I need you. I am blessed to have wonderful people like you in my life.

Members know that our electorate office staff are vital to the work we do as members in our electorates. Their support and commitment to us and our constituencies are so very central to what we as members can achieve. To my electorate office staff – Martyn, Lynda, Pam and Sam – thank you so much for all that you do and for your ongoing support. I know I could not do what I do without you.

To the amazing communities across Bendigo West, I am truly humbled and honoured that I have been re-elected to represent you for another term. I am looking forward to representing you here again in this Parliament. As always, I am ready to listen, to work hard and to advocate for great outcomes.

Today marks the start of a new Parliament. This is a great opportunity to remind members of their responsibilities in this house and to encourage you all to focus on respectful engagement and debate. The smooth operation of this chamber is dependent on your cooperation, respect for the standing orders and respect for each other. I also encourage you to show respect for the Chair always and adhere to the rules of the house.

This is a workplace not just for members but for many staff. It is a good idea to get to know the staff who work across the precinct and to acknowledge and thank them for the work that they do. They are often called on to go above and beyond to ensure we can do our jobs effectively. I encourage you to always be mindful that what we do here in this workplace impacts on them, both the good and the bad. I am sure we all want this to be a workplace that is safe and enjoyable.

I am very conscious of the responsibility that comes with the role of Speaker and that integrity is so incredibly important. I am committed to upholding the expectations of the office. In saying that, I will always make time for members and my door will always be open. I look forward to catching up with you and getting to know our newest members outside of the chamber. I promise to serve with fairness and impartiality. Empathy goes a long way in this place, as does kindness. I hope to display both. Thank you so much.

The house will now proceed to the election of a Deputy Speaker.

Deputy Speaker

Election

Anthony CARBINES (Ivanhoe – Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Racing) (11:43): I propose the inaugural member for Ashwood, Matt Fregon, as Deputy Speaker. He served the previous Parliament as the member for Mount Waverley. He served on several committees, including the Standing Orders Committee and the House Committee, and of course he was Deputy Government Whip as the member for Mount Waverley.

I say the member for Ashwood is well acquainted with the forms, practices and procedures of the house. As you, Speaker, touched on respect, I would add that respect is something that is earned; it is not demanded. Respect is something that the member for Ashwood has in spades from members across the chamber, I would like to think, and we will put that to the test shortly. I am very pleased to say that I am sure he will serve as an impartial officer of the Parliament, and I move:

That the member for Ashwood be appointed Deputy Speaker of this house.

The SPEAKER: Who seconds this motion?

Sarah CONNOLLY (Laverton) (11:43): I second this motion.

The SPEAKER: Does the member for Ashwood accept the nomination?

Matt FREGON (Ashwood) (11:44): I am honoured to accept the nomination.

The Speaker declared the member for Ashwood duly elected as Deputy Speaker.

Daniel ANDREWS (Mulgrave – Premier) (11:45): I inform the house that the Governor will be pleased to receive the Speaker in the library, Parliament House, at 1:20 pm today. Members who wish to meet the Governor can assemble in the library corridor at 1:35 pm today.

The SPEAKER: The house is now suspended, and I will resume the chair at 2 pm.

Sitting suspended 11:45 am until 2:01 pm.

The SPEAKER resumed the chair, read the prayer and made an acknowledgement of country.

*Opening of Parliament***Presentation of Speaker to Governor**

The SPEAKER (14:01): I advise that today I presented myself to the Governor as the choice of this Assembly and that she was pleased to address me in the following terms:

I have pleasure in congratulating you on your election to the high and important office of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

The able manner in which you have discharged the duties you have undertaken during your parliamentary career is recognised by the members of the Legislative Assembly who in their wisdom have selected you as their Speaker.

I have confidence that you will fulfil the duties of this distinguished office and hold fast to its traditions and customs.

The SPEAKER: Signed by the Governor.

*Address to Parliament***Governor's speech**

The Usher of the Black Rod brought a message from the Governor desiring the attendance of members in the Legislative Council chamber.

Members, led by the Speaker, proceeded to the Legislative Council chamber.

Sitting suspended 2:07 pm until 4:02 pm.

*Opening of Parliament***Commission to administer oath or affirmation to members**

The SPEAKER (16:02): I have received a commission from the Governor to administer the oath or affirmation to members, given today.

*Members***Members***Swearing in*

The SPEAKER (16:02): As required by section 23 of the Constitution Act 1975 I ask the member for Eildon and the member for Werribee to come to the table to take the oath.

Members took and subscribed the oath or affirmation as required by law.

Ministry

Daniel ANDREWS (Mulgrave – Premier) (16:04): I wish to inform the house of responsibilities that will be undertaken by ministers in this Parliament. For the benefit of members I ask that the list of changes be made available. I would also like to make available to the house a list of representing arrangements for ministers in the other place.

Shadow ministry

John PESUTTO (Hawthorn – Leader of the Opposition) (16:04): I am pleased to inform the house of the responsibilities and portfolio allocations for the coalition in this house and in the other place, and I would seek to make those available to members of the house.

*Questions without notice***Energy policy**

John PESUTTO (Hawthorn – Leader of the Opposition) (16:05): My question is to the Minister for Energy and Resources. Two weeks ago national cabinet agreed to an energy price relief plan which included price caps on energy. Can the minister guarantee that energy prices will not rise further for Victorian households and businesses and that gas shortages will not occur as a result of this plan?

Lily D'AMBROSIO (Mill Park – Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Energy and Resources, Minister for the State Electricity Commission) (16:05): I thank the opposition leader for his question. One thing that I can absolutely say on behalf of this side of Parliament, this government, is that every one of our policies is about reducing the pressure on families and businesses when it comes to energy prices – every single action. That is why we led the charge for the commonwealth government – in fact going, before this commonwealth government, to the friends of those opposite in previous governments – to actually institute a national domestic reserve policy that would ensure that we have a more than sufficient supply of gas to meet our domestic needs at a fair price. Those two things go together. We are not about playing the games that those opposite are playing because their friends in Canberra are still playing the same games. They learned nothing from the election in March. These people have learned nothing from the election in November. Unlike those who wanted to have a gas-led campaign, we know that the more we feed people gas, the higher the prices will be.

John Pesutto: On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, I do not wish to interrupt the minister unnecessarily, but we are just seeking a guarantee that energy prices will not rise. We ask her to address the question – on relevance.

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

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Thank you, Speaker. One thing is for sure: we actually had a referendum on electricity last month – bringing back the SEC and growing our renewable energy, because we know that more renewable energy means lower prices for every Victorian, unlike some who want to have higher bills through more gas and some on the other side who actually want to have nuclear power, which is the most expensive form of new energy. That is what you will deliver. On this side of the house the facts are absolutely there for everyone to see. The referendum was held and the verdict is out: people want a return of the SEC and public ownership of 100 per cent renewable energy, putting downward pressure on bills and of course creating jobs – power for people, not for profits – cutting our emissions and growing 59,000 jobs. This is all about reducing prices, growing jobs and reducing our emissions. We will absolutely deliver a significant and ambitious agenda – 95 per cent renewable electricity by 2035 and 59,000 jobs, including 6000 apprenticeships and traineeships. Unlike those who voted against our renewable energy targets and voted against our emissions reduction targets, we will absolutely continue to drive down those prices, create the jobs and own energy for the people of Victoria, not sell it off to the big profit producers of gas and the multinationals like they did with privatisation.

Government performance

Jordan CRUGNALE (Bass) (16:09): My question is for the Premier. Can our Premier please outline how the government is continuing to do what matters for Victorians and what the government will deliver for our Victorian community, which so resoundingly endorsed the government's positive and optimistic plan for our state?

Daniel ANDREWS (Mulgrave – Premier) (16:09): I am delighted to receive an outstanding question from the member for Bass and to congratulate her on her return to this place. That is not by accident; she is an outstanding local member who works very hard. She is very passionate about her community, and it is very pleasing to see her back here again to continue that hard work for her beautiful part of our state.

I am asked about what the government will do in terms of getting on and delivering. Only a few weeks ago, in fact 24 days ago, the Victorian community resoundingly endorsed our government and the positive and optimistic plan that we put forward to deliver things like free kinder so that every three- and four-year-old will be able to get that precious start in life – the skills, the socialisation and the play-based learning that change lives and deliver opportunity for those smallest Victorians throughout their lives. It gives them a start – a head start – on the skills that they will need in 15 or 20 years time when they join the workforce.

Speaking about skills and the workforce, we remember a time when our vocational education and training system was absolutely smashed. We will not lower the tone by talking about those who did the smashing, but it was decimated –

Members interjecting.

Daniel ANDREWS: And they learned nothing from that episode: courses cancelled, teachers sacked, padlocks on gates, campuses closed – absolutely shameful.

Jobs start with skills, and if you gut TAFE, then you compromise the future of workers. So we will add to the free TAFE course list. We will build new TAFEs. We will make sure that every single Victorian worker can get the skills they need for the job they want. It is such a contrast: eight years ago campuses closed, with all that absolute carnage across our TAFE sector; today classrooms are full, and they are full of people who are paying nothing to get those skills.

In terms of hospitals we will invest as no other government has ever invested in projects large and small right across our state. We will recruit the additional staff as well, because it is one thing to have new hospitals, but you have got to have staff to provide the care, and do everything from making nursing degrees free all the way through to recruiting additional staff in every part of our health system, in every way, to make sure that more patients can get the care that they need as close to home as possible.

Beyond that, as my honourable friend the minister for energy and Minister for the State Electricity Commission has just indicated, we are not selling off our assets; we are instead bringing back the State Electricity Commission so that electricity in this state can be 100 per cent renewable, and what is more, it can be owned by Victorians for Victorians. Any profits that are made from our majority stake in that – the ownership that belongs to all Victorians – will be reinvested in more supply, because while it may be news to some who are warriors for the free market when it suits them, there is a pretty simple principle: things that are abundant always cost less than things that are scarce. These big greedy energy companies have told us they are leaving. We are going to replace them with something better and create jobs along the way, embed skills and put downward pressure on household bills because privatisation of our electricity has simply failed. It has simply failed. They have said they are leaving, and we wish them all the very best because we have got something much better. I could go on. There are many other elements to our positive plan. We are absolutely –

Members interjecting.

Daniel ANDREWS: No. Interjections are disorderly, Speaker, I am sure you will inform me of that. I could of course go on, but I will not be distracted by the interjections from those opposite. The important thing here is this: over the last eight years we have demonstrated to every single Victorian that we live our values. We are the most progressive government in the most progressive state in our nation, and what is more, we get on and we get things done. And that is exactly what we will do over these next four years: delivering each and every element of our positive and optimistic plan. We thank the Victorian community for their vote of confidence, we thank the Victorian community for that sense of unity and purpose, and we will not waste a day.

Economic policy

Brad ROWSWELL (Sandringham) (16:14): Speaker, I congratulate you on your re-election as Speaker as well.

My question is to the Treasurer. The government's pre-election budget update has confirmed that budgeted spending exceeds budgeted income by \$10.2 billion. That is more than \$1500 owing for every Victorian man, woman and child. How are families expected to live within their means, especially at this time of year, when this government continues to overspend and to waste?

Tim PALLAS (Werribee – Treasurer, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Trade and Investment) (16:15): I thank the member for Sandringham for his question, and I congratulate him on his elevation to the shadow treasury portfolio. Also, I was a little bit disappointed with the question because I was anticipating that I would have got the question from the head of the economics brains trust from the opposition, the member for Caulfield, but I have been relegated to the B team apparently.

Let us be very clear: as a government we made some clear and sustained choices. During the course of an insidious pandemic that put the wellbeing of the Victorian community at risk we chose to rate their wellbeing above the short-term challenges of our balance sheet. We did that for all the right reasons. We put \$44 billion into growing the Victorian economy. We put \$13 billion into assisting Victorian businesses to stay whole and to be able to look after and connect with their customers and to keep a connection with their workforce. That is what a government that cares about the wellbeing of the Victorian people and Victorian business does. We have a strategy to deal with the challenges that we confront – we unveiled it in the November 2020 budget. It is our four-step fiscal strategy, and it is demonstrating its worth. We were the only jurisdiction in the nation to put in place a fiscal strategy to demonstrate how we would repair our budgetary position and how we would be able to demonstrate to the Victorian people step by step how that repair works.

The first step was that we would create jobs and that we would grow the economy. Well, we now have 382,000 more jobs in the Victorian economy as a consequence of this government's effort since the lowest point in the economic cycle in September 2020. That is exactly what this government did – we rated the wellbeing and the employment opportunities of Victorians, getting them back to work and using our balance sheet to assist them in being able to do it. On top of that, we said we would grow the economy. The Victorian economy is now travelling 50 per cent faster than the national average, and that is due to the very strategic investments that we made to grow the economy. The second step in our fiscal strategy was that we would deliver an operating cash surplus, and in this financial year we will deliver an operating cash surplus. We also indicated that the third step was that we would deliver an operating surplus. It is a little bit more complex, a little bit more difficult, to deliver an operating surplus compared to an operating cash surplus because we have to provide for the depreciation of the state assets, but we are still on course to be able to deliver that operating surplus by 2025–26.

Finally, we indicated that our final step in this strategy, once we brought the budget back into surplus, was that we would begin to manage and bring down our debt profile, and we have already made a very substantial contribution to that. A \$10 billion Future Fund by the end of the forward estimates will ensure that we have the right capacity to intervene and to make appropriate decisions about debt management until of course we are in a much stronger position for the purposes of drawing down on that position – unlike those opposite, who had a strategy which was all about focusing on their welfare and their own short-term political objectives. Let us not forget that on the Thursday evening, presumably after a long lunch, there was a purported attempt to cost –

Brad Rowswell: On a point of order, Speaker, reflecting upon members in the other place is unparliamentary. I would ask you to provide some guidance to the Treasurer about that comment he just made.

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

Tim PALLAS: Let us just remember that those opposite did not tell the Victorian people until the Thursday before an election that they had a plan. The plan was effectively that they were going to clean out the Future Fund. It was a little bit of creative accounting, I have got to say, to effectively flip a realised value on an asset and put it onto the output side of the ledger, but we will not worry about that. I am sure Treasury will be able to provide an accounting for dummies course for you at some point.

The second thing that they did not tell the Victorian people until the Thursday before an election was that they had a \$6 billion savings strategy and that they had not confided in them exactly what the plan was. And remember there was a proposal to privatise – to sell off essential services of the state. All of that those opposite failed to share with the Victorian people. No wonder they did not share it with the Victorian people, because it demonstrated that the party that is supposed to be fiscally responsible did not have a clue. And let us not forget of course some \$28 billion worth of expenditure in their election commitments compared to a much more modest \$11 billion offering both on the capital and combined output side from this side of government. So we know – and I think the Victorian people said it loud and clear – who is the best government to manage the finances of the state and who has a better appreciation of the fundamental principles of accounting.

We start by not confusing family budgets with a state budget. If we did, then of course we would have done the sort of ridiculous strategies that those opposite advocate. We would have prioritised our budget because it was our family budget and not made provision for the wellbeing of the Victorian people. That is a sign of a misallocation and misprioritisation from those opposite. We will continue as a government to make investments in the wellbeing of the Victorian people, to grow the Victorian economy and of course to bring the budget back into surplus. But we will not do it precipitously in a way that would undermine that revitalisation of the Victorian economy. There is a reason why the Victorian economy is the strongest performing economy in the nation, and that is because this government has invested in the wellbeing of the Victorian people. We have shown faith in them, and they have returned that in spades.

Emma Kealy: On a point of order, Speaker, in relation to standing order 58, the content of answers must be succinct, and given we are now into our eighth minute, I think that perhaps the Treasurer could wrap up his answer. Could you please bring the Treasurer back to finalising his response?

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! I appreciate the member for Lowan's knowledge of the standing orders. The Treasurer was being relevant to the question. Has the Treasurer concluded his answer?

Tim PALLAS: Thank you.

State Electricity Commission

Kat THEOPHANOUS (Northcote) (16:23): My question is for the Minister for the State Electricity Commission. Minister, when Victoria's energy systems were sold off to private multinationals, bills went up and many Victorian workers were sacked. Could the minister please indicate what kind of benefits Victorians, including constituents in my electorate of Northcote, can expect to see from the government bringing back the SEC?

Lily D'AMBROSIO (Mill Park – Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Energy and Resources, Minister for the State Electricity Commission) (16:23): I thank the member for Northcote for her question. And just like the SEC, isn't it great to see the member for Northcote back? Isn't it great? It is fantastic – just like the SEC. And it is coming back for a very, very good reason. One hundred per cent renewable electricity will be produced by the SEC – 100 per cent publicly owned renewable energy for Victorians, not for profits. I know that the member for Northcote would agree –

Members interjecting.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Maybe if you listen, you can learn something. I mean, it has only been eight years. Perhaps if you did listen, you might actually learn a few lessons from your failed privatisation agenda that Victorians absolutely rejected last month. Do you know why? Because when our assets were sold off, the only ones who benefited were those corporations that have now reaped \$23 billion. Bills skyrocketed, tens of thousands of people lost their jobs and record numbers of people were disconnected from their power systems. No longer are we going to be tolerating that with the SEC.

Let me tell you about what the SEC will do. It will deliver 4500 megawatts of new-build renewable energy, the equivalent of replacing Loy Yang A. It will drive us towards meeting our 95 per cent renewable energy target by 2035, of course including our nation-leading offshore wind energy target, driving the creation of 59,000 jobs, including 6000 apprenticeships and traineeships for Victorians. It will help drive down energy bills and reduce our emissions by between 75 and 80 per cent by 2035. We will establish the SEC Centre of Training Excellence to coordinate and accredit courses in clean energy. We are working with TAFEs, industry and unions and adding clean energy to our VCE vocational major, meaning kids in Northcote can be part of our renewable energy future while still in secondary school.

This recent election was a referendum on energy privatisation. We all know how that ended. They rejected energy privatisation. Victorians rejected the disastrous policies of those opposite, who still say that privatisation was 'good for consumers' and 'Victoria did very well out of it'. I do not think there are many people in Victoria who would actually agree with this today – \$23 billion of profits out, overseas and away from Victorians. Prices skyrocketed, thousands of people lost their jobs and record numbers of Victorians were being disconnected.

We will have an initial \$1 billion of investment in the SEC, ensuring that all profits are directed back to creating more renewable energy projects and more jobs for our people. And we will protect the SEC for our kids well into the future by enshrining it in the Victorian constitution next year, because if we know anything about the Liberals it is that they will do anything to privatise our essential assets, including of course energy and water. That is what their plan was – to privatise water. We do not lead an energy policy that is about driving bills up for consumers. The SEC will be back. It will be better than ever. It will be bigger than ever. It will be about clean energy, creating thousands of jobs – 59,000 jobs – and our young people, who are our absolute future here, will actually be in the driver's seat, getting those benefits of the skills, the training and the good jobs, knowing all the while that it is a Labor government that has delivered a sure future for them with good paid jobs, publicly owned renewable electricity, reduced emissions and reduced bills – all of that only from a Labor government.

The SPEAKER: The member for –

Youth strategy

Brad BATTIN (Berwick) (16:28): Berwick – I have moved up the alphabet. First of all, congratulations on your elevation to the role of Speaker.

My question is to the Minister for Youth. Minister, repeated expert reports have concluded that locking up and isolating young people in youth detention centres has a long-term impact on mental health and increases the likelihood of young people spiralling into a life of crime. To implement the government's *Our Promise, Your Future: Victoria's Youth Strategy*, in particular to expand for young people in and at risk of entering the youth justice system, what advice has the minister received as to the effect on young people of being forced into lockdown and isolation because of inadequate staffing numbers?

Natalie SULEYMAN (St Albans – Minister for Veterans, Minister for Small Business, Minister for Youth) (16:29): Thank you very much for my first question. I would like to begin by congratulating you, Speaker, on your reappointment to the Speaker's role, and I congratulate everybody in this place for their election.

Let me say this is a space I am very passionate about. Just this August we did implement the youth plan, the *Your Future* strategy. This is a five-year strategy that looks into implementing government policy when it comes to the health and wellbeing of young people and jobs. Most importantly, this is a plan that has been endorsed by over 2000 young people across Victoria in metro Melbourne and of course in regional Victoria as well, having a say on what they would like to see as part of their future. Just recently I had the opportunity to meet with the youth congress members – last week – and had the opportunity to talk to them firsthand about their experiences, their leadership and, most importantly, what they would like to see in the new year.

I also had the opportunity to visit YACVic, the youth affairs council, in Bendigo –

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, the –

Members interjecting.

James Newbury: Sure, sure, sure. Look, the minister has had a couple of moments to commence her answer. The report specifically goes to the issue of youth detention, and the question asked specifically about that matter. I call on the minister to return to that question.

Mary-Anne Thomas: Speaker, on the point of order, the minister is being entirely relevant to the question. She was asked about the youth strategy, and she is detailing to the house elements of the youth strategy. I ask that you allow her to continue to answer that question.

The SPEAKER: Order! I was listening closely to the minister's response. She had only just started. She was outlining the youth strategy. I ask her to come back to answering the question.

Natalie SULEYMAN: Thank you, Speaker. As I was saying, I had the opportunity to travel to Bendigo and meet with the youth affairs council and speak to them. They were a broad range of young people from across the region, all the way from Warrnambool and Mildura. We spoke about the youth strategy and the initiatives and programs that the Andrews Labor government will implement in the new year. I am looking forward to meeting with key stakeholders and working with young people to make sure that their voices are heard through the youth plan, and absolutely our commitment will be to deliver the youth plan in the new year.

Healthcare workers

Steve McGHIE (Melton) (16:32): My question is for the Minister for Health. Can the minister please indicate how the government is supporting our incredible health workers to deliver the best care close to home for sick Victorians?

Mary-Anne THOMAS (Macedon – Leader of the House, Minister for Health, Minister for Health Infrastructure, Minister for Medical Research) (16:33): Can I thank the member for Melton for his question and can I congratulate him for the way in which he continues to serve the community of Melton, who endorsed his representation at the most recent election. Indeed it has been my pleasure to be able to work closely with the member for Melton, as our electorates abut one another. I spent a great afternoon with the member for Melton talking about the Melton hospital – the hospital that our government is going to build in the Melton shopping centre, and let me tell you –

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for Melton, I want to hear the minister's response.

Mary-Anne THOMAS: Let me tell you that the people of Melton trust one side of politics, and one side only, to deliver the healthcare infrastructure that our community needs. Of course the member for Melton, as is well known, is a former paramedic himself, so he knows better than anyone else here in this place the dedication and skill of our fantastic healthcare workforce. He also knows that our healthcare workers deserve to be respected. They know that only one side of politics will ever treat them with the respect that they deserve, and that is our side of the house, the Labor government, who our

healthcare workers have backed in to work with them again as we continue to build and grow our health system here in Victoria. Of course it is our workers who are the backbone of the health system, and it is our government who has backed in healthcare workers at every opportunity, unlike some others.

Jacinta Allan: Do tell!

Mary-Anne THOMAS: Unlike some others – those on the other side of the house. Let me tell you this: every time that those on the other side of the house criticised and attacked the health system, they were attacking healthcare workers, and healthcare workers knew it.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will come to order. I want to hear the Minister for Health's response.

Mary-Anne THOMAS: Thank you, Speaker, thank you. I am enormously proud that our government is making it free to study nursing and midwifery. Our package will see an additional 17,000 nurses and other healthcare workers recruited and trained into our system. We are delivering of course a \$5000 sign-on bonus for graduate nurses and midwives who come to join us and choose to work in the public hospital system. We are improving nurse- and midwife-to-patient ratios in the busiest areas of our hospitals, including in emergency departments, in ICUs and in postnatal wards. We are expanding our dedicated aged care nursing in-reach teams so that more aged care residents can get the health care that they need without needing to attend an ED.

We know that after nine years of neglect by the previous federal Liberal government our primary healthcare system is under real pressure because we saw a failure to invest in Medicare, a failure to understand that we had a GP crisis on our hands. What our government has done is step into the primary health space in order to do all that we can to ensure that Victorians have access to the health care that we need. We are working to build our GP workforce with a \$32 million package, a plan to incentivise doctors to take up general practice as their specialty, and of course, in partnership with the New South Wales government – the New South Wales Liberal government – we are delivering 50 priority primary care centres, because when we see a system that is broken, we step in to fix it.

What is more, the people of our state have endorsed the Andrews Labor government and our plan of action. I know that the member for Melton will also be extremely pleased to know that our government will be investing in our hardworking paramedics, training and employing more MICA paramedics and introducing paramedic practitioner roles.

I think it is pretty clear that when it comes to supporting healthcare workers, when it comes to growing our healthcare workforce and when it comes to providing pathways and opportunities for healthcare workers in order to be able to deliver the very best care to all Victorians, there is only one side of politics that can be trusted to deliver that, and that is this side of politics. It is the Andrews Labor government that will keep working hard and delivering every day for the people of Victoria.

Age of criminal responsibility

Ellen SANDELL (Melbourne) (16:38): My question is to the Premier. Premier, right now our laws in Victoria allow kids as young as 10 to be arrested, tried in court, held on remand and even jailed. It is a policy that disproportionately affects our First Nations Victorians, with devastating results. First Nations leaders and communities, the UN and medical and legal experts are all calling on the Victorian government to raise the age of criminal responsibility to at least 14 with no exceptions. The ACT has already committed to it, so there is no longer any reason why Victoria cannot act now; we do not need to wait any longer for a national approach. My question is: will the Victorian government commit to doing this in this term of Parliament?

Daniel ANDREWS (Mulgrave – Premier) (16:39): I thank the member for Melbourne for her question. The issue at hand here is every best effort is being made to try and have a nationally

consistent approach. There is nothing wrong with that; that, after all, is how you get laws that operate with a degree of consistency in every part of our country. That is something that is worth pursuing. Without wanting to be overly partisan, it is our judgement that there is a greater likelihood that we can achieve that nationally consistent approach under Attorney-General Dreyfus as part of the Albanese government than was the case under the government that they took over from. However, that it is not an unlimited thing; that is not something that we will pursue forever. We will give that a reasonable chance, a fair chance. If, however, we cannot deliver – that is, as a nation – a nationally consistent set of laws, then the government reserves its right to make further announcements. Today is not the day to do that.

Today, however, is an opportunity for me to point out to the member for Melbourne and to all honourable members and, beyond this place, to all Victorians that we take the welfare of our children very seriously. That is why the government has invested some \$2.8 billion in family services and children services. That is why we have an 86 per cent case allocation rate in child protection, up from 81 per cent when we came to office. That is why we have built new, much safer, much more fit for purpose correctional facilities for offenders across the board. It is why we are also pleased to say that my last report, late last week, was that we had less than 100 young people in the youth justice system – 98 I think was the number last Thursday, which is still too high. None of them are 10 years old – none. I am happy to try and get a further breakdown, but I do not believe any of them were 11 or 12 or 13 years old either. That is not to say that the only debates that are important are ones where you can point to an actual example. We do make policy in this place, we make laws in this place and we try and set things up for the future. So I am not being critical of the question, but it is important to get on record that no young person, as described in the question, is currently in our youth justice system.

We will continue to pursue a nationally consistent approach, but the government always reserves its right – not just our right but our responsibility – to make sure that this is the most progressive state in the nation and that we have laws that reflect the values and that sense of hope and the absolute aspiration of our Victorian community to lead our nation. Today is not the day to make those announcements, but if and when a nationally consistent approach proves beyond us – ‘us’ as in governments across the nation – well, then the government reserves its right to act. Today is not the day for that.

It is also I think very important to acknowledge, just in closing, those people who work in our youth justice system, those people who work in our courts, those people who work in our youth system, if you like, those who are about saving lives and changing lives, those who are about making sure that every young person can reach their full potential – and you only do that with passion, high levels of skill and strong and consistent investment from a Labor government.

The SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Cranbourne, can I acknowledge in the gallery former Speaker Judy Maddigan, former ministers the Honourable Joe Helper and the Honourable Philip Dalidakis and federal minister Catherine King.

Education system

Pauline RICHARDS (Cranbourne) (16:43): My question is for the Minister for Education. Minister, every Victorian, including those in my electorate of Cranbourne, deserves the opportunity to have a great local school and to get the skills they need for the job they want. What is the minister’s plan for ensuring every Victorian can get a great education?

Natalie HUTCHINS (Sydenham – Minister for Education, Minister for Women) (16:44): Speaker, congratulations to you on your appointment.

Can I thank the member for her question. Certainly her enthusiasm for schools in her local electorate is one that shines through. She knows that the Andrews Labor government is building on the Education State and that every student should and does get access to great local schools and education. We are committed to delivering on the \$1.6 billion that we have committed to schools and kinder during this term. It will see significant upgrades to so many schools. In particular I just want to call out Cranbourne

Park Primary School, Cranbourne East secondary school, Cranbourne Secondary College and Rangebank Primary School in the member's electorate. She, I know, is very excited, and these projects I know will mean a lot to students and teachers in her electorate.

I am so proud of our commitment to build and upgrade schools in every corner of our state. It is a \$12.8 billion commitment that we have made in building new schools and delivering 1850 upgrades since we came to government. We promised to build 100 new schools by 2026, and we are getting on with delivering that. We are well ahead of schedule. We have delivered and fully funded the 75 on the plans, 48 have already opened and 27 new schools are on track to open across the next two years.

At the recent election we also committed to complete that plan by getting to work on six new primary schools and two new secondary schools for Melbourne's south-east; three new primary schools, a prep to year 9 school, a secondary school and a specialist school for the west; five primary schools, a secondary school and a specialist school for the north; a new primary school for Fishermans Bend; two new primary schools near Geelong; and a new primary school at Leneva. We will also open six new cutting-edge tech schools – this is such exciting work – bringing tech school coverage to almost two-thirds of Victoria's state school students.

We will deliver a \$207 million package that will transform our specialist schools and with them the lives of students, their carers and their families. A re-elected Labor Andrews government will extend outside hours care to every single specialist school in our state, giving kids the extra learning and social connection that they need and parents the respite that they deserve. We will introduce NDIS navigators to 89 specialist schools, and we will invest \$8.2 million to support TAFEs to employ 16 transitional officers. This is game-changing stuff.

Our ongoing commitment extends past secondary schools out into our TAFE system, with free TAFE so all Victorians can study for jobs in growth sectors like health care, mental health, construction, hospitality and early childhood. And last week Victoria celebrated 150 years since the passing of the Education Act in this place – the first of its kind not only in Australia but in the world. This government is committed to continuing that legacy by making Victoria the Education State and doing what matters.

Floods

Peter WALSH (Murray Plains) (16:48): My question is to the Premier. In October Rochester was hit with a flood that was significantly worse than the 2011 flood. More than 90 per cent of the housing in and around the town was flood damaged. The community has been traumatised by two extreme floods in 11 years and needs confidence that the government is doing all that it can to mitigate future extreme flooding events. The Eildon and Hume dams are gated reservoirs with a capacity to prerelease water to mitigate against extreme flooding. However, Lake Eppalock near Rochester is a fixed-crest weir with no capacity to prerelease sufficient water to protect Rochester from extreme flooding. On behalf of the Rochester community, will the government provide funding for a feasibility study for the reconfiguration of the Eppalock dam wall to allow for the effective prerelease of water to protect the town against future extreme flooding events?

Daniel ANDREWS (Mulgrave – Premier) (16:49): I thank the Leader of the Nationals for his question, and he is right to say that Rochester has had an incredibly difficult time and is still going through a really significant event. To each and every family and business in the Rochester community, and to the smaller communities who look to Rochester as their hub, if you like, I give our commitment as the government and all of our agencies to stand with each and every one of those affected businesses and households to rebuild and to work with our partners – our very positive partners in Canberra – to make sure that under those Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements and other budget allocations that we may make between now and the budget in May next year we will do everything we possibly can to support those businesses, those families, that community – not just to repair, but to thrive. That might seem a long way off for many families in that local community. I have visited it a number of times; I will be back there again soon, I hope.

I also want to thank the Leader of the Nationals for the constructive way in which he has engaged with our government and with staff from my office. We were having a discussion about it earlier today. These things are well above politics. This community does not need that sort of stuff. What this community and so many other flood-affected communities need is that absolute determination to do whatever we can to repair, to rebuild and then to learn from this very, very significant event.

Now, what I would say to the honourable member and to the Rochester community is I am not a hydrologist and I am not an engineer, but we do have many people across our public sector who have already begun the process of looking at this particular flood event to look at what might be able to be done in the future to mitigate and to make it less likely that with that sort of record rainfall we would have a similar inundation of so many homes and so many businesses, essentially the entire town. That is a more complex piece of work than I think we can do justice to today.

I am always happy to sit down with the Leader of the National Party, the local member, to talk about these issues. I am always happy to do that. I am always happy to be there on the ground as well, listening to that local community. What I would say is this: let us be really clear, if we are going to protect Rochester, if we are going to rebuild Rochester and if we are going to truly support those businesses, those families and that community, then their voices have to be heard in whatever mitigation work is done. Whatever work is done as a result of this flood event needs to be driven by that community, and my commitment is to deliver exactly that. If the member wants to continue this discussion, I am more than happy to do that. It is not about politics, it is about making sure that we get on and support that community at what is undoubtedly a very, very challenging time.

Victoria's Big Build

Paul HAMER (Box Hill) (16:52): My question is for the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Melbourne is rapidly growing, and in my electorate of Box Hill constituents want the government to invest in transport projects that will serve them into the future. Can the minister please outline the government's plans for continuing the Big Build?

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop, Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery) (16:52): I thank the member for Box Hill for his question. I am most certainly delighted to outline to the house how only the Andrews Labor government is going to continue the work that we have done for each of the past eight years and continue the strongest construction pipeline that we have in the country. Continuing the Big Build, as we saw, was resoundingly endorsed by the Victorian community at the recent state election. I would particularly like to acknowledge the good local work of the good local member for Box Hill, as his community is front and centre of our program of works. We are getting rid of every level crossing in the area of Box Hill, including the two dangerous and deadly ones at Surrey Hills and at Mont Albert. We are building the North East Link that will slash travel time for every Box Hill resident heading north, and of course Box Hill is getting a new Suburban Rail Loop train station.

We know that there were others who took an alternative proposition to the community of Box Hill. They proudly touted around to the community of Box Hill that they would scrap the Suburban Rail Loop and oppose every single one of our level crossing removals. Well, welcome back, member for Box Hill. And of course Box Hill was not the only community where the Suburban Rail Loop was strongly backed in. The member for Ashwood, the member for Oakleigh, the member for Clarinda and our new member for Glen Waverley all backed in the Suburban Rail Loop.

And it was not just in the east, it was right across the state. In the west we promised to remove every single level crossing in the seat of Melton, and welcome back to the member for Melton. We promised to remove every level crossing on the Werribee line. Welcome back to the member for Werribee, and a new welcome to the member for Point Cook and other colleagues along that corridor. I have mentioned the east, but I do want to go back there because the member for Ringwood would want me to talk about how we are removing every level crossing in Ringwood; welcome back to the member for Ringwood. We promised a new train station in Boronia; welcome back to the member for

Bayswater. We are also removing every level crossing in the Pakenham community and extending the train line to Pakenham East; welcome aboard to our fabulous new member for Pakenham.

But it is not just the suburbs of Melbourne, it is right across regional Victoria as well. We are removing two level crossings in Geelong and duplicating Barwon Heads Road, and I know our great members for South Barwon and for Geelong and of course – we have got so many I have lost you all – our new member for Bellarine and our new member for Lara are all backing in strongly the work we are doing on the Big Build and the Ballarat line. I know the federal member for Ballarat is a very big supporter of the extra train services on our Ballarat line, but not only did we add services to Ballarat, we have added them to Ararat and Ripon as well – and welcome to the new member for Ripon.

I just want to finish on this point. A few months ago this was what was said in this place by the member for Caulfield: that the coming state election would be a referendum – do you want a rail line from Cheltenham to Box Hill? Guess what, I reckon the answer was yes. Of course the Victorian community want us to continue not just the Suburban Rail Loop, not just removing level crossings, not just every road and rail upgrade that we are doing across city and country; they want us to continue to do this work because it means jobs, it supports families, it supports a fairer community and it is about continuing to support this great state, in every corner of this state, with a strong and important transport infrastructure pipeline.

Announcements

Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission

The SPEAKER (16:56): I advise the house that on 8 December 2022 I administered to Stephen John Farrow, the acting commissioner of the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission, the affirmation required by section 31 of the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Act 2011.

Clerk of the Parliaments

The SPEAKER (16:56): Under section 8 of the Parliamentary Administration Act 2005, on the recommendation of the President of the Legislative Council and me, the Governor in Council has appointed Bridget Noonan to the office of Clerk of the Parliaments effective from 31 October 2022 as a consequence of the resignation of Andrew Young.

Bills

Racing Amendment (Unauthorised Access) Bill 2022

Introduction and first reading

Anthony CARBINES (Ivanhoe – Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Racing) (16:57): I move:

That I introduce a bill for an act to amend the Racing Act 1958 to prohibit unauthorised access to certain areas of racecourses during race meetings and official trial meetings and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

Tim BULL (Gippsland East) (16:58): I ask the minister for a brief explanation of the purpose of the bill.

Anthony CARBINES (Ivanhoe – Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Racing) (16:58): The bill amends the Racing Act 1958 to provide for offences and penalties for unauthorised access to certain parts of a racecourse and disruptive conduct at Victorian race meetings and official trial meetings. Also the main purpose of the bill is to ensure the safety and welfare of all patrons and participants, including animals, at all race and official meetings and trial meetings across the state.

Read first time.

Anthony CARBINES (Ivanhoe – Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Racing) (16:58): Under standing order 61(3)(b) I advise the house that the other parties have been provided with a copy of the bill and a briefing in accordance with the standing order. I therefore move:

That this bill be read a second time immediately.

Ellen Sandell: On a point of order, I just note that we have not been provided with a briefing but we are happy for the bill to be second read.

The SPEAKER: I will note that.

Motion agreed to.*Statement of compatibility*

Anthony CARBINES (Ivanhoe – Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Racing) (17:00): In accordance with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006, I table a statement of compatibility in relation to the Racing Amendment (Unauthorised Access) Bill 2022.

In accordance with section 28 of the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (the **Charter**), I make this statement of compatibility with respect to the Racing Amendment (Unauthorised Access) Bill 2022 (the **Bill**).

In my opinion, the Bill, as introduced to the Legislative Assembly, is compatible with the human rights protected by the Charter. I base my opinion on the reasons outlined in this statement.

Overview of the Bill

The Bill amends the *Racing Act 1958* (the **Act**) to:

- prohibit unauthorised access to certain areas of race courses during race meetings and official trial meetings;
- to prohibit certain conduct during race meetings and official trial meetings; and
- to provide enforcement of these provisions.

The purpose of these amendments is to promote the safety and welfare of all patrons and participants, including animals, at race meetings and official trial meetings and to avoid the potential consequences of incursions and disruptive conduct. The consequences of disruptive behaviour or incursions onto a race-track (or a restricted racing area) can be significant, including serious injury or death to humans and animals. Notably, the *Major Events Act 2009* currently contains crowd management provisions; however, these only apply to eight major feature thoroughbred race meetings. The Bill seeks to include in the Act equivalent arrangements to specified crowd management provisions contained in the *Major Events Act 2009* so that equivalent conduct is prohibited at all race-meetings and official trial meetings (as defined in the Act and the Bill).

Human Rights Issues

This statement of compatibility commences with an outline of the human rights that are relevant to this Bill. It then discusses how relevant provisions of the Bill engage those rights.

Protection from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment (s 10)

Sections 10(a)-(b) of the Charter provide that a person must not be subjected to torture or treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way. The right is concerned with the physical and mental integrity of individuals, and their inherent dignity as human beings.

Cruel or inhuman treatment or punishment includes acts which do not constitute torture, but which nevertheless possess a minimum level of severity. Degrading treatment or punishment involves acts of a less severe nature again but which inflict a level of humiliation or debasement of the victim. Whether conduct meets the necessary threshold will depend upon all the circumstances, including the duration and manner of the treatment, its physical or mental effects on the affected person, and that person's age, sex and state of health.

Right to freedom of movement (s 12)

Section 12 of the Charter provides that every person lawfully within Victoria has the right to move freely within Victoria, to enter and leave Victoria, and to choose where to live in Victoria. The right extends, generally, to movement without impediment throughout the State, including a right of access to public places

and premises, subject to (amongst other things) the private and property rights of others. It is one of the most qualified of rights.

Privacy (s 13)

Section 13 of the Charter provides that a person has the right not to have his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence unlawfully or arbitrarily interfered with. It is wide in scope, and includes protecting a person's interests in the freedom of their personal, spatial and social sphere, including their right to identity, social relations, dignity and employment. Section 13(a) contains internal qualifications – namely, an interference with privacy will only limit the right if it is unlawful, in that an applicable law is infringed; or it is arbitrary, in that it is capricious, or has resulted from conduct which is unpredictable, unjust or unreasonable in the sense of not being proportionate to the legitimate aim sought.

Freedom of expression (s 15)

Section 15(2) of the Charter provides that every person has the right to freedom of expression, which includes the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds. However, section 15(3) provides that special duties and responsibilities attach to this right, which may be subject to lawful restrictions reasonably necessary to respect the rights and reputations of others, or for the protection of national security, public order, public health or public morality.

Right to peaceful assembly and freedom of association (s 16)

Section 16(1) of the Charter provides that every person has the right of peaceful assembly. The right of peaceful assembly encompasses the right to privately and publicly gather or associate with others to attain a particular end and the right to organise and to participate in public demonstrations and marches. The right only extends to protect peaceful gatherings, and violent assemblies, such as riots and affrays, are not protected.

Right to be presumed innocent (s 25(1))

Section 25(1) of the Charter provides that a person charged with a criminal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law. The right is relevant where a statutory provision shifts the burden of proof onto an accused in a criminal proceeding, so that the accused is required to prove matters to establish, or raise evidence to suggest, that they are not guilty of an offence.

Offence to enter or remain in a restricted racing area during a race-meeting or an official trial meeting

Under new Division 4A, section 32A makes it an offence for a person, without reasonable excuse, to enter or remain in a restricted racing area during a race-meeting or an official trial meeting unless the person is authorised or acting in accordance with an engagement in the management or conduct of the meeting.

Freedom of movement

While prohibiting persons from entering certain areas may interfere with their freedom of movement, it is doubtful as to whether the right would extend to protect unfettered access to a racing area on a premises, where an occupier is otherwise able to exercise their property right to exclude entry.

In the event that the provision is considered to limit freedom of movement, in my view, any interference is justified. Significantly, the limits serve the important purpose of promoting safety and order at race events and are aimed at protecting public order and, in turn, the rights and freedoms of others. The extent of the interference will be limited as the restrictions on movement are confined as they only affect specified 'restricted racing areas'. The provision includes a 'reasonable excuse' defence for non-compliance, which safeguards against any further interference with the right. I am therefore satisfied that the provision is compatible with this right.

Peaceful assembly

New section 32A may also engage and limit the right to peaceful assembly, which entitles persons to gather intentionally and temporarily for a specific purpose. However, the right to peaceful assembly may be justifiably limited on private property, or on Crown land where access is restricted, as long as the circumstances including the purpose behind restricting access, are proportional under 7(2) of the Charter.

I consider the limits on peaceful assembly to be reasonably necessary and proportionate to achieve the legislative purpose. The limits imposed on the right to peacefully gather is for a significant and important purpose, that is, safety and good order during race-meetings and official trial meetings. Also, the extent of the limit on peaceful assembly only apply to 'restricted racing areas' of limited scope, being: the track which is being used for racing; space which is being used for the saddling and keeping of animals; pathways which connect 2 of more restricted racing areas and a prescribed land area. Finally, the extent of any limitation is confined, in that there remain other means available for a person or group to exercise this right, such as peacefully gathering in neighbouring or adjoining areas that do not pose a danger to patrons and racing participants. Accordingly, I am satisfied that any interference with this right is compatible with the Charter.

Offences for disrupting, climbing, or causing objects to enter, fly into or land in a restricted racing area during an official trial or race-meeting

The Bill seeks to create a number of offences around unsafe or unreasonable behaviours, subject to a 'reasonable excuse' exception. New section 32B creates an offence where a person, who is in a restricted racing area during a race-meeting or an official trial meeting, disrupts the meeting; further sections makes it an offence to throw or kick projectiles or otherwise cause them to land in a restricted racing area (32C) or climb on fences, barriers or barricades within the restricted racing area during a race meeting or an official trial meeting, unless the person is authorised or is acting in accordance with an engagement in the management or conduct of the meeting (section 32D).

Freedom of expression

As disorderly conduct can have an expressive component, new sections 32B, 32C and 32D may engage section 15 of the Charter. It is well recognised that the right to freedom of expression protects the expression of ideas that offend, shock or disturb and covers behaviour that is irritating, contentious, heretical, unwelcome or provocative – provided that any relevant expression does not tend to provoke violence or itself constitute violence or damage to property.

However, as noted above, section 15(3) provides that the right to freedom of expression can be subject to lawful restrictions that are reasonably necessary to respect the rights and reputation of other persons or for the protection of national security, public order, public health or public morality. The offences concern prohibiting unsafe or anti-social conduct during meetings (s 32B, 32C and 32D) and serve the legitimate purpose of protecting public order and safety at such events. As any limits are proportionately tailored to the important objective, which is only concerned with behaviour that is unsafe or poses risks, I consider these provisions to be compatible with the right to freedom of expression.

Powers to direct a person to leave and not enter a restricted racing area

New section 32E provides an authorised officer with powers to direct a person to leave and not re-enter a restricted racing area or race-course for the duration of a race-meeting or an official trial meeting if an authorised officer believes on reasonable grounds that the person is committing or has committed one of the offences outlined above (see 32A 32B, 32C or 32D). 32F(1) makes in an offence to not comply with direction issued under s 32E.

These powers of direction are relevant to the rights to freedom of movement and peaceful assembly.

Freedom of movement and peaceful assembly

Following the discussion above, it is doubtful as to whether this power of direction, which is limited to being exercised in relation to ordering a person to leave and not re-enter a restricted racing area or race-course, would limit freedom of movement in light of ordinary powers of an occupier to exclude a person from such premises. Additionally, as the power is able to be exercised in relation to disruptive or anti-social conduct, it may also be beyond the scope of protection afforded by the right to peaceful assembly.

However, to the extent that the exercise of this power constitutes a limit on either right, I consider that such rights will not be limited under 7(2) of the Charter. The directions power provides authorised officers with an immediate tool to prevent or mitigate an identified risk to safety and public order at race meetings and official trials. The scope of the power is precisely prescribed to meet the objective, in that there is a clear and rational connection between the limitation on rights and the purpose of the provision. An authorised officer can only make a direction where they believe on reasonable grounds that a specified offence has been committed, they have informed the person of that belief and the person has refused to comply. The effect of the direction is limited to the duration of the race-meeting or official trial meeting during which it was exercised. I am thus satisfied that any limits on rights are reasonably justified and the power is compatible with the Charter.

Powers to use force to prevent or remove a person from a restricted racing area

The Bill inserts new section 32F(4), which provides a police officer with powers to use 'no more force than is reasonably necessary' in order to prevent a person from entering or re-entering a restricted racing area or race-course contrary to a direction given under s 32E, or remove a person from such areas who has refused to comply with such a direction.

Protection from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment (s 10)

The use of force on a person may engage a person's right to protection from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, however I do not consider the right to be limited. For a use of force power to be compatible with the Charter, it must be precisely circumscribed and aimed at achieving the legitimate objective, only authorise necessary force and the minimum needed to be considered effective, generally be a measure of last resort and be subject to adequate training and governance.

The power is directed to ensuring the legitimate objective of safety and good order at race meetings and trials. It is only exercisable by police officers (and not authorised officers) who will have the requisite training regarding the proportionate use of force. The power is only enlivened in relation to a person who has already been issued a direction to leave or not enter under s 32E, and can only be used for the purpose of preventing a person from entering and removing a person from a restricted racing area or race-course. The provision contains the internal qualification permitting 'no more force than is reasonably necessary', which ensures that any force used by a police officer is proportionate and necessary in the circumstances to achieve the public order and public safety objectives. Accordingly, I am satisfied that this power is compatible with the Charter.

Powers to make 'ban orders'

The Bill inserts new section 32G, which seeks to enable a court to make a ban order when a person is found guilty of one of the specified offences (32A, 32B, 32C, 32D or 32F). A ban order will mean that a person is barred from attending specified race-meetings or official trial meetings, or categories of those meetings. The penalties under this section range from banning that person from attending one race or official trial meeting, through to imposing a ban order on participation at meetings of up to five years.

Freedom of movement and privacy

New section 32G creates ban orders which prohibit a person from attending race and official trial meetings and penalises them for non-compliance, limiting that person's right to freedom of movement. Additionally, a ban order made under section 32G may interfere with the right to privacy in circumstances where they impact on a person's employment or social identity to the extent that it involves attendance at such events. However, I consider that any interference with these rights will be compatible with the Charter, in that any limit on the freedom of movement will be reasonable and justifiable under s 7(2) of the Charter, and any interference with privacy will not be arbitrary.

The ban orders are for a preventative purpose of preventing repeat offending and are only enlivened following a finding of guilt of specified offences outlined above involving disruptive, unsafe or anti-social conduct. Given the dangerous nature of the proposed prohibited conduct, the orders provide a significant additional deterrent and ensure public safety where the offending conduct is particularly serious. The ban order is a discretionary order of the court, and subject to the objective standards and criteria within a court's jurisdiction, as well as an independent and fair hearing. The order is also limited in maximum duration (up to five years) and scope (applies only to specified race-meetings or official trial meetings where the offence was committed, or to specified categories of race-meetings or official trial meetings). This allows the orders to be appropriately tailored to the nature of the offence. I consider there is no less restrictive means reasonably available to achieve the purpose of the limitations. I also note that these orders are consistent with existing provisions that apply to other events under the *Major Events Act 2009*. Accordingly, I consider these orders to be compatible with the Charter.

New offence provisions

The Bill inserts new sections 32A, 32B, 32C, 32D and 32J, which are offence provisions. The new sections inserted all include exceptions based on authorisations or on having a reasonable excuse. New section 32A creates an offence to enter into a restricted racing area without a reasonable excuse. Section 32B makes it an offence to disrupt an official trial meeting or race-meeting without a reasonable excuse. Section 32C makes it an offence to throw or kick things or cause an object to fly into or land in a restricted racing area without authority. Section 32D prohibits climbing certain infrastructure without authority. 32J prohibits obstructing an authorised officer without a reasonable excuse.

Presumption of innocence

As these offences are summary offences, section 72 of the *Criminal Procedure Act 2009* will apply to require an accused who wishes to rely on the 'lawful authority or excuse' defence to present or point to evidence that suggests a reasonable possibility of the existence of facts that, if they existed, would establish the excuse. By providing for a 'reasonable excuse' offence exception, the offence provisions may be viewed as placing an evidential burden on the accused, in that it requires the accused to raise evidence as to a reasonable excuse. However, in doing so, this offence does not transfer the legal burden of proof. Once the accused has pointed to evidence of a reasonable excuse, which will ordinarily be peculiarly within their knowledge, the burden shifts back to the prosecution who must prove the essential elements of the offence. Case law has held that an evidential onus imposed on establishing an excuse or exception does not limit the Charter's right to a presumption of innocence, as such an evidentiary onus falls short of imposing any burden of persuasion on an accused. Accordingly, I do not consider that an evidential onus such as this limits the right to be presumed innocent.

Powers to request a person's name and address

New section 32K provides an authorised officer with powers to request a person's name and address if the authorised officer believes on reasonable grounds that the person has committed an offence against 32A, 32B,

32C, 32D or 32F. Section 32L makes it an offence to refuse to give a name and address to an authorised officer under 32K. Section 32M provides that, if an authorised officer believes that a person required to give information under 32K is giving false information they may require that person to produce evidence of their name and address, which the person must comply with.

Privacy

The right to privacy is relevant to these provisions as they effectively compel a person to disclose their name and address, which is personal information. However, in my view, this section does not limit the right to privacy because any interference is permitted by law (this Bill) which is precise and appropriately circumscribed. The section is not arbitrary because it is for the clear and legitimate purpose of enabling authorised officers to enforce offences under the Bill where necessary. It is not possible for an authorised officer to prosecute offences and enforce directions to leave without the power to confirm the identity of the suspect.

The provision is subject to reasonable limitations in that the powers can only be exercised where an authorised officer has formed a belief on reasonable grounds that a person has committed an offence or when directing a person to leave. Authorised officers who are not police officers are required to produce their identity card, inform the person and state that they believe that a relevant offence has been committed. The power to compel a person to produce evidence of their name and address is only enlivened when an authorised officer believes on reasonable grounds that the name and address given a person may be false. Further, 32N requires that an authorised officer must not disclose any information obtained in the course of the authorised officer's duty or incur a penalty of 50 penalty units. These provide effective safeguards against inappropriate disclosure by an authorised officer obtained in the course of their duties.

Authority to disclose information

The Bill inserts new section 32N, which provides that authorised officers may disclose the information obtained in the course of the officer's duties or the exercise of a power under provisions 32K or 32M in certain circumstances (being details or evidence of a person's name and address).

Privacy

New section 32N will engage the right to privacy as it allows for an authorised officer to disclose personal information. In order for information to be disclosed under this provision, an authorised officer must hold a reasonable belief that disclosure is necessary for the purposes of the Act. The section enumerates limited circumstances in which the information can be shared; and imposes 50 penalty units if the information is not shared for these strict purposes.

In my view, this section will not be arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy, as any disclosure of personal information authorised by this section will only occur to the extent necessary to carry out the functions of the authorised officers under the Act, or for other specified purposes such as in the course of legal proceedings or pursuant to a court or tribunal order. Consequently, I consider that new section 32N is compatible with section 13 of the Charter.

The Hon. Anthony Carbines MP
Minister for Racing

Second reading

Anthony CARBINES (Ivanhoe – Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Racing) (17:00): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I ask that my second-reading speech be incorporated into *Hansard*.

Incorporated speech as follows:

The Victorian racing industry contributes \$4.7 billion annually to the Victorian economy and helps sustain 34,900 full-time-equivalent jobs across our State. The Government is committed to ensuring the Victorian racing industry remains a pre-eminent racing jurisdiction in Australia.

There is at least one Victorian racing industry meeting conducted on every day of the year, except for Christmas Day. There were almost 2,300 Victorian race meetings conducted in 2021-22. This included 538 thoroughbred racing meetings, 436 harness racing meetings and 1,312 greyhound racing meetings.

In recent years there have been instances of unauthorised entry to a racetrack area during the running of horse races at Victorian racecourses. While the frequency of track incursions by spectators is relatively low, the potential consequences are significant, and could result in serious injury or death to patrons, human and animal participants, and officials.

This Bill amends the *Racing Act 1958* (Racing Act) to provide for offences and penalties to ensure the safety and welfare of all patrons and participants, including animals, at all Victorian race meetings and official trial meetings.

To this end, the Bill identifies certain parts of a racecourse as restricted areas for the purposes of new offences and penalties relating to unauthorised access to those areas during a race or official trial meeting. The areas that have been identified reflect the current operational arrangements that are already in place at racecourses across Victoria. Access to these areas usually requires a person to produce an authorisation to enter, and include racing and training tracks, and other areas used by racing animals and their handlers, such as mounting yards, parade rings, stabling and kennelling facilities, and pathways between these areas.

Importantly, the introduction of restricted areas on racecourses will not affect the enjoyment of race goers. As race goers are already prohibited from entering restricted areas, those provisions will not affect their enjoyment or change the areas of the racecourse that they can access. The Bill will not alter who is authorised to enter restricted areas and what they are authorised to do.

The new crowd management offences and penalties apply to behaviours in or near restricted areas. They do not apply to the general conduct of persons in other parts of the racecourse.

New offences to manage crowd behaviour

The Bill will insert provisions into the Racing Act to create offences with regard to specific behaviours in and around the restricted areas, without a reasonable excuse.

The offences are consistent with similar offences in the *Major Events Act 2009* (Major Events Act) which apply at major sporting events covered by that Act. This includes eight of Victoria's feature race meetings during the Spring Racing Carnival: Caulfield Racecourse on Caulfield Cup Day, Caulfield Guineas Day and Thousand Guineas Day, Flemington Racecourse on a day that a race meeting of the Melbourne Cup Carnival takes place, and Moonee Valley Racecourse on Cox Plate Day.

The Bill will not affect the operation of the Major Events Act. It is important that those race meetings continue to be subject to all relevant provisions of the Major Events Act, which extend beyond the management of crowd behaviour.

The offences relate to of the disruption of a race meeting or official trial meeting; throwing or kicking projectiles, or otherwise causing projectiles to enter into a restricted racing area; and climbing on fences or barricades that are adjacent to a restricted racing area. The latter activity could lead to animals reacting unpredictably creating a risk of injury to persons near the area. It could also result in patrons inadvertently entering a racetrack area, endangering themselves and participants, and disrupting races.

These new statutory offences and related penalties will provide a clear and strong deterrent to persons who are not authorised to access certain areas of the racecourse from engaging in dangerous and disruptive conduct.

Racing industry participants

It is not intended that the new offences under the Bill apply to those persons who are licensed or registered to participate in the conduct of the meeting, or who are engaged in the management or conduct of the meeting, while they are carrying out their roles at the meetings.

For example, there may be times when a person engaged at a race meeting throws to a jockey on the race track a towel or water bottle. This type of action, which takes place in the general conduct of a race meeting, would not constitute an offence under this Bill.

This Bill does not alter who is authorised to enter restricted areas and what they are authorised to do. It also has no impact on activities that are not connected with the restricted areas.

The Victorian racing industry is fully supportive of the Bill. The new offence and penalty provisions will enable racing clubs and the racing code bodies to provide clear warnings to patrons about the consequences of dangerous and anti-social behaviour at the races.

Authorised officers

The new offences will be enforced by Victoria Police or authorised officers appointed by the Secretary of the relevant department.

Victoria Police will have primary responsibility for the enforcement of the provisions at those race meetings where a sworn officer is in attendance.

However, most Victorian race meetings are conducted without any police presence. In those instances, the offences will be enforced by other authorised officers. The Bill inserts new provisions into the Racing Act that enable the Secretary of the relevant department to appoint racing stewards and persons who have

appropriate skills, qualifications, knowledge, or experience as authorised officers. It is intended that at least one authorised officer will be present at every Victorian race meeting or official trial meeting.

The Bill provides that the Secretary can delegate this power of appointment to other Executives within the Secretary's department.

Dealing with offenders

Authorised officers will also have powers to manage people who are reasonably believed to have committed offences. Authorised officers will have the power to direct a person, reasonably believed to have committed an offence under the new provisions, to leave the restricted racing area or racecourse for the duration of the race meeting or official trial meeting. The objective of the provision is to ensure that the person does not cause further disruption at the meeting.

To assist with enforcement of the new offences to manage crowd behaviour, the Bill provides authorised officers with the power to require a person reasonably believed to have committed an offence against the new provisions to provide their name and address.

The Bill provides that safeguards are in place for the disclosure of information obtained by authorised officers in the course of exercising their powers under these new provisions.

Infringement notices are an effective and efficient way to enforce crowd management laws. The Bill empowers authorised officers to serve an infringement notice on a person reasonably believed to have, without reasonable excuse, entered a restricted racing area without authorisation, thrown or kicked a projectile, or otherwise caused a projectile to enter into a restricted racing area, or climbed any fence, barrier or barricade of a restricted racing area.

There may be some instances where a more severe penalty is warranted where an individual repeatedly offends against the provisions, or where the consequences of the offending are serious or significant. To address this, the Bill provides the courts with the option of imposing a ban order against an individual.

The ban order may specify the race meeting or official trial meeting, or category of race meetings or official trial meetings and racecourse or racecourses to which the order will apply.

Where a person's conduct is serious enough for a court to ban the person from all thoroughbred race meetings and official trial meetings, the ban could also apply to race meetings which are covered in the Major Events Act to ensure that there are no gaps in the regulatory framework.

Conclusion

Fortunately, the conduct this Bill seeks to discourage doesn't occur frequently. Nevertheless, the potential consequences are so serious that any occurrence is extremely concerning. That is why these additional deterrents, which are already in place at other major sporting events, are needed to help ensure the safety and welfare of all participants, animals, and patrons at Victorian race meetings and official trial meetings.

I commend the Bill to the house.

Tim BULL (Gippsland East) (17:01): I move:

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to and debate adjourned.

Ordered that debate be adjourned for two weeks. Debate adjourned until Tuesday 3 January.

Building and Planning Legislation Amendment Bill 2022

Introduction and first reading

Sonya KILKENNY (Carrum – Minister for Planning, Minister for Outdoor Recreation) (17:01):
I move:

That I introduce a bill for an act to amend the Building Act 1993, the Architects Act 1991, the Surveying Act 2004 and the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

Read first time; under standing order 61(3)(b), ordered to be read second time immediately.

Statement of compatibility

Sonya KILKENNY (Carrum – Minister for Planning, Minister for Outdoor Recreation) (17:03):
In accordance with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006, I table a statement of compatibility in relation to the Building and Planning Legislation Amendment Bill 2022.

In accordance with section 28 of the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Charter), I make this Statement of Compatibility with respect to the Building and Planning Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. In my opinion, the Building and Planning Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 (**Bill**), as introduced to the Legislative Assembly, is compatible with the human rights protected by the Charter. I base my opinion on the reasons outlined in this statement.

Overview of the Bill

Parts 2 and 3 of the Bill amend the *Building Act 1993*, the *Architects Act 1991* and the *Surveying Act 2004* to –

- support the operation of automatic mutual recognition under the *Mutual Recognition (Victoria) Act 1998* with respect to land surveyors, building practitioners, plumbers and architects; and
- enable the Victorian Building Authority to issue a restricted plumbing licence for more than one class or particular type of plumbing work.

Part 4 of the Bill amends the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* to increase protection of metropolitan green wedges and amend the distinctive areas and landscapes statement of planning policy endorsement process.

Human rights protected by the Charter that are relevant to the Bill

Clauses 13 and 28 of the Bill provide for recording the details of criminal sanctions on public registers for plumbers and architects. These provisions may engage:

1. the right to privacy in section 13(a) of the Charter which provides that a person has a right “not to have that person’s privacy ... unlawfully or arbitrarily interfered with”.
2. the right against discrimination in section 8(2) of the Charter, which provides that “every person has the right to enjoy their human rights without discrimination”. Section 3(1) of the Charter defines discrimination to have the same meaning as in the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* on the basis of an attribute listed in section 6 of the Act. These attributes include a ‘spent conviction’.

While clauses 13 and 28 of the Bill engage the Charter’s rights against unlawful or arbitrary interferences in privacy, any interference is lawful and not arbitrary because it is required to ensure regulators have the necessary information to enforce the law and better protect consumers from unsafe or unfit practitioners.

The information recorded in the registers is also necessary to support the implementation of the Commonwealth’s Automatic Mutual Recognition (AMR) scheme under the *Mutual Recognition Act 1992* of the Commonwealth. This scheme excludes certain individuals from an entitlement to automatic deemed registration and imposes certain obligations on local registration authorities. Under AMR, a person is not entitled to automatic deemed registration if they are subject to criminal proceedings in any state in relation to an occupation that covers an activity¹ a person intends to carry out under automatic deemed registration. Additionally, if a person is personally prohibited from carrying out the activity, or an occupation that covers the activity, or is subject to any conditions in carrying out the activity, as a result of criminal proceedings in any state², they will not be entitled to automatic deemed registration.

Section 42V(2) of the *Mutual Recognition Act 1992* of the Commonwealth requires the local registration authority (for example, the Victorian Building Authority or the Architects Registration Board of Victoria) to give to the local registration authority in another state, as soon as reasonably practicable, any information reasonably required about a person using automatic deemed registration – including information relating to a criminal prosecution taken against the person. Clauses 13 and 28 therefore support implementation of this requirement, by enabling details of any criminal sanctions to be recorded in the relevant register. This will ensure practitioners who have received a criminal sanction can be identified if they seek to register in Victoria.

Clauses 13 and 28 of the Bill are consistent with the spent conviction scheme in Victoria under the *Spent Convictions Act 2021* and are therefore compatible with the Charter rights against discrimination. The information on the Register of Plumbers and Register of Architects about ‘criminal sanctions’ will not include information about spent convictions.

I am therefore satisfied that the Bill is compatible with the Charter.

The Hon. Sonya Kilkenny, MP
Minister for Planning

¹ See section 42D(4)(a) of the *Mutual Recognition Act 1992*.

² See section 42D(4)(c) of the *Mutual Recognition Act 1992*.

Second reading

Sonya KILKENNY (Carrum – Minister for Planning, Minister for Outdoor Recreation) (17:03):
I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I ask that my second-reading speech be incorporated into *Hansard*.

Incorporated speech as follows:

The Victorian Government is committed to improving the efficiency, clarity and operation of the building and planning systems.

The Bill will amend the *Building Act 1993*, the *Architects Act 1991*, the *Surveying Act 2004* and the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* to create the following reforms:

- Strengthen legislative protection of Melbourne’s green wedges;
- Streamline the endorsement process for a distinctive area and landscape;
- Support the implementation of Automatic Mutual Recognition in Victoria; and
- Clarify the power to issue restricted plumbing work licences for private plumbing work.

Protection of Green Wedge Land

The Government is committed to protecting Melbourne’s green wedges for current and future generations. The Bill articulates the Government’s objectives for green wedge land and introduces a legislative requirement for municipal councils to prepare and review Green Wedge Management Plans. Furthermore, the Bill will enable the Minister for Planning to issue directions in relation to the preparation and content of Green Wedge Management Plans, which will provide improved guidance to councils on the structure, form and content of Green Wedge Management Plans.

Distinctive areas and landscapes

Part 3AAB of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (PE Act), introduced in 2018 enables the Governor in Council, following the recommendation of the Minister for Planning, to declare an area of Victoria to be a distinctive area and landscape. Macedon Ranges, Surf and Bass Coasts and the Bellarine Peninsula have already been declared under this legislation. This experience has repeatedly shown that it is difficult to prepare, consult on and obtain the endorsement and approval of a Statement of Planning Policy within the timeframe specified in the PE Act. The Bill streamlines the process for endorsement by responsible entities of a Statement of Planning Policy for a distinctive area and landscape.

Automatic Mutual Recognition

The *Mutual Recognition Act 1992* (Cth) was amended in 2021 to introduce an Automatic Mutual Recognition (AMR) scheme to be adopted by all States and Territories. AMR is intended to create a ‘driver’s licence’ model for occupational licensing, enabling a person to use the occupational licence issued by their home state to carry out the same activities it authorises in other participating Australian jurisdictions.

The Government agreed to participate in the AMR scheme last year. The Bill makes amendments to ensure that important consumer protection requirements that apply to Victorian architects, land surveyors, building practitioners and plumbers also apply to workers using AMR to carry out building and plumbing work in Victoria. The changes enable regulators to regularly check if both Victorian and AMR workers are covered by any required insurance.

Consumers will also benefit from improvements to information on the Victorian Building Authority (VBA) register of building practitioners and plumbers and the register of architects maintained by the Architects Registration Board of Victoria. Consumers will be able to make more informed choices before engaging practitioners, using the register to check if any Victorian or AMR worker they have engaged is appropriately registered for that work.

Restricted Plumbing Licences

Minor amendments are being made to the Building Act to provide certainty regarding the VBA’s continuing ability to issue restricted plumbing licences to authorise the carrying out of multiple classes of plumbing work that is private plumbing work.

I commend the Bill to the house.

David HODGETT (Croydon) (17:03): I move:

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to and debate adjourned.

Ordered that debate be adjourned for two weeks. Debate adjourned until Tuesday 3 January.

Human Rights and Housing Legislation Amendment (Ending Homelessness) Bill 2022

Introduction

Sam HIBBINS (Pahran) (17:04): I move:

That I introduce a bill for an act to amend the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 to establish a right to housing, to amend the Housing Act 1983 to set a target of ending homelessness in Victoria by 2030, to require a plan be developed to meet the target and to require annual reporting on progress towards the target and for other purposes.

Assembly divided on motion:

Ayes (29): Brad Battin, Jade Benham, Tim Bull, 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'Keefe, John Pesutto, Tim Read, Richard Riordan, Brad Rowswell, Ellen Sandell, David Southwick, Bill Tilley, Bridget Vallence, Peter Walsh, Kim Wells, Jess Wilson

Noes (54): 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, 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, Vicki Ward, Dylan Wight, Gabrielle Williams, Belinda Wilson

Motion defeated.

Business of the house

Notices of motion

Notices given.

Documents

Judicial College of Victoria

Report 2021–22

Anthony CARBINES (Ivanhoe – Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Racing) (17:15): I table, by leave, the Judicial College of Victoria report 2021–22.

Victoria Law Foundation

Report 2021–22

Anthony CARBINES (Ivanhoe – Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Racing) (17:15): I table, by leave, the Victoria Law Foundation report 2021–22.

Consumer Policy Research Centre*Report 2021–22*

Danny PEARSON (Essendon – Minister for Government Services, Assistant Treasurer, Minister for WorkSafe and the TAC, Minister for Consumer Affairs) (17:16): I table, by leave, the Consumer Policy Research Centre report 2021–22.

Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions*Local government rate-capping mechanism review*

Melissa HORNE (Williamstown – Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, Minister for Local Government, Minister for Ports and Freight, Minister for Roads and Road Safety) (17:16): I table, by leave, the final report of the local government rate-capping mechanism review and the government response to the report.

Visit Victoria*Report 2021–22*

Steve DIMOPOULOS (Oakleigh – Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events, Minister for Creative Industries) (17:17): I table, by leave, the Visit Victoria Ltd report 2021–22.

Documents**Incorporated list as follows:**

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

Children’s Court of Victoria – Report 2021–22

County Court of Victoria – Report 2021–22.

Ordered to be tabled.

DOCUMENTS TABLED UNDER ACTS OF PARLIAMENT – The Clerk tabled:

Accident Compensation Conciliation Service – Report 2021–22

Adult, Community and Further Education Board – Report 2021–22

Adult Parole Board Victoria – Report 2021–22

Agriculture Victoria Services Pty Ltd – Report 2021–22

Albury Wodonga Health – Report 2021–22

Alexandra District Health – Report 2021–22

Alfred Health – Report 2021–22

Alpine Health – Report 2021–22

Alpine Resorts Co-ordinating Council – Report 2021–22

Ambulance Victoria – Report 2021–22

AMES Australia – Report 2021–22

Auditor-General:

Auditor-General’s Report on the Annual Financial Report of the State of Victoria: 2021–22 – released on 28 October 2022

Regulating Victoria’s Native Forests – released on 6 October 2022

Victoria’s Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Data – released on 6 October 2022

Austin Health – Report 2021–22

Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI) – Report 2021–22

Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission – Report 2021–22 under s 30L of the *Surveillance Devices Act 1999*

Australian Grand Prix Corporation – Report 2021–22
Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency – Report 2021–22
Bairnsdale Regional Health Service – Report 2021–22
Ballarat General Cemeteries Trust – Report 2021–22
Barwon Health – Report 2021–22
Barwon Region Water Corporation – Report 2021–22
Bass Coast Health – Report 2021–22
Beaufort and Skipton Health Service – Report 2021–22
Beechworth Health Service – Report 2021–22
Bendigo Health – Report 2021–22
Boort District Health – Report 2021–22
Breakthrough Victoria Pty Ltd – Report 16 March 2021 to 30 June 2022
Calvary Health Care Bethlehem Ltd – Report 2021–22
Cenitex – Report 2021–22
Central Gippsland Health Service – Report 2021–22
Central Gippsland Region Water Corporation – Report 2021–22
Central Highlands Region Water Corporation – Report 2021–22
Cohuna District Hospital – Report 2021–22
Colac Area Health – Report 2021–22
Coliban Region Water Corporation – Report 2021–22
Commercial Passenger Vehicles Commission – Report 2021–22
Commission for Children and Young People – Report 2021–22 – Ordered to be published
Confiscation Act 1997 – Asset Confiscation Operations Report 2021–22
Consumer Affairs Victoria – Report 2021–22 – Ordered to be published
Corangamite Catchment Management Authority – Report 2021–22
Coroners Court of Victoria – Report 2021–22
Coronial Council of Victoria – Report 2021–22
Corryong Health – Report 2021–22
Country Fire Authority (CFA) – Report 2021–22
Court Services Victoria – Report 2021–22
Dairy Food Safety Victoria – Report 2021–22
Dental Health Services Victoria – Report 2021–22
Development Victoria – Report 2021–22
Disability Services Commissioner – Report 2021–22
Docklands Studio Melbourne Pty Ltd – Report 2021–22
Duties Act 2000:
 Report 2021–22 of Corporate Reconstruction and Consolidation Concessions and Exemptions under s 250B
 Report 1 January to 30 June 2022 of Foreign Purchaser Additional Duty Exemptions under s 3E
East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority – Report 2021–22
East Gippsland Region Water Corporation – Report 2021–22
East Grampians Health Service – Report 2021–22
East Wimmera Health Service – Report 2021–22
Echuca Regional Health – Report 2021–22
Emergency Services Superannuation Scheme (ESSSuper) – Report 2021–22

Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority (ESTA) – Report 2021–22

Energy Safe Victoria – Report 2021–22

Essential Services Commission – Report 2021–22

Falls Creek Alpine Resort Management Board – Report 2021

Fed Square Pty Ltd – Report 2021–22

Film Victoria (VicScreen) – Report 2021

Financial Management Act 1994:

Financial Report for the State of Victoria 2021–22, incorporating Quarterly Financial Report No 4 – released on 14 October 2022

Reports from the Minister for Agriculture that she had received the reports 2021–22 of the:

Murray Valley Wine Grape Industry Development

Phytogene Pty Ltd

Victorian Strawberry Industry Development Committee

Report from the Minister for Education that she had received the Report 2021–22 of the Queen Victoria Women's Centre Trust

Reports from the Minister for Education that she had not received the Report 2021–22 of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, together with an explanation for the delay

Reports from the Minister for Environment that she had received the Report 2021–22 of the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability

Report from the Minister for Environment that she had not received the reports 2021–22 of the:

Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Trust

Dhelkunya Dja Land Management Board

Environment Protection Authority

Gunaikurnai Traditional Owner Land Management Board

Trust for Nature

Yorta Yorta Traditional Owner Land Management Board –

together with an explanation for the delay

Report from the Minister for Health that she had received the reports 2021–22 of the:

Mildura Cemetery Trust

Victorian Pharmacy Authority

Report from the Minister for Health that she had not received the reports 2021–22 of the:

Benalla Health

Casteron Memorial Hospital

Central Highlands Rural Health

Dhelkaya Health

Gippsland Southern Health Service

Kilmore District Health

Kyabram District Health

Omeo District Health

Peter MacCallum Cancer Institute

Portland District Health –

together with an explanation for the delay

Report from the Minister for Planning that she had received the reports 202–22 of the:

Architects Registration Board of Victoria

Heritage Council of Victoria

Surveyors Registration Board of Victoria

Report from the Minister for Planning that she had not received the reports 2021–22 of the:

Cladding Safety Victoria

Victorian Building Authority –

together with an explanation for the delay

Report from the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events that he had not received the reports 2021–22 of the:

Emerald Tourist Railway Board

State Sport Centres Trust –

together with an explanation for the delay

Report from the Minister for Training and Skills that she had received the Report 2021–22 of the Veterinary Practitioners Registration Board of Victoria

Fire Rescue Victoria – Report 2021–22

Forensic Leave Panel – Report 2021–22

Game Management Authority – Report 2021–22

Game Management Authority – Report 2021–22 under s 30L of the *Surveillance Devices Act 1999*

Geelong Cemeteries Trust – Report 2021–22

Geelong Performing Arts Centre Trust – Report 2021–22

Geoffrey Gardiner Dairy Foundation – Report 2021–22

Gippsland and Southern Rural Water Corporation – Report 2021–22

Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority – Report 2021–22

Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority – Report 2021–22

Goulburn Valley Health – Report 2021–22

Goulburn Valley Region Water Corporation – Report 2021–22

Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water Corporation – Report 2021–22

Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority – Report 2021–22

Great Ocean Road Health – Report 2021–22

Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust – Report 2021–22

Greyhound Racing Victoria – Report 2021–22

Harness Racing Victoria – Report 2021–22

Health Purchasing Victoria (HealthShare) – Report 2021–22

Heathcote Health – Report 2021–22

Hesse Rural Health Service – Report 2021–22

Heywood Rural Health – Report 2021–22

Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission:

Report 2021–22 – Ordered to be published

Special reports on:

Corruption risks associated with donations and lobbying – released on 12 October 2022

Police misconduct issues and risks associated with Victoria Police's Critical Incident Response Team – released on 25 October 2022

Infrastructure Victoria – Report 2021–22

Inglewood and Districts Health Service – Report 2021–22

Integrity and Oversight Committee:

The independent performance audits of the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission and the Victorian Inspectorate – released on 31 October 2022

Report on the Performance of the Victorian integrity agencies 2020–21: focus on witness welfare – released on 6 October 2022

Interpretation of Legislation Act 1984 – Notice under s 32(3)(a)(iii) in relation to Statutory Rule 112
(*Gazette G45, 10 November 2022*)

Kardinia Park Stadium Trust – Report 2021–22

Kerang District Health – Report 2021–22

Kooweerup Regional Health Service – Report 2021–22

Labour Hire Licensing Authority – Report 2021–22

LanguageLoop – Report 2021–22

Latrobe Regional Hospital – Report 2021–22

Legal Practitioners' Liability Committee – Report 2021–22

Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014 – Practitioner Remuneration Order 2023

Legal Services Council and Commissioner for Uniform Legal Services Regulation – Report 2021–22

Library Board of Victoria – Report 2021–22

Lower Murray Urban and Rural Water Corporation – Report 2021–22

Mallee Catchment Management Authority – Report 2021–22

Mallee Track Health and Community Service – Report 2021–22

Mansfield District Hospital – Report 2021–22

Maryborough District Health Service – Report 2021–22

Melbourne and Olympic Parks Trust – Report 2021–22

Melbourne City Link Act 1995:

Deed of Lease (Western Link Upgrade) – WLU Company Lease

Deed of Lease (Western Link Upgrade) – WLU Trust Concurrent Lease

Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Trust – Report 2021–22

Melbourne Market Authority – Report 2021–22

Melbourne Recital Centre – Report 2021–22

Mental Health Complaints Commissioner – Report 2021–22

Mental Health Tribunal – Report 2021–22

Mercy Hospitals Victoria Ltd – Report 2021–22

Mildura Base Public Hospital – Report 2021–22

Mount Buller and Mount Stirling Alpine Resort Management Board – Report 2021

Mount Hotham Alpine Resort Management Board – Report 2021

Moyne Health Services – Report 2021–22

Museums Board of Victoria – Report 2021–22

National Health Funding Pool, Administrator of – Report 2021–22

National Health Practitioner Ombudsman – Report 2021–22

National Parks Act 1975 – Report 2021–22 on the working of the Act

National Parks Advisory Council – Report 2021–22

National Rail Safety Regulator, Office of the – Report 2021–22

NCN Health – Report 2021–22

North Central Catchment Management Authority – Report 2021–22

North East Catchment Management Authority – Report 2021–22

North East Link State Tolling Corporation – Report 2021–22

North East Region Water Corporation – Report 2021–22

Northeast Health Wangaratta – Report 2021–22

Northern Health – Report 2021–22

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004:

Order approving the Managing exposure to crystalline silica: Engineered stone compliance code
(*Gazette G41, 13 October 2022*)

Order revoking the managing Exposure to Crystalline Silica: Engineered stone compliance code
(*Gazette G41, 13 October 2022*)

Ombudsman:

Ombudsman's recommendations – fourth report – released on 28 September 2022

Report 2021–22 – released on 20 October 2022

Orbost Regional Health – Report 2021–22

Parks Victoria – Report 2021–22

Peninsula Health – Report 2021–22

Phillip Island Nature Parks – Report 2021–22

Planning and Environment Act 1987 – Notices of approval of amendments to the following Planning Schemes:

Ararat – C46

Ballarat – C233, C238

Banyule – C119, C162, C167, C171

Bass Coast – C163

Baw Baw – C147

Bayside – C160, C193, GC197

Boroondara – C333 Part 2, C383

Brimbank – C212, GC199, GC207

Cardinia – C238, C266

Casey – C259, C287

Campaspe – C118, C121

Colac Otway – C111, C119

East Gippsland – C162

Glen Eira – C248

Golden Plains – C91

Greater Dandenong – C241, C242

Greater Geelong – C391, C408, C448, C449

Greater Shepparton – C228, C234

Hobsons Bay – GC199

Horsham – C83

Hume – C211, C264

Kingston – GC197

Knox – C174

Macedon Ranges – C143

Manningham – C135, C137

Mansfield – C52

Maribyrnong – C164, C180, GC207

Maroondah – C134, C136, C149

Melbourne – C364, C394, C402, C404, C409, C436, C439

Melton – C182, C230

Mildura – C113

Monash – GC197

Moonee Valley – C224, C225, C230, GC207

Moreland – C212
Mornington Peninsula – C227, C228, C282
Murrindindi – C72
Nillumbik – C150
Port Phillip – C180
Stonnington – C319, C323, C327
Strathbogie – C78
Surf Coast – C142
Swan Hill – C77
Victoria Planning Provisions – VC201, VC222, VC224, VC226, VC227, VC228
Wangaratta – C91, C92
Warrnambool – C205
Whitehorse – GC197
Whittlesea – C267
Wodonga – C138
Wyndham – GC199, C252, C264
Yarra – C280, C310, C311
Yarra Ranges – C148, C195, C213, C214

Police Informants Royal Commission Implementation Monitor Act 2021 – Royal Commission into the Management of Police Informants: Progress Report 2020–21

Police Registration and Services Board – Report 2021–22

Port of Hastings Corporation – Report 2021–22

Portable Long Service Benefits Authority – Report 2021–22

Ports Victoria – Report 2021–22

Post Sentence Authority – Report 2021–22

PrimeSafe – Report 2021–22

Project Development and Construction Management Act 1994 – Documents under s 9 in relation to the Ground Lease Model 2 Project (two orders)

Public Advocate, Office of – Report 2021–22 – Ordered to be published

Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008:

Documents under s 165AQ on the making of pandemic orders implemented on:

8 September 2022

22 September 2022

Review of COVID-19 Communications in Victoria

Review of COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccination Orders in Victoria

Public Interest Monitor – Report 2021–22

Public Prosecutions, Office of – Report 2021–22

Queen Elizabeth Centre (QEC) – Report 2021–22

Radiation Advisory Committee – Report 2021–22

Recreational Fishing Licence Trust Account – 2021–22 report on the disbursement of revenue

Remembrance Parks Central Victoria – Report 2021–22

Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Act 2017 – Victorian Renewable Energy Target 2021–22 Progress Report

Residential Tenancies Bond Authority – Report 2021–22

Robinvale District Health Service – Report 2021–22

Rochester and Elmore District Health Service – Report 2021–22

Rolling Stock (Victoria-VL) Pty Ltd – Report 2021–22
Rolling Stock (VL-1) Pty Ltd – Report 2021–22
Rolling Stock (VL-2) Pty Ltd – Report 2021–22
Rolling Stock (VL-3) Pty Ltd – Report 2021–22
Royal Botanic Gardens Board – Report 2021–22
Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital – Report 2021–22
Royal Women’s Hospital – Report 2021–22
Rural Northwest Health – Report 2021–22
Sentencing Advisory Council – Report 2021–22
Seymour Health – Report 2021–22
Shrine of Remembrance Trustees – Report 2021–22
South Gippsland Hospital – Report 2021–22
South Gippsland Region Water Corporation – Report 2021–22
South West Healthcare – Report 2021–22
Southern Alpine Resort Management Board – Report 2021
Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust – Report 2021–22
St Vincent’s Hospital (Melbourne) Ltd – Report 2021–22
State Electricity Commission of Victoria – Report 2021–22
State Trustees Ltd – Report 2021–22
Statutory Rules under the following Acts:
Accident Towing Services Act 2007 – SR 128
Bail Act 1977 – SR 116
Building Act 1993 – SR 122
Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 – SRs 118, 119
Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 – SR 100
Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021 – SR 94
City of Melbourne Act 2001 – SR 104
Community Based Sentences (Transfer) Act 2012 – SR 92
Coroners Act 2008 – SR 109
County Court Act 1958 – SR 90
Crimes Act 1958 – SR 110
Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 – SR 83
Dangerous Goods Act 1985 – SR 115
Domestic Animals Act 1994 – SR 77
Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981 – SRs 96, 112, 113
Electoral Act 2002 – SR 127
Electricity Safety Act 1998 – SR 103
Environment Protection Act 2017 – SRs 85, 86, 120
Family Violence Protection Act 2008 – SR 123
Fire Rescue Victoria Act 1958 – SR 82
Forests Act 1958 – SR 84
Health Services Act 1988 – SR 121
Juries Act 2000 – SR 78
Liquor Control Reform Act 1998 – SRs 81, 111, 124
Local Government Act 2020 – SRs 104, 126

Magistrates' Court Act 1989 – SRs 79, 101, 102
Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990 – SR 97
Mutual Recognition (Victoria) Act 1998 – SR 107
Planning and Environment Act 1987 – SR 114
Port Management Act 1995 – SR 105
Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 – SRs 88, 89
Residential Tenancies Act 1997 – SR 125
Retail Leases Act 2003 – SR 99
Road Safety Act 1986 – SRs 98, 106, 129, 130
Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 – SRs 80, 95
Surveillance Devices Act 1999 – SR 117
Terrorism (Community Protection) Act 2003 – SR 91
Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition (Victoria) Act 1998 – SR 108
Victorian Energy Efficiency Target Act 2007 – SR 93
Wildlife Act 1975 – SR 87

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994:

Documents under s 15 in relation to Statutory Rules 55, 56, 70, 74, 77, 82, 85, 86, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 94, 95, 96, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 109, 110, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133

Documents under s 16B in relation to:

Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Regulations 2017 – Secretary Approval:

Nurse Immunisers – SARS-COV-2 (COVID-19) VACCINE

Pharmacist Immunisers – SARS-COV-2 (COVID-19) VACCINE

Education and Training Reform Act 2006 – Ministerial Order No 1388 – Teaching Service (Employment Conditions, Salaries, Allowances, Selection and Conduct) Order 2022

Electricity Industry Act 2000 – General Exemption Order 2022

Electricity Safety Act 1998 – Exemption order under s 120W

Great Ocean Road and Environs Protection Act 2020 – Order in Council declaring the Great Ocean Road coast and parks

Health Services Act 1988 – Victorian Duty of Candour Guidelines

Liquor Control Reform Act 1998 – Ministerial Order under s 18D

Municipal Association Act 1907 – Municipal Association of Victoria Rules 2022

Suburban Rail Loop Authority – Report 2021–22

Sustainability Victoria – Report 2021–22

Swan Hill District Health – Report 2021–22

Tallangatta Health Service – Report 2021–22

Terang and Mortlake Health Service – Report 2021–22

Timboon and District Healthcare Service – Report 2021–22

Treasury and Finance, Department of – Report 2021–22

Tweddle Child and Family Health Service – Report 2021–22

V/Line Corporation – Report 2021–22

VicForests – Report 2021–22

Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal – Report 2021–22

Victims of Crime Commissioner – Report 2021–22

Victoria Legal Aid – Report 2021–22

Victoria Police – Reports 2021–22 under:

- s 133 of the *Criminal Organisations Control Act 2012*
s 20R of the *Witness Protection Act 1991*
- Victoria Police, Chief Commissioner – Report 2021–22 under s 148R of the *Liquor Control Reform Act 1998*
- Victoria State Emergency Service Authority – Report 2021–22
- Victoria’s Mental Health Services – Report 2021–22
- Victorian Arts Centre Trust – Report 2021–22
- Victorian Assisted Reproductive Treatment Authority – Report 2021–22
- Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) – Report 2021–22
- Victorian Disability Worker Commission and Disability Worker Registration Board of Victoria – Report 2021–22
- Victorian Electoral Commission – Report 2021–22
- Victorian Environmental Assessment Council – Report 2021–22
- Victorian Environmental Water Holder – Report 2021–22
- Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission:
2021 report on the Operation of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities – Ordered to be published
Report 2021–22 – Ordered to be published
- Victorian Fisheries Authority – Report 2021–22
- Victorian Fisheries Authority – Report 2021–22 under s 30L of the *Surveillance Devices Act 1999*
- Victorian Funds Management Corporation – Report 2021–22
- Victorian Health Promotion Foundation – Report 2021–22
- Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal – Members of Parliament (Victoria) Guidelines No 1/2022 – released 11 October 2022
- Victorian Inspectorate:
Inspection Report under s 37D of the *Terrorism (Community Protection) Act 2003*
Report 2021–22
Special Report – IBAC’s referral and oversight of Emma’s complaints about Victoria Police’s response to family violence by a police officer – released on 11 October 2022
- Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine – Report 2021–22
- Victorian Institute of Sport Trust – Report 2021–22
- Victorian Institute of Teaching – Report 2021–22
- Victorian Law Reform Commission – Report 2021–22 – Ordered to be published
- Victorian Legal Services Board and the Victorian Legal Services Commissioner – Report 2021–22 – Ordered to be published
- Victorian Marine and Coastal Council – Report 2021–22
- Victorian Multicultural Commission – Report 2021–22
- Victorian Planning Authority – Report 2021–22
- Victorian Plantations Corporation – Report 2021–22
- Victorian Professional Standards Councils – Report 2021–22
- Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority – Report 2021–22
- Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation – Report 2021–22
- Victorian Small Business Commission – Report 2021–22 – Ordered to be published
- Wannon Region Water Corporation – Report 2021–22
- West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority – Report 2021–22
- West Gippsland Healthcare Group – Report 2021–22

West Wimmera Health Service – Report 2021–22
Western District Health Service – Report 2021–22
Western Health – Report 2021–22
Westernport Region Water Corporation – Report 2021–22
Wimmera Catchment Management Authority – Report 2021–22
Yarram and District Health Service – Report 2021–22
Yarrawonga Health – Report 2021–22
Yea and District Memorial Hospital – Report 2021–22
Youth Parole Board – Report 2021–22
Zoological Parks and Gardens Board – Report 2021–22.

PROCLAMATIONS – Under SO 177A, the Clerk tabled the following proclamations fixing operative dates:

Agriculture Legislation Amendment Act 2022 – Part 1, Part 2, Part 3 (except ss 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38 and 49), Part 5 (except ss 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87 and 88), Part 7 (except ss 112, 113, 114, 115 and 135) and Part 10 – 1 October 2022; Part 6 – 31 October 2022; Part 4, the remaining provisions of Part 5, Part 11 and Part 12 – 1 January 2023 (*Gazette S506, 27 September 2022*)

Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021 – Divisions 1, 2, 3 (other than s 87), 4 (other than s 88), 6, 8 and 11 of Part 6 and s 111 – 27 September 2022; Division 5 of Part 6 – 1 March 2023 (*Gazette S506, 27 September 2022*)

Education Legislation Amendment (Adult and Community Education and Other Matters) Act 2022 – Section 54 – 21 September 2022 (*Gazette S489, 20 September 2022*)

Gambling and Liquor Legislation Amendment Act 2022 – Remaining provisions of Part 4 – 4 October 2022 (*Gazette S489, 20 September 2022*)

Liquor Control Reform Amendment Act 2021 – Sections 4(4)(a), 5, 7, 14 and 56 – 27 September 2022 (*Gazette S489, 20 September 2022*)

Monitoring of Places of Detention by the United Nations Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (OPCAT) Act 2022 – Whole Act – 11 October 2022 (*Gazette S540, 11 October 2022*)

Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment Act 2022 – Sections 4, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18 and 19 – 1 October 2022; Section 9 – 1 January 2023 (*Gazette S489, 20 September 2022*)

Road Safety Legislation Amendment Act 2022 – Sections 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 – 5 October 2022 (*Gazette S524, 4 October 2022*)

Victims of Crime (Financial Assistance Scheme) Act 2022 – Sections 1 and 2 and Division 6 of Part 8 – 31 October 2022 (*Gazette S524, 4 October 2022*).

Business of the house

Adjournment

Mary-Anne THOMAS (Macedon – Leader of the House, Minister for Health, Minister for Health Infrastructure, Minister for Medical Research) (17:18): I move:

That the house, at its rising, adjourns until Tuesday 7 February 2023 at 12 noon.

Motion agreed to.

Announcements

Tabled documents database

The SPEAKER (17:18): Several reports have been tabled today. Unfortunately the tabled documents database is down. Staff are working to fix it. In the meantime, I ask for members' patience. Please contact the Clerk in the meantime to arrange access to the reports.

*Address to Parliament***Governor's speech***Address-in-reply*

The SPEAKER (17:19): I report that today the house attended the Legislative Council chamber, where Her Excellency the Governor was pleased to make a speech to both houses of Parliament. I have obtained a copy for the Assembly's records. The speech is available on the tabled documents database.

Martha HAYLETT (Ripon) (17:19): I move:

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.

It is a privilege to stand here today shoulder to shoulder with my friends in the Labor Party and those across the aisle and on the crossbench in the 60th Parliament of Victoria.

I would like to begin by acknowledging those who came first to the lands that I live and work on and now represent, the Barengi Gadjin people, the Dja Dja Wurrung people, the Eastern Maar people and the Wadawurrung people. I pay my deepest respects to their elders past and present and the emerging leaders of the future. I would also like to extend that same respect to the Wurundjeri Woiewurrung people, the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today, to representatives of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria, including co-chair Marcus Stewart, and to other First Nations people here today.

I stand here honoured and humbled to be the member for Ripon, and I stand here as a proud country Victorian. I grew up on a dirt road in central Victoria in an old miners cottage overlooking one of the sites of the 1850s gold rush. As a family we were Labor through and through, but there is also some blue in my blood. My grandfather John was a spud farmer in England. He was also the town mayor and president of the local Conservative club. My dad Robin had joined the club at age 15 simply to play snooker. But as he grew older he became more and more appalled at the views and values surrounding him, so on his 18th birthday he wrote a letter to the club president resigning his membership. His own father, as the president of the club, had to accept that letter, which made for a very awkward birthday dinner. Dad worked in the local sugar factory and petrol station to save up enough money to travel. He met my mum Heather in a youth hostel in Sydney. They fell in love, and the rest is history. Mum came from a very different home. She grew up in the working-class suburb of Oxley in Brisbane's south-west. Her dad Ned was a goldminer raised in Ballarat who had driven my grandma Joyce up on his Harley-Davidson in the 1950s to chase the Queensland sun.

I come to this place filled with the love of my family – my parents Heather Holst and Robin Haylett, my sister Freda Haylett, my brother Joseph Haylett, my brothers-in-law Jon Jenkins and Shane Pacarada and my three nephews Leon, Eamon and Ronan Jenkins – and the love of my fiancé Sam Lynch and incredible in-laws Kieran Cumberlidge, Peter Lynch, Caitlin, Madeleine and Isabella Lynch. Thank you for giving me the strong foundations that have brought me here today and for teaching me the importance of the collective.

My family, like many, relied on our public healthcare system. When I was a little girl I had significant hearing difficulties. It often meant I missed what people were saying, especially if I was not facing them. In the classroom it meant I ended up in the naughty corner more than I deserved. As a family we did not have a lot, and without our public healthcare system my parents would not have been able to afford the operation to fix my hearing. But because of our healthcare system and our incredible healthcare workers I was able to have surgery, and when I did it changed my whole life for the better.

It is why I am so proud the Andrews Labor government is fighting to protect and improve our healthcare system for families just like mine. It is also why I carry with me a deep determination to fight for those kids who are not given the same opportunities to learn and grow.

Growing up, my mum Heather worked in homelessness and family violence services for years. Women and children would arrive, fleeing violence, often with only the clothes on their backs. Even at a young age I would play with these kids and think about how unfair it was that they were sleeping in a car or on a friend's couch – kids not so different from me and my brother or sister denied the right to a safe and secure place to call home. Those experiences lit a fire in my belly. It is the reason I went on to work in the housing sector, fighting to end homelessness and build more affordable housing across our state. And it is one of the driving reasons I am here today. I am so proud of this government's commitment to improving tenants rights and building more than 12,000 new affordable homes, 25 per cent of them in rural and regional Victoria.

But there is always more to do. Access to affordable housing remains one of the biggest issues facing communities in Ripon. There are no rental vacancies in Ararat and St Arnaud. Kids are living in shipping containers around Wedderburn. Older residents have no supported housing options in Dunolly, and too many people are sleeping in tents around Maryborough. Our local industries want to grow, but they do not have the housing to home their workers. This issue must be addressed by building more public housing and affordable private rentals and introducing inclusionary zoning, planning provisions and more. If a first speech is a yardstick by which we might come to measure our contributions in public life, I want to use this opportunity to be very clear: I believe that every family, every Victorian, deserves the shelter, safety and security of a home, and every day I am in this place that is what I will be fighting for.

The Western Renewables Link is another significant and disruptive issue for my community. I want to take this opportunity to remove any doubt: I am not in the business of saying one thing in Smeaton before the election and another on Spring Street today. The project is a disgrace and must be fixed – not through grand statements or chucking money at the problem, but through hard work, genuine commitment and standing side by side with my community.

A feature of rural and regional Victoria has always been overcoming natural disasters. The droughts and fires of the past seemed a distant memory as our streets flooded in January this year and again in October. In the days following I watched in awe as SES and CFA volunteers worked tirelessly and while hundreds more turned out to sweep mud and sewage from scout halls and football-netball clubs. I saw, as we often do, the very best of our community in the very worst of circumstances. As the waters recede, the mud is cleared and the news crews head home, I will be there for them always. I know this government will be too, to rebuild what was lost better and stronger than before, because we know the rains will come again, just as we know that the droughts and fires will come too. We need to ensure our communities and our incredible volunteers have the backing they need to keep responding and that we build back stronger and better every time.

Now, there is a much longer list: investing in rural and regional transport, including the government's commitment to making the V/Line fares truly fair. We need to ensure our roads are fixed and that we do more fulsome upgrades and less patch jobs. We must continue to support our farmers, their industries and their livelihoods, especially as they deal with the impacts of extreme weather on their harvests, and protect country Victoria's much-loved pastimes, including camping, hunting, fishing and prospecting. We must boost access to mental health services and GPs in our rural communities, because still the further you are from Melbourne, the less likely you are to find care. And we must strengthen our support for veterans, because we owe it to those who fought and sacrificed their lives for our country. Now, a few lines in a first speech could never truly do justice to each of these issues, but please know that I will carry each of them with me every day in this place.

And now the necessary thank-yous: my first and foremost thanks are to the people of Ripon themselves. As a former member, the Honourable Joe Helper, once said, 'Ripon is the most fantastic group of

people anybody has ever drawn an electoral boundary around.’ The boundaries have changed quite a bit since then, but his point still remains. From the sheep graziers of St Arnaud to the spud farmers of Newlyn, the manufacturing workers of Ararat to the printers of Maryborough and the over 100 communities in between, Ripon is home to some of the most decent, hardworking, kind and generous people you will ever meet. I know this from experience, having talked and listened to thousands of locals on their doorsteps, over the phone, over cuppas and at market stalls across our region. To the people of Ripon, whether you saw fit to give me your vote or not, I promise you I intend on being a member who listens, who cares and who is your local voice first and always.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the former member Louise Staley and thank her for her service to our community over the last eight years. That same acknowledgement extends to every single candidate who put their hand up to serve the people of Ripon at this election. We may not agree on everything, but I will always admire those who seek to make our community a better place.

The pursuit of gold has defined the many communities in Ripon since William Campbell first discovered it in Clunes back in 1850. That time in our history saw both triumph and tragedy, from the enormous wealth that famously branded Maryborough ‘a town attached to a train station’ –

Jacinta Allan interjected.

Martha HAYLETT: it is beautiful – to the horrors of the 1882 Australasian mining disaster in Creswick, the worst of its kind in our history. The most famous legacy of the gold rush era was of course the Eureka rebellion. My predecessor remarked in her first speech that the lesson from this historical event was clear – that individuals should have the right to go about their business without excessive tax or red tape. Now, this may be indeed true, but I believe there is a far more profound lesson, a lesson that rings true across the dockyards, construction sites and bus depots, a lesson that has defined the growth in character of our state and country for the better and a lesson that was as relevant in the 1850s as it is today: when the workers are united they can never be defeated. Every day that I stand in this place I stand with workers and their representatives across Ripon and beyond. I want to thank the mighty union movement, in particular Mike McNess and Mem Suleyman from the Transport Workers Union, for their unwavering support. I congratulate them on their richly deserved re-election. I would also like to thank Elizabeth Doidge, Ian Fullerton and Paddy Farrelly from the CFMEU for their tireless efforts to support the Ripon campaign; Michael Donovan and Dean D’Angelo from the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association; and Cassia Drever-Smith, Ross Kenna and Brett Edgington from Ballarat Trades Hall, the second oldest in the world.

Now, none of us can claim to get here without the support of an army. At the heart of mine was my rock, my love, my fiancé Sam Lynch. He has been there with me every single step – during the tears, laughs and long days. Then there was Gabriella Dawson, a woman wise beyond her years and the best campaign manager in the business. Ours was a community campaign in the truest sense of the words. To the true believers of Ripon, many of whom are here today – the Ararat, Maryborough and Creswick-Clunes branches of the ALP: we turned Ripon red because of you. I stand on the shoulders of giants, including Hilary Hunt, Jeremy Harper, Jean Hart, Carole Hart, Thelma Herbertson, Bev Watkins, Alex Stoneman, Jenny Beales, John McDougall, Pat McAloon and Carmel Roads. Labor shines bright in Ripon because of you and the hundreds of local volunteers and supporters who turned up through it all.

To Daniel McGlone and Sarah De Santis, who ran powerful campaigns in 2014 and 2018 and came so close, your contribution to our movement will never be forgotten. To my core campaign team, who rose to every challenge: Lorraine O’Dal, the matriarch of Maryborough; Mark Karlovic, the steady hand, wise counsel and jack-of-all-trades; Craig Fletcher, who despite what you may have read in *Crikey* put up hundreds of yard signs far and wide; Craig Otte, the man with a van and a solution for every problem; Mitchell Kingston, the wonder kid from Queensland; Alice Jordan-Baird, who brightens every room she enters; Caley McPherson, who called every person I had ever met to make sure they helped out – she really did; Bassel Tallal, who always is and I am sure always will be just a phone call away to do whatever needs to be done; and to so many others, including Nicola Castleman,

Cam Petrie, Jett Fogarty, Jeff Hooper, Jenny and Bruce Mackay, Ash Bright, Susan Crebbin, Brody Viney, Wendy Podger, John Stewart, David Reeves, Frank Kitchen, Maree and John Murphy, Mary and Ian Bruce, Lis and Peter Humphries, David Morgan, Lesley Nelson, Warwick Stagg, Millie Page, James McDonald and Steve Cusworth, thank you for your endless energy and commitment.

I would also like to thank those who were taken from us all too soon but who stood with me in spirit: the endlessly loyal former Senator Mehmet Tillem, to whom I owe so much, and the force of nature Clara Jordan-Baird, who would have been 34 today and whose presence I felt beside me on all those backroads. Happy birthday, my darling. We love you, we miss you always.

I would also like to pay tribute to the Deputy Premier Jacinta Allan. You wrote the book on ensuring rural and regional voices are heard in this place. You paved the way for country women like me to put their hand up for Parliament, and I will always remember how prepared you were to seemingly drop everything with a moment's notice to help in any way you could.

I want to thank the Ballarat Labor family. To the federal member for Ballarat Catherine King, who took me under her wing and showed me the way, thank you, and to the member for Wendouree Juliana Addison, who gave me invaluable advice every single day; to the member for Eureka, who so generously introduced me to so many of the communities that were redistributed from her patch; to you, Speaker, for your friendship and support; to the member for Macedon Mary-Anne Thomas for cheering me on; and to the former member for Yan Yean Danielle Green for all the fun times.

To the sisterhood 2022 group – nine strong, incredible women that are all entering Parliament this year – thank you for keeping me laughing along the way. To the former Premier and the man who rebuilt regional Victoria Steve Bracks, former member for Ripon Joe Helper, member for Niddrie Ben Carroll, member for Lara Ella George, former Speaker in this place Judy Maddigan, former member for Southern Metropolitan Region Philip Dalidakis and former senator Stephen Conroy, thank you for your support and for keeping me on track. To Zoe Edwards, whose sage advice at the very beginning of this journey to just jump off the cliff and hope for the best is the reason I am here today, and to the federal member for Hawke Sam Rae, the size of whose heart is only matched by the height of his hair, thank you for everything.

To Chris Ford and your team at head office, Fordy, I thank you for the same reasons that all Labor members in this place thank you. You ran a brilliant campaign that has delivered Labor another four years in government, but I especially thank you for your loyalty, advice and friendship.

Finally, my thanks to the Premier and all cabinet ministers and members for the last eight years of bold and courageous leadership. It is a privilege to stand amongst your ranks. I look forward to four more years of getting on with it.

It will be the honour of my life to serve the people of Ripon in this place. It is why, as I close my opening remarks, it is to them that I make this promise: that I will not measure my success in this place by how many terms I serve or how high up the ladder I may climb; I will instead measure success by how strongly I amplify your voices and the voices of working people in rural and regional Victoria for your right to a safe and secure home, your access to quality health care and reliable transport, your safety and dignity at work and the opportunities that ensure your kids can reach their full potential. You have entrusted me with all of this and more. Rightfully it is a responsibility I take seriously, but I carry with me something much lighter too. I carry with me your unyielding optimism and aspiration, your deep belief in the power of community, your time-tested commitment in caring for one another and your willingness to back a young woman with an appetite for hard work. I will not let you down.

Members applauded.

Dylan WIGHT (Tarneit) (17:45): I am pleased to second the motion. I would like to begin by honouring the people of Tarneit for the trust that they have placed in me and honouring the Wurundjeri and the Boon Wurrung people as the traditional owners of the land.

The 2022 Victorian election has taught us that many of the old theories, paradigms and equations must be abandoned. In November the electorate, in their eternal wisdom, punished those parties and candidates who tried to ignore the demographic shifts, who opposed the new way of thinking or who denied the reality of generational transformation. The electorate rewarded candidates who at least attempted to understand what was going on, candidates who reflected the community as it truly is and candidates who had a vision for modern Victoria. Amidst all the change, some immutable facts remain. Voters like governments who say what they mean and mean what they say. Voters like governments who put the community first. Voters like governments who stand for something, who aspire for transformational change. So it is with great joy that Victorians have supported the Andrews Labor government as part of the broader, mighty labour movement.

For each of us there is a unique set of circumstances, motivations and idiosyncrasies that lead us to decide to run for Parliament. I want to talk about what drives me, but first I would like to acknowledge the fact that we all come here to try to help our communities and try to deliver a better Victoria for the next generation, so even when we are in heated disagreement I want you all to know that I respect the fact that you are prepared to stand up for your beliefs.

I, like so many others, developed my core beliefs from a young age. As the son of a blue-collar union convener who retrained later in life to become a public school teacher and the grandson of a man who had nine brothers and sisters, I was told from a very young age, ‘There are three important lessons to take with you throughout your life: always vote Labor, always be in the union and never, ever cross a picket line.’ Whilst these words have stuck with me throughout my journey, it was more than this that created the values that I live by today. I went to school, caught the bus and played sport in a place that relied on Labor governments. I saw firsthand the difference Labor could make. I remember the public housing estate next to my primary school. I went to school with the kids who lived there. We played football and cricket together at the local club. We had play dates at each other’s homes. Those families were an integral part of our community, but without social welfare, without Medicare, without compassionate governments, many of them would have been homeless. That is why politics is so important.

Politics can be a hard pursuit. There is a price to pay, and so often the ones that pay that price are the ones you love – your family and friends. To allow us to do what matters for Victorians in here we spend less time out there – less time at home, less time with those that love us.

I am conscious of making sure that this is not one big thankyou note, but there are plenty to thank, so bear with me. To the two loves of my life, Koby and Kai: I know the last little bit on the journey to Dad’s new job has at times been tough, but the good news is Dad’s good red team won and the bad blue team lost. Watching you boys grow and develop, being part of your lives, is the biggest privilege that I have. Kai, you are smart, sensitive and caring. I have never met another little boy who makes a new friend literally everywhere they go. Some people in life will try and take advantage of those qualities, but never, ever change. Koby, you are dry, witty and inquisitive, always full of questions and always ready to argue with me about why my answers to those questions are wrong, a trait that would not be out of place in here. Boys, there are times over the next four years that will be tough, times that we will not get to see each other as much as we would like, but always remember: whatever I achieve in here pales in comparison to the pride that I get from being your dad. To the boys’ mum, Cassie, thank you for everything you do for Koby and Kai. I could not think of a better co-parent.

To Dad Phil – Bartos: you are an educator, an activist, a confidant and at times an ATM. But above all that, you are my best friend. I consider my childhood to be one of privilege relative to many others. But things were not always easy. The love, support and downright patience that you showed Jarrod and me is the overwhelming reason that I am here. Dad was a Labor candidate in 1996 for Geelong – a campaign that unfortunately resulted in a re-elected Liberal government. During the campaign my mother Marie fell ill, diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumour. Mum, born and raised on a wheat farm in New South Wales, was as tough as they come, but by February of 1997 she was gone. Now a single parent, Dad put his political ambitions to the side to raise Jarrod and me and decided not to contest preselection for the 1999 state election. He instead supported a great friend to our family, the

former member for Geelong Ian Trezise. Dad, you belonged in this place as much as anybody sitting in here this afternoon. You gave up that opportunity for Jarrod and me, and that is a debt that I can never repay. Although I was only seven when Mum passed away, her love and her care for us is permanently imprinted in my brain, and there is not a day that goes by that I do not think about her.

Jarrold, my brother, carrying on the family business as a public school teacher, is a family man, a musician and a far better surfer than I am. You are everything that every husband and every father should aspire to be. Watching you raise your beautiful children, my nieces Lottie, Ines and Eleni, with Kylie has been nothing short of a gift. To Dad's partner Mary, perhaps the most vital cog in the Wight machine – so often you play the role of carer to Koby and Kai whilst I am out beating the drum – you may not hear this enough, but thank you.

And of course there is my partner Jess, a soldier, a serviceable volleyball player and an electrician looking after our state's energy grid. You have been with me for almost the entire journey since being preselected 12 months ago. I could not have done it without you. You keep me grounded for so many reasons. But for the most part, how can you complain about anything to somebody who just got home covered in oil, waiting to return to work at midnight to repair a transformer or a breaker so that Victoria can keep the lights on? You are funny, sweet and supportive and all of the good things. I am looking forward to spending much more time with you and Odie in the months and years ahead.

There are so many more to thank, some still with us and some not: Nan, Pa, Pop, Marie, Casey, Tori and the girls, Sharnee, Stef and the boys, Pam, Geoff, Bert and Ricco, Mitch and the old Thomson crew, the Geelong boys – you know who you are.

To my union, the AMWU – Ian Jones, John Herbertson and Paul Difelice, I am eternally grateful for your support and guidance, as well as to Minister Gayle Tierney. Tony Mavromatis, Tony Piccolo, Lou Malgeri and Vince Pepi, thank you for the opportunity, the work we did together and the ongoing friendship and support. To Michael Watson and Troy Gray from the Electrical Trades Union, Lisa Darmanin from the ASU, Susie Byers from the CPSU, and the entire Victorian union movement, thank you.

It is indeed a journey to get here, so to everybody that has been part of my journey – communications extraordinaire Hannah Dillon, my campaign manager Josh Spork, Casey Nunn, Clancy Dobbyn, Kos Samaras, Ros Spence, Michaela Settle, Josh Bull, Darren Cheeseman, Julijana Todorovic, Vicki Ward, Sam Rae, Alan Griffin, Mat Hilakari, Joanne Ryan, Nicola Castleman, Chris Ford, Sonja Terpstra, Raoul Wainwright and Kim Carr – you have all been part of my journey, and for that I am incredibly lucky.

To all those involved in my campaign, Tina and David Garrick; Rosy Buchanan; Robert Szatkowski; Vincent Belloso; Jas Sidu; Nusrat Islam; my predecessor in Tarneit and new member for Laverton, my friend Sarah Connolly; Tarneit Titans and Wyndham Suns football clubs; Tarneit Harmony Club; Club 60; Pritam Singh and the Tarneit gurdwara; Rifai Abdul Raheem and everybody at Melbourne Grand Mosque; Ravneet and the Hoppers Crossing gurdwara; Dr Rafiqul and Golden Wattle mosque; Sheikh Abdullah and Virgin Mary Mosque; and of course the legendary Mohamed Masood – my greatest thanks are reserved for all of you.

I am grateful because it is an honour and a privilege to represent Tarneit in this Parliament. The spirit of the community is amazing. A statistician would look at the electorate and tell you that half the voters have a mortgage, half the voters were born overseas and half the voters were born after 1981. Two out of every five voters follow a religion other than Christianity. But our community is much more than a list of stats. We are much more than Hoppers Crossing, Mount Cottrell and Tarneit. There is a palpable sense that we are building a diverse, dynamic and caring community from the ground up. As the local member, I want to champion that new way of community building.

One priority will be delivering the infrastructure the community needs that works the way the community wants. I will work hard to get a fair share of infrastructure investment. The Growth Areas

Infrastructure Contribution Fund, for example, can and must do more for Tarneit. Another key focus area is public housing. Past generations have shown us how vital public housing infrastructure really is. Luminaries such as the Prime Minister, the head of the Business Council of Australia, the member for Melton and the member for Geelong all started their lives in public housing. Now we get to enjoy the benefit of their skills and their abilities. The question we need to ask is: what future leaders will we lose if we do not provide the same opportunities for the next generation? The estate I spoke about earlier, next to my primary school – I am proud to say that as a result of the Big Housing Build, it is currently receiving a \$21.6 million upgrade. We have done a lot, but there is much more to do. In Victoria people are our key resource. Investment in public housing is an investment in that resource.

Another investment in that resource is making sure Victorians are safe at work. From bitter experience I can tell you that there is an unequal distribution of risk among Victorian workers. Blue-collar workers face a higher risk of being killed or suffering serious physical injuries at work. Having seen what I have seen, I am convinced that there is much more that needs to be done to both prevent injuries and support those workers that have suffered an injury, and I plan to work hard on that for all of my days.

I am excited about the rebirth of the SEC, not only because of the impact it will have on delivering energy responsibly, sustainably and affordably; I am also excited because of what the policy says about the apparatus of government. It says we can all come together under this umbrella called government to make things right. Of course the SEC will be all about jobs. We must aspire to a future based on high-skill, high-paid jobs. We cannot rely on the rest of the world; we need to make things here and be self-sufficient. Effective government procurement policies are vital in this endeavour. Victorian manufacturers and Victorian manufacturing workers can innovate, design and deliver what we need to be front and centre in this endeavour, and I look forward to working with the mighty AMWU in supporting manufacturing jobs in this state. For decades we were told, ‘We have 2000 level crossings around Victoria. We are stuck with them.’ This government has blown that old thinking out of the water. We must continue on in that spirit for the people of Tarneit and for all Victorians.

Members applauded.

The SPEAKER: I acknowledge Zoe McKenzie MP, member for Flinders, in the gallery. I acknowledge Aaron Violi MP, member for Casey, in the gallery, and I acknowledge the Honourable John Pandazopoulos, former minister, in the gallery.

Sam GROTH (Nepean) (18:05): I rise today with the honour of delivering my first speech to this, the 60th Parliament of Victoria, proudly representing the district and constituents of Nepean. It is an incredible privilege to be elected to this place, representing my community. The southern Mornington Peninsula is a unique and special part of our great state. Sandwiched between Bass Strait, Western Port Bay and Port Phillip, it is an incredible part of the world. Sand beaches on the bay side, surf beaches on another as well as rolling hills filled with vineyards and orchards in between – quite amazing for so-called metropolitan Melbourne.

I have asked myself numerous times in preparation for this moment how I ended up here as a member of the Victorian Parliament. Born in Narrandera, a small town in the Riverina, and growing up as the eldest of three children to my parents Phillip and Melinda, I had dreams to play footy for the Swans or play on the hallowed turf of the centre court at Wimbledon. We had a modest upbringing, my dad working six days a week to try and give his family a better life. But never, as a kid riding his bike to school in Corowa or to the local tennis courts or football ground at John Foord park, did I ever dream or envisage that I would be sitting as an elected member of this chamber. My family always made plenty of sacrifices for me to be able to travel and play tennis as a junior, and I know, looking back, it was a stretch for them, but I am forever grateful for that opportunity, and I worked hard every day to make sure that that sacrifice was not for nothing. It is that work ethic and mentality that I bring to this place as well.

These first 35 years of my life have seen many a career change. Moving to London at just 17, a year after my parents moved their family from Albury to Templestowe, tennis was my passion. I was lucky enough to be a member of the Victorian Institute of Sport and later the Australian Institute of Sport. As a 17-year-old boy from the country away from home in a foreign land, you grow up quick. At 21 I played my first Australian Open singles and thought I knew it all. But 2½ years later I was playing suburban footy at Vermont in Melbourne's eastern suburbs. After a year away and meeting my now wife Britt, I went back to tennis, and eventually I did walk onto that centre court at Wimbledon as well as the biggest stadiums my sport had to offer. I proudly represented Australia, just the 105th man to play in the Davis Cup for this country, and became an Olympian at Rio in 2016. But at 30 that career was over – and so I moved into the media.

Tennis commentary of course was the natural move but what followed – hosting a travel show and writing opinion – all became part of the package. I thought, 'This is me. Set for the future, commentating grand slam finals and helping showcase the very best our state has to offer.' I remember when all that changed, on 13 March 2020. I was an ambassador for the 2020 Formula One Australian Grand Prix, and my brother was getting married on the Friday. We had taken a day away from the track for a round of golf before the ceremony, and I received a call that the event was being cancelled because of the coronavirus. A year later and after numerous lockdowns I made the call: 'How do I help make a change?'

I joined the Liberal Party, contested preselection for the district of Nepean and now I stand here as the MP for my community. And while the change in government I had hoped would come a few weeks ago did not, I am here with a voice for the future of this state and for our party. With four years ahead of me representing Nepean, the state but also the Liberal Party, my mind turns to what the future may hold. For Nepean, I am committed to being the best local member possible. I made the move to the Mornington Peninsula with my wife Britt and our twins to give them the best start possible to life in a supportive community built on our mutual love for the unique environment and lifestyle. However, over the last eight years Nepean has been neglected by the Labor government – deprived of critical investment into facilities, services and infrastructure that we need to sustain our thriving communities. The southern peninsula is a global tourist destination and one of Victoria's ecological jewels. Despite this, it has been forced to cope with a lack of health and transport opportunities.

Nepean deserves its fair share of services and investment from the Victorian community, and I look forward to being a vocal, active and effective voice for my electorate in Parliament. I consistently campaigned for vital infrastructure, including the Rosebud Hospital and Jetty Road overpass, throughout the election period, and I will continue these campaigns as the local member, because my work as an MP should be focused on providing the best outcomes for the local community which has put its faith in me to advocate and deliver every day in service to them.

The Mornington Peninsula is unique, and I am dedicated to preserving and protecting it from overdevelopment and environmental degradation. I will work hard to ensure the peninsula way of life is upheld and that government legislation is scrutinised for its impact on our local area. For the state of Victoria, I will be an active and involved member of the Victorian opposition, working alongside our leader and shadow cabinet to ensure that we put forward a constructive and positive plan for the future of Victoria.

Following the re-election of the current government for its third term, it is more important than ever for Victoria to have an opposition of united focus, to ensure that accountability, transparency and integrity are upheld. In the Liberal Party we are faced with a choice, having only held government for four of the last 22 years – to rebuild for the future or continue offering more of the same. This election, the Victorian electorate again sent us a clear message. When my Liberal predecessor, the Honourable Martin Dixon, rose to deliver his first speech in 1996, he reflected on the Kennett government's success and how the Liberal Party would be determined to listen to the people, to learn, to change and to evaluate its vision. This is the sentiment we must now refocus on for the next four years.

Victorians expect a Liberal Party that represents the contemporary values of Victoria and reflects the diverse and modern community we are proud to have in this state. Clearly we did not satisfy this expectation, and that is something we must take meaningful and substantial steps towards changing and correcting. It is vital that we connect with our mainstream community through a fundamental re-evaluation of our platform while maintaining our core Liberal values on which the party has seen so much success in the past. There will be arguments after this election about whether we need to move right or left, but the reality is we need to move forward, and Victorian voters have made it clear that they will only accept a true Liberal Party representing a fiscally conservative and socially moderate agenda – a 21st century party for a modernised and cosmopolitan state. That is something I will work tirelessly to deliver for the Victorian electorate.

I will always be enormously grateful to the Nepean constituents for supporting me to be their local member, but I would not be here without the support of a number of people in particular. Firstly, my parents Phillip and Melinda; my brother and sister Oliver and Sophie; and my in-laws Mitch, Trish and Jacinta. To my campaign manager Edward and electorate chairman Bryan, as well as Robb, Anthea, Gael, Brian and Marshall from my campaign team, I want to thank everyone who volunteered, giving up time to open the office, stand at shopping centres and markets and to man the booths during pre-polling and on election day. I would not be here without all the hard work that you all put in. Thank you to all the donors who contributed to the campaign. To my friend and the federal member for Flinders, Zoe McKenzie, I look forward to working alongside you to deliver the best outcomes for our Mornington Peninsula. I thank the Liberal Party members in Nepean for putting their trust in me as the candidate and the people of Nepean for electing me to represent them.

I thank the members that I am now honoured to sit here beside and across from, knowing now the dedication and sacrifice it takes to sit in this place. Thank you to those that I have worked with over the last five years in the media – especially Emily, Ben and Brent – and to former member for Nepean Martin Dixon for his knowledge and always sound advice. I want to thank my two close friends and mentors: Josh Frydenberg for his political guidance over the last two years; and Todd Woodbridge both in my tennis days but especially in the last five years working alongside me and always being a guiding hand.

Most importantly, to my wife Britt: you have always been the most amazing support to me, no matter what I do, and somehow never once questioned why I would take on this journey. I am doing this for the future of this state so that our twins Mason and Parker have the best opportunity in life. This is going to be different for our family, but I know you will be there with me every step of the way. Britt, I love you.

So now, as I prepare for my first Australian summer without tennis for more than two decades, I look forward to being able to serve again, albeit in a different way. I thank the house for its indulgence.

Members applauded.

Daniela DE MARTINO (Monbulk) (18:19): Deputy Speaker, congratulations to you on your election to the position. I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we gather, the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung people, and pay my respects to their elders past and present and to Aboriginal and Torres Strait people with us here today.

I would like to begin by thanking the outgoing member for Monbulk the Honourable Mr James Merlino for 20 years of service to the electorate and to the wider state of Victoria. Mr Merlino most recently held the roles of Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Minister for Mental Health. My thanks go to him for his two decades of dedication and for his friendship and mentoring of me. Thanks must also go to his wife Meagan and their children Sophie, Emma and Joshua in supporting him to undertake his important role. Mr Merlino certainly set a high bar for all of us in this place, not least of all me. It is not often one would describe a politician as beloved – sorry, fellow members – but after the thousands of conversations I have held across the electorate, where so many expressed to me just

how well liked and respected he was, I believe I can safely make that claim here today. Victoria's loss with his retirement is now Hawthorn Football Club's gain as he takes his place on their board of directors. But I would please like it noted that Mr Merlino's unwavering love for Hawthorn just proves that no-one is perfect.

The electorate of Monbulk now takes in the majority of the Dandenong Ranges, located to the east of Melbourne. Its western border commences in parts of Ferntree Gully, Boronia and the Basin, and it extends east to the town of Gembrook. Thirty-five towns with their own proud histories line this district of hills, gullies, a multitude of waterways, temperate rainforest and an abundance of trees. It is a beautiful place. Monbulk has a thriving tourism industry, including the famous Puffing Billy Railway, the 1000 Steps and the Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden. The soon-to-be opened Chelsea Australian Garden at Olinda is sure to become another Victorian if not Australian icon. This is all in addition to the natural beauty found across the ranges, to which tourists have been daytripping since the 1870s.

The name Monbulk is believed to come from the local Indigenous word Monbolok, meaning 'hiding place in the hills', where it is thought that warriors would go to rest after battle. So it is clearly a place where people have gone to find peace for thousands of years. But for all its beauty the district of Monbulk is also vulnerable to bushfires, storms and landslips. The duality of the majestic and destructive force of nature is all too apparent across this electorate. The spectre of bushfires from years past still lingers for many. This coming 16 February will mark the 40th anniversary of the Ash Wednesday fires. The town of Cockatoo was devastated by the fire. They have not forgotten; nor should we. When storms hit, the power goes out, sometimes for days. In the case of last year's storms, many were without power for weeks. Along with the loss of power comes the loss of telecommunications. These two issues are critical for all who live across the electorate. The solutions are unlikely to be simple, but I will work with all levels of government towards finding them.

My story, like that of many others here in Victoria, started with immigration to this country. My father Paul and his parents and three siblings emigrated from Naples, Italy, in 1969. He was 17 years old – a year younger than my son is today – moving to a foreign country with a foreign language on the other side of the world. My mother Renata was born here just after her parents emigrated from the Veneto region of Italy in the late 1940s. When my nonna gave birth to my mum she could not understand the nurses speaking to her in English. I can only imagine how frightening and overwhelming that must have been for a young woman of 23, away from her family and community, birthing her first child with no clear understanding of what was happening to her. How brave she was.

The courage my family had to start a new life in a completely different country is the story of many who form a part of the rich multicultural tapestry of our state of Victoria. Last year's census found that 30.2 per cent of households in our state used a language other than English and both parents were born overseas for 41.3 per cent of Victorians.

This is something of which we should be incredibly proud. For as long as we continue to welcome and support those who seek a better life here they will enrich our society with their culture, skills, different experiences and perspectives, not to mention the amazing food – speaking of which, my interest in politics started at our family dinner table in my early teens. It was a frequent topic of conversation. My parents were committed believers in social democracy and the Labor Party. They never voted any other way. The names of Whitlam, Hawke and Keating were hallowed in my house. Although they were small business owners from the time I turned four, my parents always identified with the social justice values for which the Labor Party stands – ultimately that no-one should be left behind. They believed that those who were less fortunate were deserving of support and that ensuring people could live decent lives would result in a better society for everyone within it.

I also have a very good friend who now sits in the other place, Ms Lizzie Blandthorn, who would talk of politics with me on the bus, in class, before school, after school – anywhere and everywhere. Her connection to the Labor Party and the union movement was strong, as were her powers of persuasion,

and I decided in my late teens that I should join the party too. It was and is the party for the people, for the workers, for those who are not fortunate enough to be born into privilege, for those who need a hand and for those who will lend one to them.

My interest continued throughout my university years when I studied politics at the University of Melbourne through my bachelor of arts. I was fortunate enough to go on exchange for a semester overseas at the University of Manchester and found myself a job working in the local student pub. It was a dive. It is not uncommon when you are young to presume that the world as you know it is largely replicated across other countries. Whilst working in Manchester I learned that in the case of industrial relations our Australian system was quite special and certainly not the same as in the United Kingdom. In 1998 my hourly rate at the pub I worked in was £1.95. A few weeks into my new job I went to buy a toothbrush from a Boots pharmacy only to discover it cost me £2.50. My hour of work could not buy me a toothbrush. My indignation and fury were palpable. How was this possible? Wasn't there a minimum wage like we had back at home? The short answer was no. In fact it was not until April 1999 that the United Kingdom's first minimum wage was introduced. By contrast, we established a wages board in 1896 in Victoria, and the Harvester decision of 1908 set our first minimum wage. We beat the English by 91 years, but who is counting? If I was not already assured of the importance of the Labor Party and unions in this country, I was utterly convinced of it after experiencing the paltry wage many of us were subjected to back in the UK.

A couple of years later I heard the calling to become a teacher and completed my diploma of education. I entered the classroom in 2002, teaching English, history and geography over the next seven years at Firbank Grammar School and Pembroke Secondary College. I loved it. It is one of the great privileges to be able to teach young people and guide them on their journey into the next stage of their lives. Some of the best people I know are teachers and educators. Indeed, most of my closest friends and my two sisters-in-law are or have been. They are selfless in their work and dedicated to the education and wellbeing of young people. We all owe them our gratitude. Alison, Sally, Kate, Jacinta, Jane, Michelle and Jenny: you are some of the best of us.

Education is the great leveller, and this government has done so much already to ensure Victorian children get the best start in life. I will advocate strongly for schools so that staff have the best settings to deliver exceptional education for students. One of my proudest moments during the campaign was announcing the upgrading of Emerald Secondary College. I look forward to seeing this come to fruition.

When my teaching schedule clashed with my capacity to secure child care, the plight of many a working primary carer, I found a new part-time role at the national office of the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association, where I worked as an industrial officer. With the memory of my experience in Manchester still fresh, I was full of passion for the work which unions do in securing better conditions and pay for workers.

We defended a tax on penalty rates and won the case to change the adult rate from 21 to 20 years for workers in retail and fast food. Some of the most brilliant minds dedicated to improving the lives of others were in that office. Greta Brewin, Ian Blandthorn, Julia Fox, Sue-Anne Burnley, Therese Bryant, Katie Bittlestone and Matt Galbraith – I learned so much from all of you, and I bring that knowledge into this place with me now. The collective power of people working towards a common good should never be derided or diminished. We need only look to countries where minimum wages mean people barely subsist, conditions like annual or personal leave do not exist or are grossly limited, and occupational health and safety is largely ignored. They are places where unions have little presence, if any at all, and consequently workers are treated poorly. Unions give voice to the vulnerable, and I will always proudly support the important work they undertake.

After five years of industrial relations work I decided that I needed a different direction and a job closer to home. Mike and I bought the local organic store, which turns 40 next year. Climate change and environmental issues more broadly are the biggest existential crises we face across the globe. In running this business, where we minimised waste and packaging and we championed sustainable

chemical-free farming and food processing, I was able to live my values once again. We have only one planet, and as custodians of it we must do our utmost to mitigate the change which is occurring. It is the least we owe to our children and their children to come.

Although I am the daughter of small business owners, it was only after managing my own for six years that I truly appreciated the hard work which goes into running a business and employing staff. Small businesses are the largest employer collectively in this state and across the country. I truly understand the challenges they face and will bring those experiences into this place. Thriving, stable businesses employ happy, well-treated staff. They are deserving of our support. To the staff we employed over the years, some of whom are here, my thanks to them all for being the best staff anyone could find. Some have become my friends, and I am so grateful to them for their work and friendship.

It is through a desire to help others that I find myself here today – to give voice to those who do not have one or struggle to be heard over others. It has been said by those who know me well, and probably by most people who have been more than five minutes in my company, that I can talk underwater. I was even berated for talking and singing in class one day when I was not even present, so clearly my reputation preceded me. Well, I am here to put my capacity to speak to good use, but with the promise to always listen more and to listen carefully to what the constituents of Monbulk have to tell me and to bring their stories into this place with me in an effort to help those who need it most.

Being elected to Parliament required the work of many wonderful people who gave of their time freely to support our campaign. I thank them all, including Amit; Andrew; Anne; Bev; Ian; Kate; Kara; Kelly; Maria; Mr Michael Galea, currently giving his inaugural speech in the other place – he has probably already given it; Michelle; Sophie; and Tricia. Thanks to you all. I must also make special note of Pam, our secretary, and Liam, our campaign director. Both are deserving of the highest thanks one can give. The work they undertook was demanding yet executed with precision and never a complaint. To the members and friends of the wonderful Monbulk branch of the Labor Party, thanks for climbing the mountain with me to knock on doors, for picking up the phone to talk with voters and for standing at street stalls and stations in the rain, hail, more rain and very little shine. Special mention must be made of Andrew, Tricia, Warwick, Rudy, Vander, Lynne, Adam, Pat, Ken, Di and Lucius – the amount of time they all gave up to help this campaign was extraordinary. Thank you also to Mr Michael Donovan, national president and secretary of the Victorian branch of the SDA, and Dean D'Angelo and the hardworking SDA young Labor crew, notably Ella Gvildys and Adam Steiner, for all their support and effort.

To my dear friends and family here in the gallery today and those who could not make it, including my in-laws in the UK, Anne and David, Alison, Sally, Simon, Pete, Amelia, Tom and Sam, I am grateful to have them all in my life. My sister Laura and my old friends Jane, Connie, Michelle, Kate, Lucy, Louisa, Sarah, Matt and Sam, thank you for decades of friendship and for putting up with my political chatter over the decades. Now I have a position where I can talk politics all day long and possibly leave you all in some peace – possibly.

To my mother and father, who is no longer with us, thank you for raising me and imbuing me with your values of social justice. Thanks for all your love and support. I know that wherever Dad is he is proud and he is loving this moment.

To my husband Mike: when I went to study in Manchester, I travelled with the dream of exploring the United Kingdom and Europe and spreading my 20-year-old wings. I came back with a fiancé, almost giving my parents synchronised heart attacks. Here we are, 25 years later. I am so glad we found each other. Mike, you are my greatest supporter and defender but also the first to tell me when I need to pull my head in. I am blessed to have you, and I love you. My Alex and Bella: the resilience each of you has shown through the challenges you have had to endure in your short lives is remarkable. I stand in awe of you both and how you have coped with all that you have experienced. I could not be prouder, and I love you with all my heart.

It is a true honour to stand here having been elected by the people of Monbulk – to represent them and give voice to their needs in the Parliament of Victoria is a privileged position. It is a responsibility which few have the chance to hold, and I will not take it for granted. Never in my wildest dreams, as the granddaughter of poor migrants and as a pub worker earning less than a toothbrush an hour, did I think I would be standing here in this place, a member of the most progressive government this great state of Victoria – indeed Australia – has ever seen. I am so very grateful and so very proud to be a part of it. I promise that every time I enter I will pause to remember the work I have to do for the people I represent, with a true desire to leave this place better than I found it. And I hope that when I leave these chambers for the final time, I will have made everyone proud.

Members applauded.

Jade BENHAM (Mildura) (18:42): First and foremost I wish to acknowledge the traditional owners of my electorate, the Ladji Ladji and Barkindji people, who have enriched and continue to enrich us with their culture, which will forever remain enshrined in our region. I also pay my respects to their elders past and present.

Today I begin my journey to represent them and represent every man, woman and child within my entire community. For that I am forever grateful, and over the period of my term in office as the member for Mildura I will never take that for granted. I am indeed honoured and humbled by the support and comfort that the voters in my electorate in the far reaches of the great north-west of Victoria have afforded me. It has been overwhelming, yet it has given me a great sense of expectation that the work starts now.

It was hard work that the Mallee was built on, and I have witnessed firsthand the triumphs and tragedies that have impacted this region, even now with a significant flooding event, with a potentially devastating disease that has ravaged our growers who produce the vast majority of our country's dried fruit and table grape exports and with a sudden hailstorm which has wiped out cereal crops across the southern Mallee. They are part of my community. They are my friends. They are my neighbours. By representing them in this Parliament I hope they receive the support to get them through a wasted season – another one – with no income for another year.

Just imagine for a minute in this chamber – or any of your constituents – living for one year with no pay, trying to put school shirts on your children's backs, unable to provide them with sporting gear so they can enjoy the crisp Mallee air of a Saturday morning playing the sport of their choice, let alone have aspirations of greater education and career opportunities ahead. Ours is a region that faces these challenges over and over and over again. This is the reason I am here. This is the reason that I fought so hard to be in this Parliament: to fight for the people of the Mildura electorate. Now here I am, because in the Mallee we need to fight tooth and nail for everything we get. But too often something has to give: the crops fail, the floods come. Our socio-economic status is one of the lowest in the state; our unemployment rate is one of the highest in the state. And yet we fight on. That is what we do in the Mallee – we are full of fight.

In year 11 I was told by a teacher – not one like you, Daniela – that I would never amount to anything, as are many in my community, whether it is because some believe that we will just end up blockies' wives, I kid you not, or blockies ourselves. Or perhaps it is due to the perceived lack of opportunity or vision for something bigger. I hope now I can be that vision for young people who know their parents cannot afford to send them on to higher education or who are told over and over again they will amount to nothing. Guess what? Yes, you will – with just a little bit of fight. The opportunities are honestly endless in the great north-west; you just sometimes have to create them for yourself.

I come from a long line of women who had a whole lot of fight in them and refused to stay quiet – shocking, I know – who refused to be the victim simply because of the place where they lived. My Italian grandmother emigrated out here to be with a man she did not even know in the 1950s. She could not cook – yeah, we got ripped off – but she had the fight in her. She fought to come out to this

country because she knew there was a better life waiting for her future family here in Australia and the place that we now call home. Every day she worked so hard to grow her family the food they needed to survive and ultimately thrive.

My maternal grandmother, daughter of a World War I hero, grew up on harsh Mallee country in the 1920s and would tell stories of the hut that they lived in and of the Natya school where she was educated. She went on to become the first A-grade netball umpire in our part of Victoria in the 1970s. Imagine the work, dedication and effort that must have taken in the 70s. But she had the fight in her. She was determined. She got there. Now my own mother, my sister and I carry that legacy today, although none of us have been able to reach the A-grade status that she did. But she fought for it, and she won.

My mother at just 26 years old faced the prospect of having a nine-month-old baby and the fight of her life on her hands – to run a grape block as well as raising her new child, me, alone at 26. Where were you at 26? I bet it was not running a farm with a toddler on your hip. Now, fight or flight should have kicked in here, and it probably did. She chose fight. Whilst her husband – my dad – was booked for a course at Castlemaine college courtesy of Her Majesty, she fought every single day to make sure it was all there when he got home. She was there. The farm was there. Everything was there because of the fight in her. Under the most trying circumstances she refused to be a victim and walk away. She refused to give up. She knew that if she put her head down and her bum up, she could get through this, and then they could get through anything. Despite being wiped out with hail later on down the track and a few other ups and downs along the way, I am happy to say that they are still married and sitting over there after 47 years and still live on that same block that they bought together when they were first married – the one she ran while dad was on ‘holiday’. She fought. She won – and she is still winning.

I am a second-generation Australian on my father’s side and a World War I soldier settler’s great-granddaughter on my mother’s. The Mallee is in my blood, and in the Mallee we fight. We always have. The entire Mildura electorate is a marvellous place – very, very different from end to end. It is probably the place where the last carrot you ate came from; in fact there is a 35 per cent chance it came from just up the road from my place. Smashed avo on toast – yes, we are growing that too. The avocados and the grains that go into your sourdough – that is coming from us. And the almond latte you order from your barista in the morning, that is us. In fact we are producing 60 per cent of Australia’s almonds in our region, and that is just the tip of the iceberg. Grapes, legumes, sultanas, oranges, Mallee prime lamb, asparagus, wheat, lentils, stone fruit – they are all grown right in my patch, and they will land on your plate without notice or consequence. You will enjoy them – you might even compliment the chef – but without our visionary, innovative and dedicated efforts in the far north-west, you would be missing out.

Next time you do eat the glorious things we have grown for you, spare a thought for the fight that it took to get to your plate, fridge or fruit bowl. Think about the many families out on farms right now as we sit here – harvest wives making sure that the crews are fed in the hope that they can have Christmas Day off, or the families in the district who on the daily have to fight ever-growing numbers of trucks on roads with gaping potholes, crumbling shoulders and huge drop-offs, quite often having to leave the road entirely and come to a stop because there is no other choice if we want to stay alive on our country roads. Think about the school bus drivers that fear for their precious cargo’s lives every time they turn a corner that has not been maintained, or think about the fact that whilst your food is delicious the cost is far greater than the money you are paying for it.

Thankfully, Mallee growers are full of fight. They have to be or none of us would ever eat. That lamb or granola, grapes, carrots or whatever it is has caused our growers incredible stress and heartache. It has cost them more to produce this year than it ever has before because of chemical prices, freight costs, labour issues, flood, hail, disease and so on. Think about the actual price of getting it to you. It is a lot more than \$2 an avocado, I promise, but we fight on. We fight because we have a job to do, and that job is feeding your family.

Whilst our growers are incredibly stressed – and I know this because I am married to one – seeking help for those health issues, both mental and physical, that manifest is getting increasingly harder in the Mildura district. Imagine being in a mental health crisis and being told a GP appointment for a mental health plan is at least eight weeks away or that your four-year-old requires antibiotics urgently but you have no idea where you might be able to get a script for that. Because of the recent closure of Tristar Medical and other issues surrounding rural medicine and GPs we cannot get a doctor's appointment for three months or a telehealth appointment for at least 10 days now. Just this week I had a gentleman contact me who, in his mid-seventies, requires pain medication and who throughout COVID has become accustomed to telehealth. Imagine him, living alone, being told he would not be able to have his medication for Christmas because there are simply no appointments available. And imagine him being told that he should try going up to accident and emergency at our hospital. He does not want to do that, of course, because he knows the pressure that Mildura Base Public Hospital is under. He knows that he would have to sit outside for a RAT and wait times could be lengthy.

Imagine being Mildura mum Katrina, wife of Scott who, with an undiagnosed heart condition, suddenly died because he could not get an angiogram in a regional city of over 40,000 people. When Scott's heart condition took a turn, even though they lived only minutes from the hospital, ambulance services could not get him to life-saving treatment. Now she fights with every fibre of her being so that the people of our tri-state area of Mildura have access to specialist care and procedures like angiograms. The Umback family have just celebrated their fourth Christmas without their husband, dad, son, brother and uncle over the weekend. I plan to help Katrina fight.

The great north-west of this state is just getting greater, but our roads and healthcare systems are failing us. I believe it is worth fighting for basic services for those that provide you with your family's food every day. It does not seem like a huge trade-off, does it? Decent roads and transport infrastructure to get food to market and port, a doctor's appointment when you need one and a rural healthcare model that grows with our region and does not force those who need support to move to larger centres where they can get it – these are just two of the issues that gave me the fight to run for the seat of Mildura. Now that I am here my intention is to follow them through. I have only ever wanted the best for my community, and my promise is to do that each and every day of the week.

My family has been and continues to be my strength. To my husband Luke, who is the backbone and heart of this operation, words will not ever be able to thank you enough, but I will work so hard that the outcomes just might be. To my children and stepchildren Brooklyn, Scarlett, Peyton and Parker, your generation is why Mamma is always working. I will think of you every day that I am away for work. I love you to the moon and back and all the twinkle stars. To my mum and dad, who filled me with this fight in the first place by showing me exactly what it looked like, thank you. I hope I have made you proud despite the green boots.

We are only just getting started. To my ride-or-die squad, Kel and Brylee, thank you. To the National Party dream team, Matt and the team at head office, and our campaign committee on the ground – Daniel Linklater, Jon Armstrong, Grace Walker, Brylee Neyland, Xavier Healy, Alan Malcolm, Gerry Leach and John Watson – you all have the fight in you and you are amazing. Thank you to the federal member for Mallee, Dr Anne Webster, for all your work – I cannot wait to work closely with you for the betterment of our community. To the volunteers who hung or hosted signs or handed out how-to-vote cards on polling day and over the course of pre-polling, I say thank you. It takes stamina and fight, and you had plenty.

I welcome other new members of Parliament and look forward to working with the current government and other members to get a fair go for the Mildura electorate – the region that puts food on your plate and champions on racetracks, and punches above its weight every day. I invite all of you to come and see it for yourself. I am deeply humbled that my journey to represent the people of Mildura begins today. Thank you.

Members applauded.

Chris CREWITHER (Mornington) (19:03): It is an honour to be elected to serve as Mornington district's representative, covering Mount Eliza, Mornington, Tuerong, most of Mount Martha and Moorooduc, and part of Baxter. We live in an amazing part of the world. To all I promise to be genuine, humble, compassionate and hardworking and to have courage of conviction, put myself in others' shoes, stand up for justice and make a difference. Today I will outline my background, principles and changes needed.

Grace and I live in Mount Eliza with our kids Yasmin and Edward, who attend a local child care and public primary school. Yasmin has missed her last day of grade 1 today, but what a learning experience!

I grew up in Horsham with my three younger siblings Sara, Katrina and Lee. My dad Barry was born in Mildura. His mum tragically died at 23, and his sister at Kew Cottages years later. He moved in with Melbourne relatives, later moving back in with Grandpa when he remarried. At 16 Dad started in the army apprentice scheme at the old Balcombe army barracks in Mount Martha, now housing young people through Fusion. Dad then worked as a mechanic and a financial planner and recently ran the Wimmera's community transport program. My mum Debbie was born in Jeparit, living on a farm at Ellam. After a family split she moved with her siblings to Melbourne with my nanna. In my early years Mum danced and taught ballet but, growing up, mostly worked as our mum.

Now for a story. My nearly 95-year-old grandpa Bob McIntosh and his cousin Noel had neighbouring farms. They shared farm equipment and their kids played together, including Mum. Coincidentally endorsed on the same night last year, I am now privileged to serve in neighbouring chambers with Noel's grandson, my third cousin Tom McIntosh, Labor's member for Eastern Victoria, also covering Mornington.

I was not born with a silver spoon in my mouth; nor was Grace, whose parents moved to western Sydney from South Korea when she was aged three. Seeing my parents work hard to create a better life, I followed their example, starting as a paper boy aged 11, then at BP and at Franklins supermarket.

My spark to make a difference was lit seeing significant disadvantage growing up and doing YMCA's Victorian and federal Youth Parliament over 20 years ago at Camp Manyung in Mount Eliza and this Victorian Parliament. After attending mainly public schools in Horsham and Murtoa, I completed a law degree and two masters degrees in international law and diplomacy, on break working in canola and wheat breeding. Professionally I have worked as a magistrate's associate, lawyer, project manager, international lawyer through the UN in Kosovo, CEO of Mildura Development Corporation and head of strategic partnerships for the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery. I have been on several boards and committees, including Global Voices, Mt Eliza Woodland Residents Association, my daughter's primary school's parents and friends association, and Australia's Modern Slavery Expert Advisory Group. I am also patron of the Tourette Syndrome Association of Australia.

Previously I represented part of Mornington district as a federal MP from 2016 to 2019. Nationally I was chair of Parliament's Foreign Affairs and Aid Subcommittee and the government's home affairs and legal affairs policy committee, bringing about Australia's Modern Slavery Act. With locals I delivered many projects, including Mornington Little Aths track, Mount Martha Soccer Club fields, Peninsula Home Hospice's building, the National Centre for Healthy Ageing and more. I am perhaps the only MP to have stood now in four federal and state elections against the Nationals, the teals and Labor and to have served at federal and state level. But that is the past. I will use this experience to build for our future.

From preselection on 9 December last year to declaration as Mornington's MP on 9 December this year, I have worked hard, hand in hand with locals. For the next four years I will work with constituents, Liberal and National colleagues and parliamentarians to improve Mornington district and Victoria.

Liberals must be different. Before the next election Liberals will have spent 23 out of 27 years in opposition and won one election in 30 years. So we must offer an alternative and stand up for what we believe in: aspiration, free enterprise, families, reward for effort, lean government and of course freedom, equality of opportunity, preserving our environment and justice, which I will now address.

First, on freedom: Liberals and I believe in the basic freedoms of thought, worship, speech, association and choice. In my experience this campaign was the most others and I have been targeted for being or associating with people of faith – often not for what was said but on the basis of guilt by association. In saying that, anyone should be able to express their views and try to persuade others. It is not wrong to be a Christian or a person of faith. Under a secular democracy, one should not try to impose their world view or restrict the rights of others. Christians, atheists, Muslims and others applying these principles have more in common than those who do not. That does not mean, though, that one cannot express their faith or non-faith in politics or acknowledge God, as I do. Principles and values shaped by one's faith, world view, experiences and upbringing are crucial. Importantly, we must value each person equally, strive for justice and treat everyone with kindness, not as 'the other'. We must abandon generalised labels like 'religious right', 'right-wing nut jobs', 'loony left' and so on. This simplifies politics and humanity and enables ad hominem attacks based on group identity, whereas an individual can have views ranging from left through to right. So this term I will stand up for people of faith or non-faith to freely speak their mind and for private schools and organisations to freely associate and employ based on their values and beliefs.

With the pandemic we have also seen a massive incursion into people's freedoms to protest, express themselves, freely practise their faith or even go to the playground. We saw the power of state governments and the limited power of federal government. In my 2016 maiden speech to federal Parliament I noted that most freedoms are not guaranteed and can be whittled away with a simple parliamentary majority. I just did not see it happening in 2020. Thus basic freedoms and liberties should be included in Victoria's constitution with special majority and/or referendum protection.

On vaccinations, another topical subject: firstly, I support vaccinations. They have done a great job globally with measles, smallpox, polio and more. However, people should not be forced, coerced or pressured on vaccinations through mandates, job losses, financial losses or exclusion. Vaccination uptake should only be based on education, persuasion and positive incentives. For that reason, I do not support mandates. We need less-restrictive options that bring larger vaccination gains.

On drug use, having worked in a Magistrates Court early in my career, I know that many of these cases take a lot of police and court time away from dealing with more serious matters, so on this point I also personally support decriminalisation of drug use and targeting dealers, not users.

On social media, we need laws targeting algorithms that divide society, feed people different information on the same topic, create confirmation bias and echo chambers and connect similar people. Instead social media should be an open marketplace of ideas, feed people a variety of information, promote creative thinking and randomly connect people.

Second, on equality of opportunity, we believe in equality of opportunity, 'with all ... having the opportunity to reach their full potential'. People should be able to follow their dreams and aspirations regardless of background, postcode, socio-economic situation, sexual orientation and so on.

On education, schoolchildren are disadvantaged on school choice because of their postcode – particularly due to zoning – and socio-economic situation. This perpetuates advantage and disadvantage, and artificially inflates and deflates house prices. It does not increase school choice, particularly for disadvantaged kids, create school competition, incentivise improvements or intermix society. Thus we must look at the way we do zoning, if at all. We should also look to a HECS-based system for schools so children have maximum school choice no matter their socio-economic background. Further, we must increase child education levels, looking to places like Finland. There should be a high minimum tertiary entry standard for teaching while concurrently greatly increasing

teacher pay and reducing administrative burdens. We must see, respect and reward teachers in the same bracket as doctors, as they are in, say, South Korea.

Starting primary school, I recall seeing kids without uniforms being picked on. We need to expand up-front coverage for uniforms, excursions, music, dance, sports and more in schools and implement a post-school model, like in Iceland, to give young people positive alternatives. We must also invest in education infrastructure based on need, not on margins or politics. In Mornington district examples include Mount Eliza Secondary College, with nearly 50-year-old buildings, and Mornington Park Primary School.

On connectivity infrastructure and services, we must decentralise and invest to attract industry, business, jobs, people and services, and grow opportunity no matter one's postcode. This includes investing in public transport, rail, airport, port, road, power, freight, health, education, sport and communications nodes across Victoria. I will continue advocating for passenger rail to Baxter and Mornington plus to places like Mildura, Horsham, Koo Wee Rup and elsewhere; Hastings to Mornington with a bus service and a bus service to our local retirement villages; fixing potholed roads; redeveloping Rosebud Hospital; and upgrading reserves like Emil Madsen, Dallas Brooks, Narambi, Moorooduc and Ferrero. Much of the Mornington Peninsula is further than Geelong is from the city, but we get 10 times less investment. Like Geelong, we must be reclassified as regional while protecting our green wedge. With the growth of telework under COVID, more people can work from anywhere, so with connectivity infrastructure we can reduce urban sprawl, productive land loss and commutes; revive regional communities; improve people's way of life; support farmers and miners; grow high-quality manufacturing; and enable energy investment.

On public housing and homelessness, we must end grouped or concentrated public housing, which perpetuates disadvantage. Instead we must invest in distributed public housing across Victoria that intermixes society and improves support networks. Years ago I got funding for a Melbourne City Mission trial to match people needing a home or a room with those offering them. Such a program could be implemented across Victoria, with land tax, stamp duty and rate reductions to incentivise home owners to offer accommodation. Longer term stability can change lives, and there are more than enough under-utilised properties in Victoria to house every person experiencing homelessness. We must also fund and replicate proven holistic models like Fusion and Zoe Support Australia.

On payroll tax and stamp duty, these should also be phased out and replaced. Payroll tax punishes employment. Stamp duty lowers first home ownership, disincentivises housing turnover and impacts house prices.

Third, on the environment, we believe in preserving our environment for future generations. That is why Liberals like Alan Hunt pioneered the green wedge. This is a major issue for Mornington, including the old Reg Ansett land and mansion, the decommissioned South East Water reservoir and protecting our beaches from eroding due to human interference such as dredging, inadequate drainage and Mornington's wave wall. We must stop inappropriate development, save sites like the old reservoir as wetlands and invest in long-term beach solutions.

Fourth, on justice, we believe in a 'just and humane society in which the importance of the family and the role of law and justice is maintained'. Enhancing justice is essential. Injustice begets injustice, but with justice comes a caring and humane society. And so I was honoured to be appointed as Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Justice and Corrections and today as Liberal Party Whip in the Legislative Assembly. Thank you, John and team. I will also have more to say on these roles, but I will strive to use my experience to bring about a better and fairer justice system, improve youth justice outcomes, tackle modern slavery and more.

Without an incredible team of hundreds of volunteers I would not be standing here today, so thank you. Thank you to my executive and campaign committee: Mornington chair Stephen Batty, campaign chair Peter Rawlings, campaign manager Jackie Hammill, Anita Josefsson, Susanne La Fontaine,

Linda and Robert Hicks, Colin and Dawn Fisher, Greg Dixon, Josiah Matthew, Lisa Francis, Sophie Stuart and Michael Stuart, James Balmer, Steve Perera, Dreena Gray and Emma Buchanan, and also Edward Burke as initial campaign chair.

Everyone who donated, put up signs, encouraged me and volunteered – thank you. And to those who have gone above and beyond that I have not already named, including Emile Nicholas, Ruth Sutton, Sabe Saitta, Kerry Beard, Jan Strong, Renate Hadoway, Robin Amos, Britt Lloyd-Doughty, Di Goetz, Mark Burke, Louise Ashby, Judy Shearman, Amedeo Sacco, Colin and Linda Price, Michael and Jenny Hall, Travis Mitchell, Massimo Cannatelli, Ian Morrison, John and Pam Power, Amy Mitchell, Tom and Maree Shelton, Peter Royal, Dennis Gist, Wayne Gibbs, Rob Cook, Len Martin, Annie Neil, Monica Hughes, Jake Robison, John Healey, Victor Doree, Andrew Lennie, Robert Latimer, James Ludlow, Callum Carter and so many others – naming people is very dangerous, so I apologise if I have missed anyone.

To driver Bayley Sacco, Matthew Baragwanath and Veuga Taviri, Jordie and Progress Signs and Dush and Snap Frankston, thank you.

Thanks to MPs who have given me support, particularly Bev McArthur MP and shadow ministers who came out. Locally, thanks to Renee Heath MP, David Burgess, Zoe McKenzie MP, the Honourable Greg Hunt, Neale Burgess, Cathrine Burnett-Wake, Sam Groth MP, Ann-Marie Hermans MP plus amazing local candidates Briony Hutton, Bec Buchanan, Michael O'Reilly, Phillip Pease and Manju Hanumantharayappa – your time will come. I also acknowledge the 16-year service of my predecessor David Morris and his wife Linda. Thanks also to Liberal headquarters, members across the party who have supported me and all candidates for Mornington.

Finally, thanks also to Neil King from Horsham College, who sparked my interest in politics; my parents Barry and Debbie and parents-in-law Justin and Sarah; my grandparents who could not be here, Grandpa Bob, Grandmas Verna and June; relatives; and those who are here in spirit.

Lastly, thank you to my amazing wife Grace and our two young children, Yasmin and Edward, and every dedicated supporter who is here with me in the chamber today. Especially I would like to thank the people of Mornington. I will not let you down.

Members applauded.

Mary-Anne THOMAS (Macedon – Leader of the House, Minister for Health, Minister for Health Infrastructure, Minister for Medical Research) (19:22): I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Ordered that debate be adjourned until later this day.

Business of the house

Postponement

Mary-Anne THOMAS (Macedon – Leader of the House, Minister for Health, Minister for Health Infrastructure, Minister for Medical Research) (19:22): I move:

That remaining business be postponed.

Motion agreed to.

Adjournment

The SPEAKER: The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

Timber industry

Danny O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) (19:22): (1) My adjournment matter this evening is for the Minister for Agriculture, and the action I seek is for the minister to take action to save the timber industry, particularly the timber jobs in Gippsland and around the state that are under threat at the moment. She can do that by making amendments to the timber code of practice to close loopholes in legal action that shut the timber industry down overnight as of a couple of weeks ago. The minister will be very aware that we currently have 200 jobs on the chopping block at Opal's Maryvale mill, the single biggest private employer in the Latrobe Valley. I know my colleague the member for Morwell would like to raise this issue himself, but until he has spoken he is unable to do so in this place.

On behalf of the member for Morwell, me, a member for Eastern Victoria Region in the other place and the Shadow Minister for Agriculture, we need the Minister for Agriculture to act. We need it because we have currently got harvest and haul contractors who are out of work – they cannot do anything because of this legal action and because of the government's failure to act. We have got workers at mills who are on the verge of being stood down because those mills have run out of timber, and we have got 200 jobs at Opal under threat because they have just about run out of timber. On 23 December they are expected to run out of native timber, and this is an absolute shame.

We know the government has a policy to shut down the timber industry by 2030. We do not like it, we oppose it strongly, and our position was strongly endorsed in those seats in Gippsland, including in Morwell where the Labor Party suffered a 9 per cent swing against it, in part I am sure because of the position of the government on the timber industry. But the government's policy is 2030; it is not now, as is being enforced by the legal action through the courts. We need the government to step in. Workers and communities do not want compensation. They do not want payouts, and they do not want some sort of scheme to help them transition to a new future; they want their jobs. They want the jobs that the government said would be there while the transition occurs.

We will always oppose the shutting down of the native timber industry. It is bad for the environment because all that will happen is we will import more timber from overseas, from places that are less regulated. It is good for climate change – a native timber sector actually helps with carbon sequestration. So this is a disastrous situation. I plead with the government – I beg the minister – to take action. Forget what has happened in Northcote and Brunswick and everywhere else. The election is over. These are jobs on the chopping block right before Christmas, and we need the government to take action to save those jobs and give the timber industry and the workers in Gippsland some hope for the short term at the very least.

East Bentleigh ambulance station

Nick STAIKOS (Bentleigh) (19:25): (2) Deputy Speaker, I congratulate you on your election.

My adjournment matter tonight is for the attention of our new Minister for Ambulance Services, and the action I seek from the minister is that she visit the Bentleigh electorate for the start of works at the new East Bentleigh ambulance station. A number of years ago I met with some local paramedics stationed at the Brighton station who had told me that a large proportion of their call-outs were coming from my electorate, and from that meeting we have now got this commitment and funding from the Andrews government to establish a new ambulance station in the Bentleigh electorate. The site will be Moorabbin Hospital – incidentally, where I was born; I was born in my electorate. Site investigations have now concluded. They took place a few months ago. I understand we are close to appointing a builder. The ambulance station will be up and running next year in 2023. It will mean that my electorate will have its own ambulance crew in East Bentleigh taking care of Bentleigh residents. So I ask that the minister join me on a visit to Moorabbin Hospital to meet with some local paramedics and also to mark the start of works at this important new facility.

Railway House, Beaconsfield

Brad BATTIN (Berwick) (19:27): (3) Congratulations on your promotion to Deputy Speaker.

My adjournment tonight is for the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. I should have written that down before I got up here. It is in relation to a transport infrastructure project that is going to be happening in Beaconsfield, and I would like the minister to come out and meet with the constituents out there, particularly those that are in a house which is a very old house that was built in Beaconsfield in 1888. The community out there is distraught that the government are not only going to be going forward with a project that tears up a car park that was recently funded with \$15 million of federal funding and has only just started to be used post COVID – they are going to be tearing up that work and wasting that money – but are also going in and tearing down a house which is known in Beaconsfield as the ‘Railway House and Bunya Bunya Pine’.

The house was built in 1888 by James Adamson for Charles Nott. The house was known as the Kenilworth Cottage and has had various owners. In 1900 it was acquired by the railway for a stationmaster’s house, and it is now privately owned and has been sensitively restored and renovated. Ian Cole put blood, sweat and tears into that property to restore it to what it was traditionally and originally. It is an absolutely stunning home. That bunya-bunya pine was planted out the front of the Railway House and is a remnant of the Kenilworth Gardens from the 1880s. It is a rare example of this type and is now on the significant trees list.

Now, I understand progress and I understand moving forward, but we have to have sensitivities, because if you went into any of the areas within Melbourne in the inner east you would not be going through and tearing down a house that is this old. The government and councils would not give permits to tear down a house that is this old. It is the oldest house in Beaconsfield. It was one of the first properties in Beaconsfield. It has a fine history and has been restored from a property that you could almost say was going to fall down at one particular stage. I ask the minister to come down and ensure that every bit that we can do to protect this house is done. The owners of the property want to stay there. I look at the property. It is in the middle of two car parks – it is not a place I would go to look for positive real estate, two car parks around a railway station. However, because of the history that is there the location of it is absolutely stunning, and because of what they have done, we must preserve this history. I ask the minister: please come down and ensure that the sensitivity of this property is taken into consideration with any developments happening down there. I do not believe we are fixing a problem that is a massive issue through Kenilworth and Station streets, but I think it is paramount that we protect this house as a priority for the Beaconsfield community.

Melbourne Airport rail link

Sarah CONNOLLY (Laverton) (19:30): (4) My adjournment is for the Deputy Premier and Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. The action I seek is that the minister updates me on the works that are currently underway on the Melbourne airport rail project, now branded as SRL Airport. As the minister knows, SRL Airport is one of the biggest infrastructure projects that our government has undertaken in Melbourne’s west. For folks in my electorate in the Sunshine area this project is going to bring a lot of change, and with those changes will come tremendous opportunities.

When I was on the campaign trail this year meeting constituents, the project was actually a highlight of those discussions. Folks in the west and definitely beyond want to see a rail line to the airport become a reality. They know it means fewer cars on our roads and freeways, greater ease of travel to the airport and more and more options to travel into the city. It is something that Melbourne has waited a very long time for, and we are getting on and delivering it before the end of the decade.

As the new name now suggests, this rail link will also form part of our government’s monumental Suburban Rail Loop project, linking folks in the west with the rest of Melbourne via the rail loop. An update from the minister on where we are at with this project now that works have started will be warmly welcomed by my constituents in the Laverton electorate, where these works will be taking place.

Sandringham electorate level crossing removals

Brad ROWSWELL (Sandringham) (19:31): (5) I also congratulate you on your elevation and election to high office. Having worked with you as a former whip in this place, I know that you will execute those duties very, very well and impartially.

My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. The action that I seek is for the minister to meet with and listen to the residents along the Frankston line who are impacted by the Highett Road, Wickham Road, Latrobe Street and Warrigal Road level crossings. The minister recently announced that the Frankston line will be level crossing free but failed to consider the consequences and impacts of that rushed decision on my community. The minister knows very well my advocacy in relation to these matters in this place. I consistently raised matters relating to the Highett Road and Wickham Road level crossing removals during the last Parliament, asking the government time and time again to deliver upon those things.

We are now faced with the circumstance where the government is proposing sky rail in Highett Road and Wickham Road to remove those two level crossings. This will have an impact on my community – an incredible impact on my community and a negative impact on my community. At this moment rumours are running rife in the community, and this is one of the reasons why I want the minister to sit down with the affected residents to listen to them and hear from them. Grace Heart Community Church, which does such wonderful work in our community, Highett Bowls Club, Lyle Anderson Reserve and the Dunkley Fox estate – a local public housing estate – are due to be impacted by the level crossing removal at Highett Road if sky rail proceeds. This is an unacceptable thing in my community.

At Warrigal Road we are hearing that there will be sky rail there again. Set aside the fact that the Warrigal Road level road crossing should have been removed at the same time as the Balcombe Road level crossing, but sky rail there will simply mean a roller-coaster ride for passengers along the Frankston line from Parkdale right through to the city.

I asked my community – 1500 households – two questions when the government announced that they would close the Latrobe Street level crossing. Firstly, were you consulted by the government before they made this announcement? And, secondly, do you want the crossing closed? The overwhelming majority, in fact 96 per cent, said that they were not consulted, and 88 per cent of respondents across 300 households said they did not want this level crossing closed. I implore the government to listen to my community and for the minister to visit my community to sit down with the residents, community groups and organisations who are affected by the thinking of the government and their ill-considered announcement.

Lyndhurst Secondary College

Gary MAAS (Narre Warren South) (19:34): (6) I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Deputy Speaker, on your elevation to that position.

For my adjournment matter I wish to raise this for the attention of the Minister for Education. It concerns Lyndhurst Secondary College. The action I seek is that the minister provides further information on the Andrews Labor government's election commitment to upgrade and modernise the school. As a result of the electoral redistribution, I now have Lyndhurst Secondary College in the seat of Narre Warren South, and it is really terrific to have been re-elected so that the government can deliver on its election commitment.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the member for Cranbourne, who previously represented the school and spent time introducing me to the hardworking principals in my new area, including Eloise Haynes from Lyndhurst Secondary College. Ms Haynes and her staff and students' hard work has been recognised recently by the *Age* newspaper. They selected Lyndhurst Secondary College as a Schools that Excel winner for government schools in Melbourne's south. I am so glad that Lyndhurst Secondary College will be receiving \$13.6 million for upgrade and modernisation

works, and the upgrade will help the school to continue to deliver the best education and facilities for staff, students and the school community. I would appreciate if the minister could provide any further information on the election commitment to upgrade Lyndhurst Secondary College and I look forward to sharing the minister's response with my community.

Caulfield South Primary School

David SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) (19:36): (7) Could I also join with others in congratulating you on your elevation to Deputy Speaker. I am sure you will do a great job.

Today I have a very important matter, and the matter is for the Minister for Education. The action that I seek is that the minister intervene to sort out ongoing issues – cultural issues, leadership issues – that have been taking place at Caulfield South Primary School. This is a very serious matter. It is a matter that I had hoped the department would sort out prior to the election. It is something that we did not want to make a political situation during the election. Unfortunately it has got to the point where we desperately need the minister to intervene. I understand the minister met with the school only a day or two ago. This has been going on for a number of months; the department met 12 months ago with a new school council. There are issues of misconduct, there are issues of misappropriation of funds, there are issues of allegations of bullying and intimidation. We have a parent body that are beside themselves at the moment. We have an acting principal that has come from Caulfield Primary School, another great school, and has now spent nine weeks managing Caulfield South Primary School, and we now have two schools that have been affected by this situation.

This school desperately needs leadership. This school needs the department or the minister to actually ensure that the school gets protection, that they provide the education that these kids deserve, and that this mess gets cleaned up. The department and the minister have a responsibility to those kids, to those parents, to provide the best of education. At this election we committed \$11 million to upgrade the school. I am pleased that the government responded by committing \$9 million, and the school will get \$9 million of facilities in terms of an upgrade. But facilities alone do not fix the school; it is culture, it is the way we look after our kids, and it starts at the top. It is not good enough to have a principal that has been on and off leave for a number of years now. It is something that has continued to happen at this school.

This school, which was the jewel in the crown – Caulfield South Primary School – has fallen by the wayside. It was years ago that I raised with the previous minister that we could not even get toilets fixed at this school, and we had to go on 3AW to get that fixed. Kids had to hold it in – could not use those toilets – because they were in an appalling situation. This school needs support. The minister needs to sort it out before the kids return back after summer. We need the school fixed up. The minister needs to get going and ensure that these kids are looked after and supported, and I ask the minister – I plead with the minister – to ensure Caulfield South Primary School and these kids get the support that they deserve.

Cranbourne community hospital

Pauline RICHARDS (Cranbourne) (19:39): (8) Deputy Speaker, congratulations on your elevation.

My adjournment matter is to the Minister for Health, and the action I seek is that the minister visit the site of the Cranbourne community hospital and update the consultative committee on progress of this exciting project. The Cranbourne community hospital will be a terrific three-storey service run by Monash Health in the heart of Cranbourne East. It will include ophthalmology, dental, dialysis and after-hours urgent care. The Cranbourne community are very much excited about this new hospital, and the consultative committee have worked very hard to ensure it meets the needs of our growing and diverse community. I look forward to the minister's response.

Native forest logging

Tim READ (Brunswick) (19:39): (9) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Agriculture, and I ask the minister to legislate for native forest logging to cease in Victoria by December 2023 and to accompany this with a support package for workers, and for the industry to transition to plantation timber and paper alternatives. The worsening climate crisis requires us to eliminate emissions from every part of our economy, but, as the Premier often says, it is not like flicking a switch; it takes time, and during that time more greenhouse gases are pumped into our atmosphere. Worse still, the consequences of global warming, like forest fires, further accelerate global warming both by producing large amounts of carbon dioxide and by killing the trees that remove CO₂ from the atmosphere, so the one thing we should stop as soon as we can is the logging and subsequent burning of native forest in Victoria.

Victoria's Central Highlands forests store more CO₂ per hectare than any forests in the world, but we continue to subsidise their destruction, putting over 3 million tonnes of that CO₂ back into the atmosphere every year. I was surprised to read – I know the number for South Gippsland will be interested in this – that our Central Highlands forests contain more carbon per hectare than even the Amazon forests.

Decades of unsustainable logging, fires and climate change mean very little of Victoria's original forests remain. Everything that is left is critical habitat for Victoria's sadly growing list of species facing extinction. Recent court cases brought by community groups to protect threatened species habitat have highlighted that continuing to log native forests in Victoria is untenable. As we understand it, logging across much of the state is now on hold and workers face an uncertain future. The environmentally and socially responsible thing for the government to do at this time is to reset. And we know that 2030 is too late to end logging – too late for our climate, too late for the threatened species and too late for the very workers whose fate is the concern of the member for South Gippsland.

Ringwood electorate level crossing removals

Will FOWLES (Ringwood) (19:42): (10) I find myself in the invidious position of standing between a very excited new bunch of parliamentarians and a cold beer over the road, so I am going to make this very brief indeed.

My adjournment matter is directed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, and I ask the minister to arrange a briefing on the Bedford–Dublin roads level crossing project, to provide an update on the project so far and the next steps as we make Ringwood level crossing free. In the interests of brevity I am not going to talk about how my opponent in the election spent a lot of time bagging the level crossing project and then suddenly found out it was fantastic. I am not going to spend a whole bunch of time talking about how those opposite run down these programs – they just dip into them the whole time. I am not going to spend all my time doing that. I am going to finish very quickly and wish you all a very merry Christmas and a safe and happy new year.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, a merry Christmas to us all.

Responses

Melissa HORNE (Williamstown – Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, Minister for Local Government, Minister for Ports and Freight, Minister for Roads and Road Safety) (19:43): Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker, and I too would like to add my congratulations on your elevation. Before we adjourn I would also like to thank the parliamentary clerks and all the staff of the Parliament for getting us through what feels like a considerably long year. Thank you very much –

Members interjecting.

Melissa HORNE: 'Interminable' actually is the way that I was describing it a little earlier today, but nevertheless we are almost there.

ADJOURNMENT

The member for Gippsland South and the member for Brunswick raised matters – very polarising matters – for the Minister for Agriculture. We had the member for Bentleigh raise a matter for the Minister for Ambulance Services. The members for Berwick, Laverton, Sandringham and Ringwood raised matters for the Deputy Premier. The member for Narre Warren South and also the member for Caulfield raised matters for the Minister for Education, and the member for Cranbourne raised a matter for the Minister for Health.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The house is now adjourned.

House adjourned 7:44 pm until Tuesday 7 February 2023.