Hansard

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

60th Parliament

Thursday 24 September 2026

By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

Office-holders of the Legislative Assembly

60th Parliament

Speaker

Maree Edwards

Deputy Speaker

Matt Fregon

Acting Speakers

Juliana Addison, Martin Cameron, Jordan Crugnale, Daniela De Martino, Wayne Farnham, Lauren Kathage, Nathan Lambert, Paul Mercurio, Kim O'Keeffe, Meng Heang Tak and Iwan Walters

Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Premier

Ben Carroll (from 28 July 2026)

Jacinta Allan (from 27 September 2023 to 28 July 2026)

Daniel Andrews (to 27 September 2023)

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Deputy Premier

Gabrielle Williams (from 28 July 2026)

Ben Carroll (from 28 September 2023 to 28 July 2026)

Jacinta Allan (to 27 September 2023)

Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and Leader of the Opposition

Jess Wilson (from 18 November 2025)

Brad Battin (from 27 December 2024 to 18 November 2025)

John Pesutto (to 27 December 2024)

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

David Southwick (from 28 January 2026)

Sam Groth (from 27 December 2024 to 28 January 2026)

David Southwick (to 27 December 2024)

Leader of the Nationals

Danny O'Brien (from 26 November 2024)

Peter Walsh (to 26 November 2024)

Deputy Leader of the Nationals

Emma Kealy

Leader of the House

Anthony Carbines (from 15 April 2026)

Mary-Anne Thomas (to 15 April 2026)

Manager of Opposition Business

James Newbury (from 13 October 2025)

Bridget Vallence (from 7 January 2025 to 13 October 2025)

James Newbury (to 7 January 2025)

Members of the Legislative Assembly

60th Parliament

Member	District	Party	Member	District	Party
Addison, Juliana	Wendouree	ALP	Maas, Gary	Narre Warren South	ALP
Allan, Jacinta	Bendigo East	ALP	McCurdy, Tim	Ovens Valley	Nat
Andrews, Daniel[1]	Mulgrave	ALP	McGhie, Steve	Melton	ALP
Battin, Brad	Berwick	Lib	McLeish, Cindy	Eildon	Lib
Benham, Jade	Mildura	Nat	Marchant, Alison	Bellarine	ALP
Britnell, Roma	South-West Coast	Lib	Marsh, Anthony[9]	Nepean	Lib
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[2]	South Barwon	Ind	O'Keeffe, Kim	Shepparton	Nat
Cianflone, Anthony	Pascoe Vale	ALP	Pallas, Tim[10]	Werribee	ALP
Cleeland, Annabelle	Euroa	Nat	Pearson, Danny	Essendon	ALP
Connolly, Sarah	Laverton	ALP	Pesutto, John	Hawthorn	Lib
Couzens, Christine	Geelong	ALP	Read, Tim[11]	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[12]	Warrandyte	Lib
Edwards, Maree	Bendigo West	ALP	Southwick, David	Caulfield	Lib
Farnham, Wayne	Narracan	Lib	Spence, Ros	Kalkallo	ALP
Foster, Eden[3]	Mulgrave	ALP	Staikos, Nick	Bentleigh	ALP
Fowles, Will[4]	Ringwood	Ind	Suleyman, Natalie	St Albans	ALP
Fregon, Matt	Ashwood	ALP	Tak, Meng Heang	Clarinda	ALP
George, Ella	Lara	ALP	Taylor, Jackson	Bayswater	ALP
Grigorovitch, Luba	Kororoit	ALP	Taylor, Nina	Albert Park	ALP
Groth, Sam[5]	Nepean	Lib	Theophanous, Kat	Northcote	ALP
Guy, Matthew	Bulleen	Lib	Thomas, Mary-Anne	Macedon	ALP
Halfpenny, Bronwyn	Thomastown	ALP	Tilley, Bill	Benambra	Lib
Hall, Katie	Footscray	ALP	Vallence, Bridget	Evelyn	Lib
Hamer, Paul	Box Hill	ALP	Vulin, Emma	Pakenham	ALP
Haylett, Martha	Ripon	ALP	Walsh, Peter	Murray Plains	Nat
Hibbins, Sam[6, 7]	Prahran	Ind	Walters, Iwan	Greenvale	ALP
Hilakari, Mathew	Point Cook	ALP	Ward, Vicki	Eltham	ALP
Hodgett, David	Croydon	Lib	Wells, Kim	Rowville	Lib
Horne, Melissa	Williamstown	ALP	Werner, Nicole[13]	Warrandyte	Lib
Hutchins, Natalie	Sydenham	ALP	Westaway, Rachel[14]	Prahran	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
Lambert, Nathan	Preston	ALP	Wilson, Jess	Kew	Lib
Lister, John[8]	Werribee	ALP			

[1] Resigned 27 September 2023
[2] ALP until 29 April 2024
[3] Sworn in 6 February 2024
[4] ALP until 5 August 2023
[5] Resigned 13 February 2026
[6] Greens until 1 November 2024
[7] Resigned 23 November 2024
[8] Sworn in 4 March 2025
[9] Sworn in 2 June 2026
[10] Resigned 6 January 2025
[11] Died 19 September 2026
[12] Resigned 7 July 2023
[13] Sworn in 3 October 2023
[14] Sworn in 4 March 2025

Party abbreviations

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

CONTENTS

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE
Notices of motion and orders of the day 4083
PETITIONS
Montrose quarry 4083
Retail crime 4083
Warrnambool College 4084
COMMITTEES
Privileges Committee 4084
Person Referred to in the Legislative Assembly: Simon Vallone 4084
DOCUMENTS
Documents 4084
BILLS
Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Bill 2026 4085
Council's amendments 4085
Appropriation 4085
MOTIONS
Motions by leave 4085
BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE
Standing and sessional orders 4086
MOTIONS
Motions by leave 4086
MEMBERS STATEMENTS
Dandenong electorate 4086
South Melbourne Football Club 4086
State election 4087
Ivanhoe electorate 4087
Gippsland East electorate 4087
Felicitations 4088
Energy policy 4088
Williamstown electorate 4088
Warrandyte electorate 4089
Box Hill Hawks Football Club 4089
Surrey Park Football Club 4089
Rohan Ritchie 4089
Mid-Autumn Festival 4090
Felicitations 4090
Mordialloc electorate 4090
Road maintenance 4090
Felicitations 4091
Middle East conflict 4091
Cheltenham East Primary School 4092
Prahran electorate 4092
St Albans electorate 4092
Elevated rail 4093
Montmorency Bowling Club 4093
Eltham Bowling Club 4093
Felicitations 4093
Michael Ritchie 4094
Williams Landing train station 4094
BILLS
Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Bill 2026 4094
Council's amendments 4094
MOTIONS
Liberal Party policy 4120
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE AND MINISTERS STATEMENTS
Road maintenance 4144
Ministers statements: government achievements 4144
Construction industry 4145
Ministers statements: racing industry 4146
Construction industry 4146
Ministers statements: health system 4147

CONTENTS

Homelessness 4148
Ministers statements: education system 4148
Government performance 4149
Ministers statements: crime 4149

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS
Mornington electorate 4150
Broadmeadows electorate 4150
Ovens Valley electorate 4150
Cranbourne electorate 4151
Prahran electorate 4151
Preston electorate 4151
Ringwood electorate 4151
Glen Waverley electorate 4152
Polwarth electorate 4152
Monbulk electorate 4152

MOTIONS
Liberal Party policy 4152

MEMBERS
Member for Mill Park 4170
Valedictory statement 4170

MOTIONS
Liberal Party policy 4174

MEMBERS
Member for Bendigo West 4175
Valedictory statement 4175

MOTIONS
Liberal Party policy 4180

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE
Adjournment 4184

BILLS
Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Amendment Bill 2026 4184
Council's amendments 4184

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE
Notices of motion 4184

MOTIONS
Respectful Relationships 4185

BILLS
Inquiries Amendment (Special Prosecutor) Bill 2026 4191
Council's agreement 4191
Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Amendment Bill 2026 4191
Council's amendments 4191

ANNOUNCEMENTS
Felicitations 4198

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE
Postponement 4199

ADJOURNMENT
Lorne fuel supply 4199
Bellarine electorate bus services 4200
Regional development 4200
Sacred Heart Mission 4201
Warrnambool College 4201
Pascoe Vale electorate schools 4202
Foster and kinship carers 4203
Monbulk electorate volunteers 4204
Felicitations 4204
Wallan wallan regional park 4205
Responses 4205

Thursday 24 September 2026

The SPEAKER (Maree Edwards) took the chair at 9:33 am, read the prayer and made an Acknowledgement of Country.

Business of the house

Notices of motion and orders of the day

The SPEAKER (09:34): General business, notices of motion 2, 10 and 81 to 100 and order of the day 7, will be removed from the notice paper unless members wishing their matter to remain advise the Clerk in writing before 2 pm today.

Petitions

Montrose quarry

David HODGETT (Croydon) presented a petition bearing 799 signatures:

Communities and professionals of **Monbulk, Croydon, Bayswater, and Evelyn electorates** have major concerns around Boral's Montrose Quarry, including potential cumulative long-term impacts of site operations, dust, airborne particulate matter, blasting, noise, vibration, landslip, habitat and vegetation loss, groundwater, waterway, cultural heritage, traffic and associated amenity impacts.

- Montrose Quarry does not meet the EPA's 500-metre recommended separation distance for quarry operations, nor the planning scheme's 1-kilometre buffer for asphalt plants.
- Boral's proposed Montrose Quarry Extension seeks to extend operations 30-plus years beyond current life expectancy, and increase extraction area by approximately 12 hectares, significantly encroaching upon homes, schools, businesses, childcare, aged-care, and other surrounding land-uses.
- Boral's proposal includes an additional extraction area almost 60 percent larger than its previous expansion application, which Yarra Ranges Council unanimously rejected (2007). State Government declined Boral's request for intervention (2008). Councillors recognised incompatibility of expanding operations with surrounding sensitive land-use.
- The Minister for Planning determined an Environment Effects Statement (EES) is required due to significant environmental and community impact potential. Human health impacts have not been identified within the Minister's Statement of Decision or Reasons for Decision.

The petitioners therefore request that **the Legislative Assembly of Victoria** call on the Minister for Planning to guarantee any forthcoming EES Scoping Requirements will, before release for public comment:

a. Mandate a comprehensive, fully independent Human Health Impact Assessment (HHIA);

b. Ensure this Human Health Impact Assessment examines actual and cumulative health impacts associated with dust, fine particulate matter, silica exposure, pollutants, noise, blasting, vibration, traffic, emissions, amenity loss, mental health, and any other quarry-related impacts on nearby sensitive receptors;

c. Require that the Human Health Impact Assessment outcomes be given substantial weight in determining whether the project can lawfully or safely proceed, should health, safety, or environmental risks be demonstrated.

Ordered that petition be considered tomorrow.

Retail crime

Iwan WALTERS (Greenvale) presented a petition bearing 716 signatures:

Issue:

This petition of residents in Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly the urgent and growing crisis of aggression and assaults against retail, fast food, hospitality, and transport workers – those who keep our communities running every day.

1. These workers are essential workers and face frequent violence and intimidation simply for doing their jobs, and the toll on their safety and wellbeing is unacceptable.

2. Strong action has been taken in other States and Territories to stamp out this scourge and send a message that our society will not tolerate aggression and violence directed at directed at these workers.
3. Premier Allan promised in May last year to introduce stronger penalties, and we now call on the Legislative Assembly to act swiftly, ensuring real, concrete measures are in place to protect those who serve our community.

Action:

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly legislate, without delay, to impose tougher penalties for aggression and assault directed at retail, fast food, hospitality and transport workers and introduce Workplace Protection Orders for use against serial offenders.

Warrnambool College

Roma BRITNELL (South-West Coast) presented a petition bearing 1830 signatures:

The petition of residents of Warrnambool and surrounding communities

draws to the attention of the House

that the Warrnambool College Pool is an important regional aquatic facility used by 16 schools and approximately 3,067 students for swimming instruction, water-safety education and other aquatic programs. Approximately 1,400 swimmers use the facility each week.

The proposed closure of the Warrnambool College Pool on 20 December 2026 will significantly reduce aquatic capacity available to schools, swimming programs, families and the wider community. Existing aquatic facilities in Warrnambool and surrounding communities do not currently have sufficient capacity to accommodate all of the programs and users who would be affected by the closure.

The closure therefore creates a significant risk to the continued provision of swimming and water-safety education for local students and to access to swimming programs for the wider community.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria

extend the proposed closure date of the Warrnambool College Pool from 20 December 2026 to 20 December 2028, and use this additional time to assess regional aquatic capacity and work with affected schools, councils, aquatic operators, Warrnambool Swimming Club and other relevant stakeholders to develop and implement a safe, practical and coordinated transition plan. The plan should ensure that adequate and accessible aquatic facilities are available for school swimming, water-safety education, swimming lessons, training and competition before the Warrnambool College Pool closes.

Roma BRITNELL: I move:

That the petition tabled in my name, with over 2000 signatures in 36 hours, be moved on this day of sitting, and I urge the Premier to reverse the decision.

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for South-West Coast, unfortunately, that is not the way to do things, so we will expunge that one from the record.

Committees

Privileges Committee

Person Referred to in the Legislative Assembly: Simon Vallone

Lily D'AMBROSIO (Mill Park) (09:37): I have the honour to present to the house a report from the Privileges Committee on a person referred to in the Legislative Assembly, Simon Vallone, together with appendices.

Ordered to be published.

Documents

Documents

Incorporated list as follows:

DOCUMENTS TABLED UNDER ACTS OF PARLIAMENT – The Clerk tabled:

Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission, Board of – Report 2024–25

Duties Act 2000:

Report 2025–26 of Foreign Purchaser Additional Duty Exemptions under s 3E

Report 2025–26 of corporate reconstruction and consolidated concessions and exemptions under s 250B

Gambling Regulation Act 2003 – Report of Independent Review Panel: Monitoring Licensing Project

Land Tax Act 2005 – Report 1 July 2023 to 31 December 2025 of Land Tax Absentee Owner Surcharge Exemptions under s 3BB

Ombudsman – Investigation report: 'I just get dark, dark thoughts': How DJCS considers human rights when applying to transfer children to adult prison – Ordered to be published

Statutory Rules under the following Acts:

Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 – SRs 130, 132

Criminal Procedure Act 2009 – SR 132

Electricity Safety Act 1998 – SR 126

Planning and Environment Act 1987 – SR 127

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 – SRs 125, 128, 129

Youth Justice Act 2024 – SR 131

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994:

Documents under s 15 in relation to Statutory Rules 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131

Documents under s 16B in relation to the *Essential Services Commission Act 2001*:

Electricity Distribution Code of Practice (Life Support Reforms) Amendment 2026

Energy Retail Code of Practice (Life Support Reforms) Amendment 2026

Gas Distribution System Code of Practice (Life Support Reforms) Amendment 2026

Victoria Police – Report 2025–26 under s 20R of the *Witness Protection Act 1991*

Victoria Police, Chief Commissioner – Report 2025–26 under s 148R of the *Liquor Reform Act 1998*

Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board – Report 2025–26.

Bills

Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Bill 2026

Council's amendments

The SPEAKER (09:38): I have received a message from the Legislative Council agreeing to the Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Bill 2026 with amendments.

Ordered that amendments be taken into consideration later this day.

Appropriation

The SPEAKER (09:39): I have received a message from the Lieutenant-Governor recommending an appropriation for the purposes of the Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Bill 2026.

Motions

Motions by leave

Ellen SANDELL (Melbourne) (09:39): I move, by leave:

> That this house calls on the Victorian Labor government to recall Parliament to pass the working-from-home legislation, noting it has the support of the Greens to pass the upper house.

Leave refused.

Business of the house

Standing and sessional orders

Anthony CARBINES (Ivanhoe – Leader of the House, Minister for Artificial Intelligence and the Digital Economy, Minister for Major Events, Minister for Medical Research, Minister for Racing, Minister for Economic Development) (09:39): I move, by leave:

> That so much of standing and sessional orders be suspended today to allow the Speaker to interrupt business at 4:15 pm and the member for Mill Park to make a valedictory statement for a maximum of 15 minutes.

Motion agreed to.

Motions

Motions by leave

Gabrielle DE VIETRI (Richmond) (09:40): I move, by leave:

> That this house notes that 191.5 tonnes of nitrocellulose was sent to the United States, predominantly via Yarraville port, in Melbourne since 2023, enough for over 20,000 mortar shells which have been used to arm Israel's genocide in Palestine and calls on the government to end the two-way arms trade with Israel.

Leave refused.

David SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) (09:41): I move, by leave:

> That this house condemns the vigil honouring martyrs on the anniversary of the 7 October Hamas terrorist attack, which murdered 1200 people, and calls on the government to do something.

Leave refused.

Members statements

Dandenong electorate

Gabrielle WILLIAMS (Dandenong – Minister for Education, Minister for Skills and Training, Minister for First Peoples, Minister for Women and Gender Equality) (09:42): I rise today to celebrate and thank my community in Dandenong. Since 2014 I have proudly represented one of the most diverse communities in the country, and together we have achieved a lot. In just the last four years this Labor government has delivered a brand new tech school in Dandenong. Over the 12 years I have represented the community we have upgraded almost every local school across the Cranbourne and Pakenham lines. We have built more social housing, and in the last four years that included some more social housing in Noble Park. We have in this last term alone saved the Doveton pool. We have delivered the Stud Road pedestrian crossing. We have upgraded a number of local sporting and community precincts. We have established in my time a brand new mental health and wellbeing local, and before that we opened an Orange Door. These are services that would not exist but for Labor. We backed our local multicultural communities with funding and improvement for facilities and for festivals. We have funded significant upgrades to the Dandenong Hospital, and in my time we have halved the local unemployment rate. We have also benefited from free TAFE and 20 per cent off rego, free breakfast clubs in schools, free kinder and so much more. This government has continued to back local jobs. We have always proudly backed multiculturalism and the diversity on which my community is built. But all this is at stake, because a Liberal–One Nation coalition stands against diversity.

South Melbourne Football Club

Matthew GUY (Bulleen) (09:43): I would like to offer my congratulations to the South Melbourne footy club, one of Australia's most decorated and oldest football clubs, for reaching the final of the Australia Cup, which will be played on 10 October, where they will meet Melbourne Victory. It is a game that has been 21 years in the making. Many of my constituents are of Greek heritage and have followed this club for generations. South Melbourne was not just a football club when it was formed in 1959, it was a cultural heartbeat of the Greek community. It did not just produce footballers and

coaches like Trimboli and Postecoglou; it was a place of belonging for those who had recently arrived from Greece. And now, on 10 October, 67 years later, South Melbourne fans of all generations will see their club on the biggest stage again.

It will be a wonderful occasion to see two of the most successful football clubs from two very different eras go head-to-head. I know many of my constituents would love to see South Melbourne back in the A-league, and perhaps a win here for South over Victory may prove that this is the right time for them to make a return. I know the South team has done an extraordinary job on and off the field, and many of the constituents believe the Hellas supporters will far outnumber those of Victory. So here's to a wonderful game, and may the best team win.

State election

Matthew GUY (Bulleen) (09:44): Speaking of 'may the best team win', after 12 years of this Labor government the health system is worse off, the roads have never been in as bad a condition. debt is the highest it has ever been, we face a diabolical budget and corruption is endemic. The government is a complete disgrace. It is time to change the government at this election, and Victorians are going to do so once and for all.

Ivanhoe electorate

Anthony CARBINES (Ivanhoe – Leader of the House, Minister for Artificial Intelligence and the Digital Economy, Minister for Major Events, Minister for Medical Research, Minister for Racing, Minister for Economic Development) (09:45): The Victorian people always get it right. I do offer my thanks to the Ivanhoe electorate across the 60th Parliament and the work that we have been doing since I arrived here for the 57th Parliament. We have worked to achieve many outcomes for the locals, including duplicating the Hurstbridge line between Heidelberg and Rosanna to run extra services; the new and expanded Chandler Highway bridge; the North East Link to get 15,000 trucks off local roads; our Austin Hospital emergency department, where a $275 million emergency department expansion is underway right now; the $14 million new gym and classrooms at Heidelberg Primary School, which are almost finished; the $750,000 new Ivanhoe library; the $76 million for 130 new homes at the Tarakan estate in West Heidelberg; the new SES that has opened for services in West Heidelberg; the 100-plus new homes under construction on the Bell-Bardia estate, thanks to a $55 million contribution from our government; the new Olympic Village Primary School for $6 million, which is providing services to my local community; the new Rosanna Library, where $1.5 million is operating and providing services; the level crossing gone at Rosanna, with a new station that is servicing our community; the Macleod level crossing will soon be gone; and my old school Viewbank College, where we have a new performing arts centre providing great services for the community – and I have got a feeling that I might just have some new announcements for Viewbank College, my old school, very shortly. Can I also say that both the Liberal Party and One Nation candidates do not live locally in the electorate. Vote for a local in Ivanhoe – that is going to be me.

Gippsland East electorate

Tim BULL (Gippsland East) (09:46): I wish I had the confidence of the member for Ivanhoe that things would be delivered in my electorate. When I started in this place, if an announcement was made and a media release was issued and it was published, normally things would follow through and that commitment would come to fruition, but in my electorate in the last four years we have had a number of things promised that never eventuated. We had a large plant nursery promised for Nowa Nowa as part of the timber transition. It never eventuated. We had a media release issued about the Marlo to Cape Conran bike path, stating that it would be funded. That funding is gone; it is not built. We had an electric vehicle manufacturing plant promised in the Latrobe Valley that went into thin air, all announced with much fanfare, with media releases and front pages. Just this week that has continued. The $750,000 promised to the Lakes Entrance fishermen's cooperative to remove the asbestos and repair their roof is now not happening. We need a lot of investment in our region. There is only one

side of politics that will do it. That includes fire stations and a new Bairnsdale hospital, and it is only this side, it seems, that will deliver on those commitments.

I will finish up by saying this is my last speech in this place. In the immortal words of Kenny Rogers:

> You've got to know when to hold 'em
> Know when to fold 'em …

As far as this place goes, I am now folding 'em. Thanks, and good luck to everyone.

Felicitations

Ros SPENCE (Kalkallo – Minister for Corrections, Minister for Victim Support, Minister for Youth Justice, Minister for Community Sport) (09:48): On this last sitting day of the 60th Parliament of Victoria I want to say a few thankyous. Firstly, thank you to the constituents of Kalkallo, whom I have had the pleasure and honour of representing over this term. Thank you to my electorate office staff, who work tirelessly to assist our constituents with issues that range from minor to life changing. To Alex my office manager and to Shraddha, Athena, Sarah, Rahn and Smita: thank you for what you do every day to help our community. To my ministerial staff: thank you. To my chief of staff Grant Poulter: thank you for holding the team together, for leading the team with intellect and compassion and for being a walking calculator. Thank you to my ministerial advisers Ann, Hannah, Carina, Almendra and Josh. Your advice and commitment are always appreciated. To my parliamentary adviser and caucus liaison adviser Tara, you are a joy to have around, and I appreciate you keeping me where I need to be and providing me with what I need to know. To my executive assistant and my chief EA, Rebecca and Halle, thank you for keeping everything on track. Bec has been with me from day one, and there is no-one I would rather have running my life. To the departmental liaison officers, departmental liaison assistants, department staff and executives for current and previous portfolios: thank you for your responsiveness and advice. To the clerks, to Bridget and her team and to parliamentary services, security, the Hansard team and the catering team: thank you for all that you do. I wish everyone all the best in the campaign ahead. We know these times get tough, so let us all look out for one another.

Energy policy

Bridget VALLENCE (Evelyn) (09:49): Despite the recent parliamentary inquiry into the state budget noting the importance of gas as an energy source needed for energy security, this Labor government has a war on gas. The Carroll Labor government wants to limit gas-fired power generation and has started banning gas connections in homes. Labor's failed energy policies are driving energy prices higher. In Premier Ben Carroll's desperation to cling to power, Labor's transition to renewables is now in limbo and Labor is banning gas. Labor's ban on gas hurts Victorian families. It hurts Victorian businesses. Our Liberal plan will reverse the Labor government's ban on gas. That is right: our Liberal plan will reverse the Labor government's ban on gas. We will throw open the door for gas exploration, ensuring reliable gas supply for Victoria. We will ease the cost-of-living pressures and restore energy choice by scrapping Labor's ban on gas appliances. If Victorians want to cook with gas or have gas hot water, under a Liberal government, they can. Our plan supports hundreds of plumbers, important tradies in my community, who are facing uncertainty right now. We value our plumbers, and they are facing uncertainty with Labor's gas bans. It supports manufacturing, agriculture and many other industries that rely on gas, providing energy security and energy certainty. Only the Victorian Liberals back gas for Victoria and for Victorians.

Williamstown electorate

Melissa HORNE (Williamstown – Minister for Ports and Freight, Minister for Jobs, Minister for Industry and Advanced Manufacturing, Minister for Defence Industry) (09:51): In this final sitting week of the term, I rise to reflect on just how much the Labor government has achieved in my electorate of Williamstown. Over this term we have transformed every single corner of the electorate, from revitalising Brooklyn with the opening of community gardens for the Patch in the Park, truck

bans in Spotswood and Yarraville, to the upgrade of the zone in Newport and the sealing of Paisley Park in Altona North. The change has been felt in every single street and every single suburb. None of this happens without the people, though, that hold our community together, and we have invested in every single one of our schools for current and future generations. To our community clubs who keep the younger ones busy and who invest in female participation, create friendships and build lasting skills, thank you for your advocacy, your volunteers and for every single thing that you do. It has been such a pleasure to support our clubs through capital upgrades and sporting grants. Our beautiful maritime electorate has also seen numerous waterfront upgrades: Workshops Pier, Gem Pier, the award-winning Altona Pier and upgrades to the foreshore, Altona boat ramp and car park, Williamstown beach jetty and of course Williamstown lifesaving club. I cannot wait to see how the club is transformed in the year ahead. To our multicultural and multifaith groups, your contribution is greatly valued. And finally, to all the community groups I work closely with, thank you for your advocacy and your support for the many vulnerable people throughout our community.

Warrandyte electorate

Nicole WERNER (Warrandyte) (09:52): It has been the honour of my life to serve as the member for Warrandyte. I am the granddaughter of a World War II survivor, an illiterate peasant woman who, due to her family's poverty, never got sent to school and to this day still cannot read or write. I am the daughter of working-class parents who migrated to Australia in search of a better life. My parents worked multiple jobs, cleaning toilets in factories and in manual labour, to get ahead and to achieve the great Australian dream of buying their first home. I married into a fifth-generation farming family from north-east Victoria, where we farm 2000 acres of sheep, wheat and canola. The farm was a side hustle for my father-in-law until he retired from policing after 36 years in the force. My husband, Fraser, helps run the family farm and is a small business owner in construction. All of these experiences anchor and drive me as a member of Parliament. It is why I am so passionate about fighting for working families, for battlers, for small business owners, for tradies, for young people and for every single Victorian looking to have a fair go. It is why I have called out the Labor government for their corruption. It is why when in this chamber Labor shouted me down I fired up and fought back, because I am here to serve the Victorian people. A good government gets the basics right. A good government respects taxpayers money, and a good government backs small business. Victorians can take heart because a good government is on its way. Under a Liberal–National government, Victoria will get the fresh start it needs.

Box Hill Hawks Football Club

Paul HAMER (Box Hill – Minister for Roads and Road Safety) (09:54): This week we are a happy team at Box Hill – we are the mighty fighting Hawks. We love our club and we play to win; we ride the bumps with a grin. My huge congratulations to coach David Mirra, skipper Stu Horner and the entire squad, staff and volunteers. I cannot wait to see the premiership flag unfurled at the refurbished city oval at the start of next season.

Surrey Park Football Club

Paul HAMER (Box Hill – Minister for Roads and Road Safety) (09:54): What a story it has been for the mighty Surrey Park football club. Fifteen years ago the club was in the middle of a long losing streak, but through community focus, outstanding club leadership and building a strong connection between the junior and senior clubs, the club has completely reversed its fortunes. It recently won the Eastern Football Netball League division 2 premiership, securing its third premiership in four years and a berth in division 1 for next year. Congratulations to coach James Kenworthy and all involved in this emerging dynasty.

Rohan Ritchie

Paul HAMER (Box Hill – Minister for Roads and Road Safety) (09:55): Last week I had the opportunity to meet Box Hill High School captain Rohan Ritchie. 2026 has been a big year for Rohan.

Earlier this year, for his 18th birthday, he ran 100 kilometres, raising $18,000 for youth mental health with the charity Headspace. He also finished first in his age group in the 100-kilometre Ultra-Trail Australia race. And to top it off, he received the gold Duke of Edinburgh as a reward. Good luck, Rohan, for your future running career and your year 12 exams.

Mid-Autumn Festival

Paul HAMER (Box Hill – Minister for Roads and Road Safety) (09:55): I send my best wishes to everyone in the Box Hill community who is celebrating the Mid-Autumn Festival this weekend. It is time to celebrate with friends and family and of course eat lots of mooncake.

Felicitations

Will FOWLES (Ringwood) (09:55): I want to thank a number of people who make this place work. To the Deputy Speaker and the acting speakers, thank you for keeping this house on track, even when members test your patience. To the clerks and to the table office, particularly Bridget Noonan, thank you for your patience, good humour and sound advice. I have relied on all three, sometimes just 5 minutes before the house sits. Your impartiality is frequently tested but is always beyond reproach. To Hansard, thank you for turning what we say into a record that makes sense at least part of the time. That cannot always be easy. To our security staff, particularly Adam Boyd and Courtney Wise, thank you. You are here when we arrive and here when we leave, and you look after us both here and in our electorate offices. Thank you to the attendants, committee and broadcasting staff, property services, the cleaning staff and everyone who keeps this building running. To the IT team, I frequently sought to push our IT capabilities beyond where they are, and you mercifully and gracefully met me on that journey, so thank you. Thank you for your patience and for making things work. And to the catering staff, thank you for the coffee, the meals and the conversations during long sitting days. Members come and go, and the work of parliamentary staff carries on. It has been a privilege to work with all of them, absolutely all of them, and I thank them.

Mordialloc electorate

Tim RICHARDSON (Mordialloc – Minister for Local Government, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Renters) (09:56): It has been an honour to represent the Mordialloc district over the last three terms, and the investment in our area is unprecedented, from level crossing removals at Chelsea, Edithvale, Aspendale, Mordialloc, Parkdale, Mentone and Cheltenham and building brand new train stations to delivering the Mordialloc Freeway, talked about for decades and delivered under this Labor government, taking pressure off our local roads and getting people home to the people they love and care about sooner.

When we see the upgrades to our local schools – Chelsea, Chelsea Heights, Edithvale, Mordialloc Beach Primary School, Mordialloc College, Parkdale Secondary College, St John Vianney's Primary School, St Louis de Montfort's Primary School, St Joey's primary school, St Brigid's Primary School and, when I took over the area of Keysborough South, Keysborough Gardens Primary School – we see that investing in the people that are supporting our next generation is so very critical. To the teachers and education support staff, I am so proud of the agreement that has been secured that supports and backs them.

To our hospital staff and our nurses, our midwives and our allied health staff in our hospitals in Frankston, in Monash and in Dandenong, which we are upgrading and delivering: we back you. We delivered the pay rise, a 28 per cent pay rise, and we added 17,500 more nurses and midwives, because Labor backs education and it backs our health workers.

Road maintenance

Jade BENHAM (Mildura) (09:58): On the final day of the 60th Parliament I once again need to raise the condition of our roads, particularly the Calder Highway south of Sea Lake. On Wednesday night there was an accident on this stretch of road, and this is not the first, nor will it be the last if this

is not urgently addressed. The condition of this highway is plain to see for anyone who, like me, travels it every single week. It is also plain to see that those of us in the great north-west of the state have not had our fair share over the last 12 years. The Calder is a vital link between Mildura and Melbourne. It carries freight that supports our economy, school buses carrying our children and local families going about their lives. They should not have to scan what is left of the bitumen while travelling at highway speeds. And, guess what, there is not even any signage warning of road hazards when you approach from the south. The culvert has completely collapsed, and it is invisible at night.

The Minister for Roads and Road Safety, Pothole Paul, must urgently make dangerous defects safe and tell the community when lasting repairs will be completed. Another bandaid will absolutely not be enough, and people will die. The Nationals have a plan. It is time for a fresh start, and it is time to let the Nationals eliminate potholes, bring back the country roads and bridges program and give regional Victorians their fair share, because we are sick of driving on what is left of the roads after 12 years of Labor.

The SPEAKER: Just because it is the last day of sitting, it does not mean members can start calling people by their incorrect titles.

Felicitations

Sonya KILKENNY (Carrum – Attorney-General, Minister for Planning, Minister for Prevention of Family Violence) (10:00): Every now and then we get to work alongside truly extraordinary people – people who inspire us, challenge us, make us laugh and make us better. I have had that privilege. To my ministerial teams Joe Battanta, Rion Casey, Jack Carns, Metika Claxton, Tyler Finn, Mark Gazic, Ella Glanville, Katie Gompertz, Lauren Johnson, Casey Lodge, Liam Miles, Brigid McCarthy, Nicole Nabbout, Nadia Oosthuizen, Eliza Phillips, Tom Rosser, Brighid Sammon, Mick Timlin, Ruby Wallace, Alex Woods, Anthony Xu and Max Resic, thank you. You have brought intelligence, integrity, compassion and an enormous sense of purpose to everything we have done together. Following the biggest community engagement in our state's history, we delivered the biggest reforms to Victoria's planning system in a generation because we could no longer sit back and watch Victorians locked out of finding a home. We made it easier and faster to build the homes Victorians need, we made Victoria the townhouse capital of Australia and we established tree targets to make our suburbs greener, cooler and better places to live. In justice we put the voices of victim-survivors at the very centre of reform, strengthening our laws on family and sexual violence and making sure our justice system better reflects the seriousness of the harm done to victims, because victim-survivors deserve to be heard, deserve to be believed and deserve justice. Life is ultimately about people, and I could not have asked for better people beside me. I will remember the laughter, the friendships, the kindness and the moments we backed each other and believed in each other. I will always be incredibly proud of what we achieved together and even more grateful I got to do it with you.

Middle East conflict

Gabrielle DE VIETRI (Richmond) (10:01): As bombs dropped on Palestine, this government made a choice to stand with Israel as it committed genocide. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians are since dead, wounded and missing, and children have been subjected to unthinkable horrors. Despite hundreds of thousands rallying in the streets against these heinous war crimes, this government backed genocide every step of the way. They rolled out the red carpet for the President of Israel. They funded and showcased weapons and weapons parts made for Israeli forces, shipped off knowing that they would kill Palestinians. This government continued to support their so-called friendship with Israel over the protection of basic humanity, and there is no way they could claim they did not know. Week after week they shut down debate about the truth in Palestine and turn their backs on human rights. To the Labor MPs who think they care about Palestine but have stood by while their government have grovelled at Netanyahu's feet and who have hidden in the long, dark shadow of their government's complicity, shame on you. What could have been so important that you stayed silent? History will remember you.

Cheltenham East Primary School

Nick STAIKOS (Bentleigh – Minister for Housing, Building and Precincts, Minister for Homelessness, Minister for Seniors) (10:03): Happy 70th anniversary, Cheltenham East Primary School. Cheltenham East opened in 1956, the year of the Melbourne Olympics, which explains the school's Olympic torch emblem. The first principal was Sir William Fry, a former mayor of Moorabbin and state member of Parliament, after whom Highett's Sir William Fry Reserve was named. The current principal is Robert Ridgway, with whom I have worked very, very closely to improve the school. I was very proud back in May to secure $10.5 million in the budget for a major upgrade of Cheltenham East, and I am really pleased to report that an architect has recently been appointed to get this exciting project started. While Cheltenham East Primary School has been around for 70 years, the site that it sits on has a fascinating history that predates 1956. From the 1860s the Church of England common school 127 occupied the site, but it closed some years later. However, the development of local market gardens for housing made the reactivation of the land for educational purposes necessary. When Cheltenham East Primary School opened it had 226 students and just seven staff. But as enrolments grew, more classrooms were built, and it is these classrooms that we will now rebuild to secure a bright future for Cheltenham East Primary School. Happy 70th birthday.

Prahran electorate

Rachel WESTAWAY (Prahran) (10:04): As the 60th Parliament draws to a close, I want to reflect on what has been an extraordinary privilege representing the community I love as the member for Prahran. When I was elected in February last year I became the first Liberal elected to Prahran since 2010, only the second woman to represent the seat in its long history and the first Victorian parliamentarian of Thai heritage. I came to this place determined to give a strong voice and to focus on the issues that matter to our community, and since then I have fought for safer streets and stations, supported our traders and small businesses, advocated for residents in public and social housing, stood up for sensible planning and worked to protect the institutions that make Prahran special. I am proud that we have now committed to protecting Prahran market, advocating for clubrooms for Orrong Romanis Reserve, funding the St Kilda Primary School community hall, delivering more police and protective services officers and helping make our community even safer. But there is more to come. We will see Chapel Street revitalised, remove the overlay on Punt Road, improve roads and transport in our area and better support our most vulnerable residents. We will not tear down the over-55s public housing if it is not needed. I hope to return to this place in the 61st Parliament as part of a government that is led by Jess Wilson, with the opportunity to turn those plans into reality. I thank the people of Prahran for placing their trust in me. I thank my electorate staff for their extraordinary work: my first office manager Peter Katsambanis, who we miss; Matt Hobbs; Jo Graham; Ben Greenwood; Danah Akritidis; Susanna Louie, Edward Bourke, Max Bodon and Miles Pappas.

St Albans electorate

Natalie SULEYMAN (St Albans – Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment, Minister for Small and Family Business, Minister for Veterans) (10:06): I want to begin by thanking my community of St Albans. Since 2014 I have had the great honour of representing my community. I was born and raised in St Albans, a true local. Our Labor government has removed the dangerous level crossings at Main Road and Furlong Road, St Albans. We built the Joan Kirner Women's and Children's Hospital. We doubled Sunshine Hospital, including a new emergency department and a children's emergency department. We have invested in every single school and built Brimbank Tech, the first paramedicine centre of excellence, the Victoria University Cisco cybersecurity centre, and a jobs and skills centre, creating local jobs and opportunities for young people. We have delivered more PSOs at St Albans station and are rolling out the community connectors in St Albans to keep our streets safe. We are seeing Melbourne Airport rail continue to be built and commence through our community. We are delivering a new bus service to Cairnlea, and it has been fantastic for my local community, including more services for bus 408. We delivered the Metro Tunnel, a safer Taylors Road in Keilor Downs, invested in the St Albans business district and absolutely fought hard to keep

Kealba landfill closed for good. We have also supported local sporting clubs and backed our multicultural communities. We funded – *(Time expired)*

Elevated rail

Steve DIMOPOULOS (Oakleigh – Minister for WorkSafe and the TAC, Minister for Sport, Minister for Equality) (10:07): I rise to talk about sky rail, once an idea, a bold vision that was monopolised in a negative way by the opposition, the Liberal Party of Victoria, talking down to my community, scaring them about how this would be an awful thing – it would ruin the community, it would divide the community, there would be ghettos, there would be burnt-out cars like in those American movies or *Mad Max*. It has been nothing of the sort. What sky rail has done in my community is it has become kilometre after kilometre of open space, table tennis courts, basketball hoops, an entire world of recreation and activity for the community. But it says something about politics, doesn't it, when you try to do something bold and visionary, because the bold and visionary thing was to remove initially 50 level crossings – now 92 level crossings – four from my community and build open space. What is there not to love about that? But of course even on that vision, something pretty obviously fantastic for the community, the Liberal Party came in and held random forums, scaring people. That is what is at stake at this election – hope over fear, aspiration over pessimism. The Labor Party and our government have done enormous amounts to support our community.

Montmorency Bowling Club

Vicki WARD (Eltham – Minister for Public Transport, Minister for Creative Industries) (10:09): Thank you, Montmorency Bowling Club, for welcoming me to your annual opening of the green event. We had a scrumptious afternoon tea and a great afternoon, catching up and talking about the season ahead. Thank you to president Bert Wilson, secretary Phil Stirling and the executive for all you do for your club. I wish Monty all the best, and I look forward to seeing you at my annual parliamentary bowls comp next year.

Eltham Bowling Club

Vicki WARD (Eltham – Minister for Public Transport, Minister for Creative Industries) (10:09): Thank you to Eltham Bowling Club for including me in your annual opening of the green day. It is always a great day, full of fun, a bit of ribbing and a fair bit of excitement for the season ahead. I had the pleasure of presenting encouragement awards to Bill and Val Mayhew, two promising prospects on the green and very supportive members of the club. Thank you to president Peter Toovey and secretary Ros Camera and the executive for all you do for your club. All the best for the season ahead, and I look forward to seeing you at next year's annual bowls day comp.

Felicitations

Vicki WARD (Eltham – Minister for Public Transport, Minister for Creative Industries) (10:09): I thank my electorate office team, Lucy, Nick, Ruby, Tim, Sam and Katherine, for all your hard work, dedication, deep care and kindness over the last year. Your work is extraordinary, and I am lucky to have your support. Thank you to my ministerial team this year who have worked around the clock to support me and the work of our government, such smart, talented people: Dave, Jim, Ruby, Julian, Anna, Josh, Hana, Harrison, Liv, Laurent, Julie – and her lollies – and Penny. Thank you to Bridget, Parliament's clerks, attendants, Hansard, catering, cleaners and security staff for all you do to keep this place running. Thank you for your professionalism and work, which often goes unseen. And I thank my community for giving me the extraordinary gift of representing them for the last four years. As a government we have achieved amazing things for my community in the time that we have been here, whether it is the duplication of the Hurstbridge line, whether it is all of the work that we have done modernising our local schools, whether it is the upgrade to Fitzsimons Lane or whether it is the walking paths that we have extended to Hurstbridge.

Michael Ritchie

Colin BROOKS (Bundoora – Treasurer, Minister for Industrial Relations) (10:10): I rise today to acknowledge all of the group leaders at Watsonia Scout Group, in particular Michael Ritchie, and congratulate Michael on being named a finalist in the 2026 Plenty Valley Westfield Local Heroes program. When Watsonia Scouts needed someone to step up, Michael did exactly that. Motivated by the positive impact scouting had on his own family, he took on a leadership role and has worked tirelessly to strengthen the group and its future. Michael is one of those people who simply gets stuck in whenever he is needed. Whether it is supporting leaders and volunteers, helping improve the Scout hall, working on grants and projects or finding new opportunities for young people, Michael is always looking for ways to make the group stronger. Under his leadership the Watsonia Scout Group is building an inclusive community where young people of all abilities can feel a genuine sense of belonging, build confidence and develop skills that will stay with them throughout their lives. But what stands out most about Michael is that at the heart of everything he does is a belief that every young person deserves the opportunity to learn, grow, challenge themselves and feel part of their community. Michael's commitment to the Watsonia Scouts is a wonderful example of the difference that local volunteers can make. I congratulate Michael on this well-deserved recognition and thank him for everything he does for the Watsonia community and for the next generation of Scouts.

Williams Landing train station

Mathew HILAKARI (Point Cook) (10:11): In politics polls go up and down, and at Williams Landing station that is exactly what the lift does. It goes up and down – a new thing that we have built in our community at Wallace Avenue. We need this sort of accessibility – a great result from this Labor government.

Bills

Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Bill 2026

Council's amendments

Message from Council relating to following amendments considered:

1. Clause 1, after line 3 insert –

   "(aa) to amend the **Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004**, the **Occupational Health and Safety Amendment (Dangerous Goods) Act 2026** and the **Dangerous Goods Transport Act 2026** in relation to reckless endangerment offences; and".

2. Clause 1, page 2, after line 8 insert –

   "(iii) to make further provision for the award of provisional and subsequent damages to injured workers with certain dust-related conditions; and".

3. Clause 1, page 2, before line 9 insert –

   "(iv) in relation to commencing certain proceedings related to serious dust-related conditions without complying with certain requirements; and".

4. Clause 1, page 2, line 11, after "accommodation" insert "and in relation to commencing certain proceedings related to serious dust-related conditions without complying with certain requirements".

5. Clause 1, page 2, after line 11 insert –

   "(ba) to amend the **Accident Compensation Act 1985** to provide for claims for damages related to employment between 12 November 1997 and 20 October 1999; and".

6. Clause 1, page 2, before line 12 insert –

   "(bb) to amend the **Accident Compensation Act 1985** to make further provision for the award of provisional and subsequent damages to injured workers with certain dust-related conditions; and".

7. Clause 1, page 2, after line 18 insert –

   "(iii) to provide for health and safety orders and related matters; and".

8. Clause 1, page 2, before line 19 insert –

"(iv) to provide for the use of impact statements in certain proceedings; and".

9. Clause 1, page 2, line 20, after "accommodation" insert "and certain benefits for children".

10. Clause 1, page 2, line 21, after "consequential" insert "and related".

11. Clause 1, page 2, after line 23 insert –

"(ea) to amend the **Limitation of Actions Act 1958** to remove the limitation period for certain causes of action for dust-related conditions; and".

12. Clause 2, line 27, after "other than" insert "Part 1A,".

13. Clause 2, line 27, after "Part 2" insert ", Division 2 of Part 4".

14. Clause 2, lines 27 and 28, omit "and Part 5" and insert ", Part 5 and Part 5A".

15. Clause 2, line 28, before ") comes" insert "and Part 5B".

16. Clause 2, after line 29 insert –

"(1A) Division 2 of Part 4 comes into operation on 1 November 2026.".

17. Insert the following New Part after Part 1 –

'**Part 1A – Amendments related to reckless endangerment**

Division 1 – Amendment of Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004

2A Section 32 substituted

For section 32 of the **Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 substitute** –

"**32 Conduct that endangers persons at workplaces etc.**

(1) A person must not, without lawful excuse, recklessly engage in conduct that places, or may place, another person who is at a workplace in danger of serious injury, serious illness or death.

Penalty: 10 000 penalty units or 10 years imprisonment or both for a natural person;

50 000 penalty units for a body corporate.

(2) A person must not, without lawful excuse, recklessly engage in conduct that –

(a) constitutes a contravention of a provision of –

(i) Division 2, 3 or 4; or

(ii) this Division (other than subsection (1)); and

(b) places, or may place, another person in danger of serious injury, serious illness or death.

Penalty: 10 000 penalty units or 10 years imprisonment or both for a natural person;

50 000 penalty units for a body corporate.

(3) An offence against subsection (1) or (2) is an indictable offence.

Note

However, the offence may be heard and determined summarily (see section 28 of the **Criminal Procedure Act 2009**).".

Division 2 – Amendment of Occupational Health and Safety Amendment (Dangerous Goods) Act 2026

2B Conduct in respect of handling of dangerous goods that endangers persons

(1) In section 55 of the **Occupational Health and Safety Amendment (Dangerous Goods) Act 2026**, in proposed section 35D(1) of the **Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004**, after "serious injury" **insert** ", serious illness".

(2) In section 55 of the **Occupational Health and Safety Amendment (Dangerous Goods) Act 2026**, for the penalty at the foot of proposed section 35D(1) of the **Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 substitute** –

"Penalty: 10 000 penalty units or 10 years imprisonment or both for a natural person;

50 000 penalty units for a body corporate.".

Division 3 – Amendment of Dangerous Goods Transport Act 2026

2C Conduct in respect of transport of dangerous goods that endangers persons

(1) In section 20(1) of the **Dangerous Goods Transport Act 2026**, after "serious injury" **insert** ", serious illness".

(2) For the penalty at the foot of section 20(1) of the **Dangerous Goods Transport Act 2026 substitute** –

"Penalty: 10 000 penalty units or 10 years imprisonment or both for a natural person;

50 000 penalty units for a body corporate.".'.

18. Insert the following New Part heading to follow clause 13 –

"**Part 2A – Further amendment of Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013**".

19. Insert the following New Division before Part 3 –

'**Division 1 – Amendments relating to actions for damages**

13A Definitions

In section 356A of the **Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013** –

(a) insert the following definition –

"***serious dust-related condition*** means a condition that is –

(a) a dust-related condition within the meaning of the **Administration and Probate Act 1958**; or

(b) an eligible progressive disease attributable or related to exposure to occupational dust;";

(b) the definition of ***serious silica-related condition*** is repealed;

(c) in the definition of ***subsequent action***, for "silica-related" **substitute** "dust-related".

13B Section 356B amended

(1) In the heading to section 356B of the **Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013**, for "**silica-related**" **substitute** "**dust-related**".

(2) In section 356B of the **Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013**, for "silica-related" (wherever occurring) **substitute** "dust-related".

13C Only one subsequent award of damages permitted

In section 356C of the **Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013**, for "silica-related" (where twice occurring) **substitute** "dust-related".

13D Regard must be had to initial award of damages

In section 356D of the **Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013**, for "silica-related" (where twice occurring) **substitute** "dust-related".

13E Regard must be had to legal costs incurred in initial action

(1) In section 356E(1) of the **Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013**, for "silica-related" (where twice occurring) **substitute** "dust-related".

(2) In section 356E(3)(a)(ii) and (iv) of the **Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013**, for "silica" **substitute** "occupational dust".

13F New section 356G inserted

After section 356F of the **Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013 insert** –

"**356G Interaction with Asbestos Diseases Compensation Act 2008**

(1) Despite anything to the contrary in the **Asbestos Diseases Compensation Act 2008**, that Act does not apply to an asbestos-related cause of action that has not been commenced before the commencement of Part 2A of the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026**.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), an asbestos-related cause of action is a cause of action for damages in respect of an asbestos-related condition (within the meaning **Asbestos Diseases Compensation Act 2008**) that is also a serious dust-related condition.".

13G New section 631 inserted

At the end of Part 13 of the **Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013 insert** –

"**631 Transitional provisions – Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026 – Actions for damages**

(1) Subdivision 3 of Division 2 of Part 7 as amended by Part 2A of the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026** applies to a cause of action for damages in relation to a serious dust-related condition to which that Subdivision applies commenced on or after the commencement of Part 2A of the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026**.

(2) Subdivision 3 of Division 2 of Part 7 as amended by Part 2A of the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026** applies to a cause of action for damages in relation to a serious dust-related condition commenced before the commencement of Part 2A of the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026** but only if –

(a) the hearing of the action has not commenced before the commencement of Part 2A of the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026**; or

(b) damages have not been awarded or a settlement has not been reached in that action before the commencement of that Part.

(3) Subdivision 3 of Division 2 of Part 7 as amended by Part 2A of the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026** does not apply to a cause of action for damages in relation to a serious dust-related condition commenced before the commencement of Part 2A of the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026** if –

(a) the hearing of the action has commenced before the commencement of Part 2A of the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026**; or

(b) damages have been awarded or a settlement has been reached in that action before the commencement of that Part.".'.

20. Insert the following New Division before Part 3 –

'**Division 2 – Commencing proceedings without complying with certain requirements**

13H Heading to Division 3 of Part 7 amended

In the heading to Division 3 of Part 7 of the **Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013**, for "**asbestos-related conditions**" **substitute** "**serious dust-related conditions**".

13I Section 357 amended

(1) In the heading to section 357 of the **Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013**, for "**asbestos-related conditions**" **substitute** "**serious dust-related conditions**".

(2) In section 357(1)(a) of the **Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013**, for "death; or" **substitute** "death.".

(3) Section 357(1)(b) of the **Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013** is **repealed**.

(4) After section 357(1) of the **Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013 insert** –

"(1A) This section also applies if a worker may have an entitlement to recover damages in accordance with Division 2 in respect of an injury that is a serious dust-related condition arising out of, or in the course of, or due to the nature of, employment.".

(5) In section 357(4) of the **Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013** –

(a) in paragraph (a), for "subsection (1)(a)" **substitute** "subsection (1)";

(b) in paragraph (b) –

(i) for "subsection (1)(b)" **substitute** "subsection (1A)";

(ii) for "an asbestos-related condition" **substitute** "a serious dust-related condition".

(6) In section 357(7) of the **Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013**, for "the asbestos-related condition" **substitute** "the serious dust-related condition".

(7) For section 357(8) of the **Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013 substitute** –

"(8) In this section –

serious dust-related condition means a condition that is –

(a) a dust-related condition within the meaning of the **Administration and Probate Act 1958**; or

(b) an eligible progressive disease attributable or related to exposure to occupational dust.".

13J New section 632 inserted

At the end of Part 13 of the **Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013 insert** –

"**632 Transitional provision – Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026 – commencing proceedings without complying with certain requirements**

Section 357 as amended by the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026** applies in relation to the commencement of proceedings in accordance with Division 2 of Part 7 on or after the day on which Division 2 of Part 2A of the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026** comes into operation regardless of whether the injury in respect of which those proceedings are to be commenced occurred before that day.".'.

21. Insert the following New Division before Part 3 –

'**Division 3 – Review of certain amendments**

13K New section 620C inserted

After section 620B of the Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013 insert –

"**620C Review of amendments made by Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026**

(1) The Minister must cause –

(a) a review to be conducted of the operation and effect, during the review period, of the amendments made to this Act or any other Act by Parts 2A, 3A, 4A and 4B of the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026**; and

(b) a report of that review to be prepared.

(2) The review is to be undertaken, and the report prepared, by a person chosen by the Minister for that purpose.

(3) In choosing the person to conduct the review and prepare the report, the Minister must consult with each Minister who administers any part of either of the following Acts –

(a) the **Administration and Probate Act 1958**; and

(b) the **Limitation of Actions Act 1958**.

(4) The person chosen to conduct the review must do so in consultation with –

(a) the Minister; and

(b) each Minister who administers any part of an Act referred to in subsection (1)(a) or (b).

(5) The review must examine whether an amendment referred to in subsection (1)(a) has resulted in a provision of an enactment either applying, or not applying, in relation to a person when that ought not to have occurred.

(6) The review must be completed, and the report given to the Minister, within six months after the end of the review period.

(7) The Minister must cause a copy of the report to be laid before each House of the Parliament no later than 14 sitting days after receiving it.

(8) In this section –

review period means the period –

(a) beginning on the day after the day on which the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026** receives the Royal Assent; and

(b) ending on the first anniversary of that day.”.’.

22. Insert the following New Part heading to follow clause 15 –

“**Part 3A – Further amendment of Accident Compensation Act 1985**”.

23. Insert the following New Division before Part 4 –

‘**Division 1 – Claims for damages related to employment between 12 November 1997 and 20 October 1999**

15A Heading to Division 8A of Part IV substituted

For the heading to Division 8A of Part IV of the **Accident Compensation Act 1985 substitute** –

“**Division 8A – Actions in respect of certain injuries arising from certain periods of employment**”.

15B Actions for damages

After section 134AB(2) of the **Accident Compensation Act 1985 insert** –

“(2A) A worker or the dependants of a worker may recover damages in a proceeding in respect of an injury arising out of or in the course of, or due to the nature of, employment on or after 12 November 1997 but before 20 October 1999 if –

(a) the injury is a condition that is –

(i) a dust-related condition within the meaning of the **Administration and Probate Act 1958**; or

(ii) an eligible progressive disease attributable or related to exposure to occupational dust; and

(b) the injury is a serious injury; and

(c) the employment was a significant contributing factor to the injury of the worker.”.

15C Actions for damages only in accordance with this Act

After section 134A(2) of the **Accident Compensation Act 1985 insert** –

“(3) Subsection (1) does not prevent the recovery of damages in a proceeding under this Act or the **Wrongs Act 1958**, subject to and in accordance with Division 8A of this Part, in respect of injury to a worker arising out of or in the course of, or due to the nature of, employment on or after 12 November 1997 but before 20 October 1999 if –

(a) the injury is a condition that is –

(i) a dust-related condition within the meaning of the **Administration and Probate Act 1958**; or

(ii) an eligible progressive disease attributable or related to exposure to occupational dust; and

(b) the employment was a significant contributing factor to the injury of the worker.

Note

See section 134AB(2A).

(4) Subsection (3) applies despite any time limit applying to proceedings under Part III of the **Wrongs Act 1958**.”.

15D Heading to Division 9B of Part IV amended

In the heading to Division 9B of Part IV of the **Accident Compensation Act 1985**, for "**asbestos-related**" **substitute** "**certain**".

15E Section 135BB amended

(1) For the heading to section 135BB of the **Accident Compensation Act 1985 substitute** –

"**Actions by workers with certain conditions**".

(2) After section 135BB(1) of the **Accident Compensation Act 1985 insert** –

"(1A) This section also applies to a worker who may have an entitlement to recover damages in accordance with section 134AB(2A) in respect of injury arising out of, or in the course of, or due to the nature of, any employment on or after 12 November 1997 but before 20 October 1999.".

15F New section 402 inserted

At the end of Division 20 of Part IX of the **Accident Compensation Act 1985 insert** –

"**402 Transitional provision – Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026 – employment on or after 12 November 1997 but before 20 October 1999**

Section 134A(3) and (4) as inserted by Part 3A of the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026** does not apply in relation to a cause of action for damages in relation to a dust-related condition arising out of, or in the course of, or due to the nature of any employment on or after 12 November 1997 but before 20 October 1999 if that cause of action has been finalised and fully determined before the commencement of Part 3A of that Act.".

15G New Division 21 of Part IX inserted

After Division 20 of Part IX of the **Accident Compensation Act 1985 insert** –

"**Division 21 – Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026 – Transitional matters**

405 Regulations dealing with transitional matters – Part 3A of Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026

(1) The Governor in Council may make regulations containing provisions of a transitional nature, including matters of an application or savings nature, arising as a result of the enactment of Division 1 of Part 3A of the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026**, including any repeals and amendments made by or as a result of the enactment of that Part of that Act.

(2) Regulations made under this section may –

(a) have a retrospective effect to a day on or after a date not earlier than the day on which the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026** receives the Royal Assent; and

(b) be of limited or general application; and

(c) differ according to time, place or circumstances; and

(d) leave any matter or thing to be decided by a specified person or class of person.

(3) Regulations under this section have effect despite anything to the contrary in –

(a) this Act or any other Act (other than Division 1 of Part 3A of the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026** or the **Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006**); or

(b) any subordinate instrument.

(4) This section is **repealed** on the second anniversary of the day on which it comes into operation.".'.

24. Insert the following New Division before Part 4 –

'Division 2 – Amendments relating to actions for damages

15H Definitions

In section 135BC of the **Accident Compensation Act 1985** –

(a) **insert** the following definition –

"***serious dust-related condition*** means a condition that is –

(a) a dust-related condition within the meaning of the **Administration and Probate Act 1958**; or

(b) an eligible progressive disease attributable or related to exposure to occupational dust;";

(b) the definition of ***serious silica-related condition*** is **repealed**;

(c) in the definition of ***subsequent action***, for "silica-related" **substitute** "dust-related".

15I Section 135BD amended

(1) In the heading to section 135BD of the **Accident Compensation Act 1985**, for "**silica-related**" **substitute** "**dust-related**".

(2) In section 135BD of the **Accident Compensation Act 1985**, for "silica- related" (wherever occurring) **substitute** "dust-related".

15J Only one subsequent award of damages permitted

In section 135BE of the **Accident Compensation Act 1985**, for "silica-related" (where twice occurring) **substitute** "dust-related".

15K Regard must be had to initial award of damages

In section 135BF of the **Accident Compensation Act 1985**, for "silica-related" (where twice occurring) **substitute** "dust-related".

15L Regard must be had to legal costs incurred in initial action

(1) In section 135BG(1) of the **Accident Compensation Act 1985**, for "silica-related" (where twice occurring) **substitute** "dust-related".

(2) In section 135BG(3)(a)(ii) and (iv) of the **Accident Compensation Act 1985**, for "silica" **substitute** "occupational dust".

15M New section 135BI inserted

After section 135BH of the **Accident Compensation Act 1985 insert** –

"**135BI Interaction with Asbestos Diseases Compensation Act 2008**

(1) Despite anything to the contrary in the **Asbestos Diseases Compensation Act 2008**, that Act does not apply to an asbestos-related cause of action that has not been commenced before the commencement of Part 3A of the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026**.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), an asbestos-related cause of action is a cause of action for damages in respect of an asbestos-related condition (within the meaning **Asbestos Diseases Compensation Act 2008**) that is also a serious dust-related condition.".

15N New section 403 inserted

At the end of Division 20 of Part IX of the **Accident Compensation Act 1985 insert** –

"**403 Transitional provisions – Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026 – Actions for damages**

(1) Division 9C of Part IV as amended by Part 3A of the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026** applies to a cause of action for damages in relation to a serious dust-related condition to which that Division applies commenced on or after the commencement of Part 3A of the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026**.

(2) Division 9C of Part IV as amended by Part 3A of the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026** applies to a

cause of action for damages in relation to a serious dust-related condition commenced before the commencement of Part 3A of the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026** but only if –

(a) the hearing of the action has not commenced before the commencement of Part 3A of the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026**; or

(b) damages have not been awarded or a settlement has not been reached in that action before the commencement of that Part.

(3) Division 9C of Part IV as amended by Part 3A of the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026** does not apply to a cause of action for damages in relation to a serious dust-related condition commenced before the commencement of Part 3A of the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026** if –

(a) the hearing of the action has commenced before the commencement of Part 3A of the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026**; or

(b) damages have been awarded or a settlement has been reached in that action before the commencement of that Part.”.’.

25. Insert the following New Division before Part 4 –

‘**Division 3 – Commencing proceedings without complying with certain requirements**

15O Heading to Division 9B of Part IV substituted

For the heading to Division 9B of Part IV of the **Accident Compensation Act 1985 substitute** –

“**Division 9B – Actions by workers with certain conditions**”.

15P Section 135BB amended

(1) For the heading to section 135BB of the **Accident Compensation Act 1985 substitute** –

“**Actions by workers with certain conditions**”.

(2) In section 135BB(1) of the **Accident Compensation Act 1985**, for “an asbestos-related condition” **substitute** “a serious dust-related condition”.

(3) In section 135BB(3)(b) of the **Accident Compensation Act 1985**, for “asbestos-related condition” **substitute** “serious dust-related condition”.

(4) In section 135BB(4) of the **Accident Compensation Act 1985**, for “an asbestos-related condition” **substitute** “a serious dust-related condition”.

(5) For section 135BB(8) of the **Accident Compensation Act 1985 substitute** –

“(8) In this section –

serious dust-related condition means a condition that is –

(a) a dust-related condition within the meaning of the **Administration and Probate Act 1958**; or

(b) an eligible progressive disease attributable or related to exposure to occupational dust.”.

15Q New section 404 inserted

At the end of Division 20 of Part IX of the **Accident Compensation Act 1985 insert** –

“**404 Transitional provision – Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026 – commencing proceedings without complying with certain requirements**

The amendments made to section 135BB by Division 3 of Part 3A of the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026** apply in relation to the commencement of proceedings under section 134AB or 135A on or after the day on which Division 3 of Part 3A of the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026** comes into operation regardless of whether the injury in respect of which those proceedings are to be commenced occurred before that day.”.’.

26. Insert the following New Division heading before clause 16 –

"**Division 1 – Supported accommodation**".

27. Insert the following New Division to follow clause 18 –

'**Division 2 – Benefits for children**

18A Surviving children

(1) For section 59(1) of the **Transport Accident Act 1986 substitute** –

"(1) The Commission is liable to pay weekly payments, a death benefit and an education allowance in accordance with this section in respect of a dependent child of a person if –

(a) the person dies as a result of a transport accident; and

(b) any of the following apply –

(i) the child has another parent who is not a dependent partner of the person;

(ii) the child has another parent who does not wholly, mainly or in part provide economic support for the child;

(iii) the child does not have another parent.".

(2) After section 59(3) of the **Transport Accident Act 1986 insert** –

"(3A) Despite subsection (3), on or after 1 November 2026, the sum of a weekly payment for which the Commission is liable under subsection (1) or (2) is double the amount that would otherwise be payable under subsection (3)(a).".

18B New section 59A inserted

After section 59 of the **Transport Accident Act 1986 insert** –

"**59A Surviving children – education allowance**

(1) The Commission is liable to pay an education allowance in accordance with this section in respect of a dependent child of a person who dies in a transport accident if the child is not entitled to an education allowance under section 59.

(2) The education allowance payable under subsection (1) in respect of a dependent child is –

(a) the same as the amount that is payable in respect of a child under section 59(6)(a); and

(b) payable to the responsible person for the child for the benefit of the child until the child attains the age of 18 years.

(3) In this section –

responsible person has the same meaning as in section 59.".

18C New section 132AA inserted

After section 132 of the **Transport Accident Act 1986 insert** –

"**132AA Regulations dealing with transitional matters – Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026**

(1) The Governor in Council may make regulations containing provisions of a transitional nature, including matters of an application or savings nature, arising as a result of the enactment of Division 2 of Part 4 of the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026**, including any repeals and amendments made by or as a result of the enactment of that Division.

(2) Regulations made under this section may –

(a) have a retrospective effect to a day on or after a date not earlier than the day on which Division 2 of Part 4 of the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026** receives the Royal Assent; and

(b) be of limited or general application; and

(c) differ according to time, place or circumstances; and

(d) leave any matter or thing to be decided by a specified person or class of person.

(3) Regulations under this section have effect despite anything to the contrary in –

(a) this Act or any other Act (other than Division 2 of Part 4 of the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026** or the **Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006**); or

(b) any subordinate instrument.

(4) This section is **repealed** on the second anniversary of the day on which it comes into operation.".

18D New section 236 inserted

After section 235 to the **Transport Accident Act 1986 insert** –

"**236 Surviving children**

(1) Sections 59(3A) and 59A apply in respect of a dependent child of a person who dies in a transport accident, regardless of when the transport accident occurred.

(2) Despite subsection (1), if the transport accident occurred before the commencement day, the Commission is not liable to pay any amount under section 59(3A) or 59A in respect of any period occurring before the commencement day.

(3) In this section –

commencement day means the day on which Division 2 of Part 4 of the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026** comes into operation.".'.

28. Insert the following New Part after Part 4 –

'**Part 4A – Amendment of Limitation of Actions Act 1958**

18E New section 23AB inserted

After section 23A of the **Limitation of Actions Act 1958 insert** –

"**23AB No limitation period for certain dust-related conditions**

(1) No limitation period applies in relation to a cause of action for damages for injury to a worker, whether the cause of action is brought by the worker or the dependants of a deceased worker if –

(a) the action for damages is an action to which –

(i) Part IV of the **Accident Compensation Act 1985** applies; or

(ii) Part 7 of the **Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013** applies; or

(iii) Part III or VB of the **Wrongs Act 1958** applies; and

(b) the injury to the worker is a dust-related condition within the meaning of section 3(1) of the **Administration and Probate Act 1958**.

(2) This section applies despite anything to the contrary in section 5 or section 40(a) and (b).".

18F Saving

In section 40 of the **Limitation of Actions Act 1958** for "Despite" **substitute** "Subject to section 23AB, despite".'.

29. Insert the following New Part after Part 5 –

'**Part 5A – Further amendment of Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 – health and safety orders**

Division 1 – Amendment of Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004

37A New definition inserted

In section 5(1) of the **Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 insert** the following definition –

"***health and safety order*** means an order under section 137(1);".

37B Section 136 repealed

Section 136 of the **Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004** is **repealed**.

37C Health and safety order

(1) In the heading to section 137 of the **Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004**, for "**Release on the giving of a health and safety undertaking**" **substitute** "**Health and safety order**".

(2) In section 137(1) of the **Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004** for "up to 2 years and make an order for the release of the offender giving an undertaking with specified conditions" **substitute** "up to 5 years and order that the offender is subject to the conditions included in the order".

(3) In section 137(2) of the **Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004** –

(a) for "An undertaking must specify the following conditions – " **substitute** "A health and safety order must include the following conditions – ".

(b) in paragraph (a) **omit** "during the period of the adjournment";

(c) in paragraph (b), for "adjournment" **substitute** "health and safety order".

(4) In section 137(3) of the **Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004** –

(a) for "the court may impose on an offender who is an employer special conditions that the offender" **substitute** "the court may specify in a health and safety order one or more special conditions that the offender";

(b) in paragraph (c), for "Authority." **substitute** "Authority; and";

(c) after paragraph (c) **insert** –

"(d) undertake a specified project for the general improvement of occupational health, safety and welfare within the period specified in the health and safety order.".

(5) At the foot of section 137(3) of the **Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 insert** –

"**Note**

In relation to the undertaking of an offender see also Part 3.".

(6) Section 137(4) and (5) of the **Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004** are **repealed**.

(7) In section 137(6) of the **Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004**, for "undertaking" **substitute** "health and safety order".

(8) In section 137(7) of the **Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004**, for "an order under this section" **substitute** "a health and safety order".

37D Section 138 substituted and new section 138A inserted

For section 138 of the **Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 substitute** –

"**138 Variation or contravention of health and safety order**

(1) The following persons at any time while a health and safety order is in force may apply to a court for variation or cancellation of the health and safety order –

(a) the offender;

(b) the Authority;

(c) the Director of Public Prosecutions.

(2) On application under subsection (1), the court –

(a) may vary or cancel a health and safety order if satisfied –

(i) that the circumstances of the offender have materially altered since the health and safety order was made and as a result the offender will not be able to comply with any condition of the health and safety order; or

(ii) that the circumstances of the offender were wrongly stated or were not accurately presented to the court or the author of a pre-sentence report before the health and safety order was made; or

(iii) that the offender is no longer willing to comply with the conditions of the health and safety order; and

(b) may deal with the offender for the offence or offences with respect to which the health and safety order was made in any manner in which the court could deal with

the offender if the court had just found the offender guilty of that offence or those offences, having regard to the extent to which the offender has complied with the health and safety order.

(3) Notice of an application under subsection (1) must be given –

(a) to the offender; and

(b) to the Authority, if the sentencing court was the Magistrates' Court;

(c) to the Director of Public Prosecutions, if the sentencing court was the Supreme Court or the County Court.

(4) The court may order that a warrant to arrest be issued against the offender if the offender does not attend before the court on the hearing of the application.

138A Contravention of a health and safety order

An offender subject to a health and safety order must not contravene the health and safety order unless the offender has a reasonable excuse.

Penalty: 500 penalty units for a natural person;

2 500 penalty units for a body corporate.".

Division 2 – Consequential amendments to Occupational Health and Safety Amendment (Dangerous Goods) Act 2026

37E Section 198 amended

In section 198 of the **Occupational Health and Safety Amendment (Dangerous Goods) Act 2026**, for "Before section 136" **substitute** "Before section 137".

37F Section 199 amended

In section 199 of the **Occupational Health and Safety Amendment (Dangerous Goods) Act 2026**, for "before section 136" **substitute** "before section 137".

37G Section 200 repealed

Section 200 of the **Occupational Health and Safety Amendment (Dangerous Goods) Act 2026** is **repealed**.

37H Heading to section 201 amended

For the heading to section 201 of the **Occupational Health and Safety Amendment (Dangerous Goods) Act 2026 substitute** –

"**Health and safety order**".'.

30. Insert the following New Part before Part 6 –

'**Part 5B – Further amendment of Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 – impact statements**

Division 1 – Amendment of Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004

37I Definitions

In section 5(1) of the **Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 insert** the following definitions –

"***impact statement*** means a statement referred to in section 134A;

medical report means a report referred to in section 134D;".

37J New Division 1A of Part 11 inserted

After Division 1 of Part 11 of the **Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 insert** –

"**Division 1A – Impact statements**

134A What is an impact statement?

(1) An impact statement is a statement that –

(a) is in respect of an offence against this Act or the regulations; and

(b) contains any information described in subsection (2); and

(c) is in the form of –

(i) a statutory declaration; or

(ii) an affidavit; or

(iii) sworn or affirmed oral evidence.

(2) The information that may be contained in the statement is the following –

(a) information relating to a risk –

(i) that is to the health, safety or welfare of any person; and

(ii) to which the offence relates;

(b) information relating to the eventuation of a risk described in paragraph (a);

(c) information relating to how any person was impacted, directly or indirectly, by –

(i) a risk described in paragraph (a); or

(ii) the eventuation of a risk described in paragraph (a); or

(iii) the offence.

(3) A reference in subsection (2)(c) to how any person was impacted refers to –

(a) how the health, safety or welfare of any person was impacted (including by the person suffering injury, loss or damage); and

(b) any other way in which any person was impacted.

(4) An impact statement that is in the form of a statutory declaration or an affidavit may include photographs, drawings or poems or other material that relates to any of the matters set out in subsection (2).

Note

Under section 134D, a medical report may be given with an impact statement.

134B When court may allow person to give impact statement

(1) A court that finds a person guilty of an offence against this Act or the regulations may allow a person to give an impact statement to the court in respect of the offence for the purpose of assisting the court to determine –

(a) what sentence to impose for the offence; or

(b) whether to make an order under Division 2 in respect of the offence (and if so, the content of that order) –

if the court is satisfied that it is appropriate to do so.

(2) Nothing in subsection (1) limits or otherwise affects the ability of a person to make a victim impact statement under the **Sentencing Act 1991**.

(3) An impact statement given in accordance with subsection (1) may be given on behalf of another person if –

(a) that other person is under the age of 18 years; or

(b) the court is satisfied that the other person is incapable of making the statement because of mental illness or for any other reason.

134C Admissibility

(1) A court that receives an impact statement may rule as inadmissible –

(a) the whole or any part of the statement; or

(b) the whole or any part of a medical report attached to the statement.

(2) It is the intention of Parliament that in interpreting and applying this section, courts have regard to the following –

(a) an impact statement allows a person to give information described in section 134A(2);

(b) an impact statement is not inadmissible merely because it contains subjective or emotive material.

(3) A court may receive the whole of an impact statement, or an attached medical report, despite –

(a) an objection being taken to the statement or report (or to part of the statement or report); or

(b) the statement or report containing inadmissible material.

(4) If the court receives an impact statement, or an attached medical report, that contains inadmissible material, the court, in sentencing the offender –

(a) is not to rely on the material that the court considers to be inadmissible; and

(b) need not specify which of the material is not being relied on.

134D Medical report

(1) A person who gives an impact statement to a court may also give to the court, along with that statement, a report on medical matters concerning that person (or, if the statement is given on behalf of another natural person, that other person).

(2) The report –

(a) must be –

(i) in writing; and

(ii) made and signed by a medical expert; and

(b) may include a document that the medical expert intends should be read with the statement.

(3) A document may be included under subsection (2)(b) regardless of whether –

(a) it was in existence at the time the report was made; or

(b) the medical expert obtained it, or caused it to be brought into existence, at a later time.

(4) In this section –

medical expert has the same meaning as in Division 1C of Part 3 of the **Sentencing Act 1991**;

medical matters has the same meaning as in Division 1C of Part 3 of the **Sentencing Act 1991**.

134E Distribution of written materials

(1) A person who is to give an impact statement to a court in the form of a statutory declaration or an affidavit must give a copy of the statement to the prosecutor a reasonable time before sentencing is to take place.

(2) A person who is to give a medical report to a court along with an impact statement must give a copy of the report to the prosecutor a reasonable time before sentencing is to take place.

(3) As soon as practicable after a prosecutor receives a document under subsection (1) or (2), the prosecutor must –

(a) file a copy of the document with the court; and

(b) give a copy of the document to –

(i) the offender; or

(ii) the legal practitioner representing the offender.

134F Examination of person who gives impact statement

(1) If a person gives an impact statement to a court, the court may call the person to give evidence.

(2) If a person gives a medical report to a court, the court may call the medical expert who made the report to give evidence.

(3) The court may call a person to give evidence under subsection (1) or (2) at the request of –

(a) the offender; or

(b) the prosecutor.

(4) A person called to give evidence under subsection (1) or (2) may be cross-examined and re-examined.

134G Witnesses

(1) A person who gives an impact statement to a court may call a witness to give evidence in support of any matter contained in the statement or a medical report given along with the statement.

(2) A witness called to give evidence under subsection (1) may be cross-examined and re-examined.

(3) Any party to the proceeding may lead evidence on any matter contained in the impact statement or medical report.

134H Reading aloud of impact statement

(1) A person who is to give an impact statement in the form of a statutory declaration or affidavit may request that the court provide for a specified part of the statement to be –

(a) read aloud or displayed in open court in the course of the sentencing hearing by –

(i) the person making the request; or

(ii) a person chosen by the person making the request who consents and who is approved by the court for that purpose; or

(b) read aloud in open court in the course of the sentencing hearing by the prosecutor.

(2) If a request is made under subsection (1), the court must grant the request with respect to each part of the impact statement that –

(a) is specified in the request; and

(b) is admissible; and

(c) is appropriate and relevant to the determination of what sentence to impose (or whether to make an order under Division 2, and if so, what the contents of that order are to be).

(3) The court may direct the person who made the request, or the person who is to read aloud or display the specified parts of the impact statement, as to the parts of the statement in respect of which the request is granted in accordance with subsection (2).

(4) Nothing in this section prevents the presiding judge or magistrate from reading aloud any admissible part of an impact statement in the course of a proceeding.

134I Alternative arrangements for reading aloud of impact statement

(1) If a court grants a request under section 134H for the reading aloud of any part of an impact statement, the court may direct that alternative arrangements be made for that reading aloud.

(2) Without limiting subsection (1), the court may direct that arrangements be made –

(a) permitting the impact statement to be read aloud from a place other than the court room by means of an audio visual link that enables communication between that place and the court room;

(b) using screens to remove the person reading the impact statement from the direct line of vision of the offender;

(c) permitting a person who is –

(i) chosen by the person reading the impact statement; and

(ii) approved by the court for this purpose –

to be beside the person reading the statement while it is read aloud for the purpose of providing emotional support to the person reading the statement;

(d) permitting only persons specified by the court to be present while the impact statement is read aloud;

(e) requiring legal practitioners not to robe.

(3) A direction under subsection (1) may be given, varied or revoked –

(a) on the application of –

(i) the person who is to read the impact statement aloud; or

(ii) the prosecutor; or

(b) on the court's own motion.

(4) For the purposes of this section, the ***reading aloud*** of an impact statement includes the display of material included in it.

Note

See section 134H(1)(a).

134J Alternative arrangements for witnesses

(1) If a person is called to give evidence under section 134F or 134G, the court may direct that alternative arrangements be made for the examination, cross-examination and re-examination of that person.

(2) Without limiting subsection (1), the court may direct that arrangements be made –

(a) permitting the person to be examined, cross-examined and re-examined from a place other than the court room by means of an audio visual link that enables communication between that place and the court room;

(b) using screens to remove the person from the direct line of vision of the offender;

(c) permitting a person who is –

(i) chosen by the person being examined, cross-examined or re-examined; and

(ii) approved by the court for this purpose –

to be beside the person referred to in subparagraph (i) for the purpose of providing emotional support to that person;

(d) permitting only persons specified by the court to be present while the person is being examined, cross-examined or re-examined;

(e) requiring legal practitioners not to robe;

(f) requiring legal practitioners to be seated while examining or cross-examining the person.

(3) A direction under subsection (1) may be given, varied or revoked –

(a) on the application of –

(i) the person called to give evidence; or

(ii) the prosecutor; or

(b) on the court's own motion.".

37K Heading to Division 2 of Part 11 amended

In the heading to Division 2 of Part 11 of the **Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004**, for "**Sentencing for offences**" **substitute** "**Additional sentencing orders**".

37L New Division 3A of Part 15 inserted

After Division 3 of Part 15 of the **Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 insert** –

"**Division 3A – Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026**

188A Impact statements

Division 1A of Part 11 does not apply for the purposes of sentencing an offender for an offence of which they were found guilty before the day on which Division 1 of Part 5B of the **Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026** comes into operation.".

Division 2 – Related amendments to Occupational Health and Safety Amendment (Dangerous Goods) Act 2026

37M New sections 194A to 194K inserted

After section 194 of the **Occupational Health and Safety Amendment (Dangerous Goods) Act 2026 insert** –

'**194A Heading to Division 1A of Part 11 repealed**

The heading to Division 1A of Part 11 of the Principal Act is **repealed**.

194B New Part 13.1A heading inserted

Insert the following heading before section 134A of the Principal Act –

"**Part 13.1A – Impact statements**".

194C What is an impact statement?

(1) For section 134A(1)(a) of the Principal Act **substitute** –

"(a) is in respect of –

(i) an offence against this Act or the regulations; or

(ii) a contravention of a civil penalty provision; and".

(2) For section 134A(2)(a)(i) of the Principal Act **substitute** –

"(i) that is to –

(A) the health, safety or welfare of any person; or

(B) property involved with the handling of dangerous goods; and".

(3) In section 134A(2)(a)(ii) and (c)(iii) of the Principal Act, after "the offence" **insert** "or contravention".

194D When court may allow person to give impact statement

(1) In section 134B(1)(b) of the Principal Act, for "Division 2" **substitute** "Part 13.2".

(2) After section 134B(2) of the Principal Act **insert** –

"(2A) A court that is considering whether to make a civil penalty order in respect of a contravention of a civil penalty provision may allow a person to give an impact statement to the court in respect of the contravention for the purpose of assisting the court to determine whether to make the civil penalty order (and if so, the content of that order) if the court is satisfied that it is appropriate to do so.".

(3) In section 134B(3) of the Principal Act, after "subsection (1)" **insert** "or (2A)".

194E Admissibility

In section 134C(4) of the Principal Act, after "in sentencing the offender" **insert** "or determining whether to make a civil penalty order (and if so, the content of that order)".

194F Section 134E amended

(1) In the heading to section 134E of the Principal Act after "**materials**" **insert** "**– sentencing**".

(2) In section 134E(1) of the Principal Act, for "court" **substitute** "court, in accordance with section 134B(1),".

(3) In section 134E(2) of the Principal Act, after "impact statement" **insert** "given in accordance with section 134B(1)".

194G New section 134EA inserted

After section 134E of the Principal Act **insert** –

"**134EA Distribution of written materials – civil penalties**

(1) A person who is to give an impact statement to a court, in accordance with section 134B(2A), in the form of a statutory declaration or an affidavit must give a copy of the statement to the Authority a reasonable time before sentencing is to take place.

(2) A person who is to give a medical report to a court along with an impact statement given in accordance with section 134B(2A) must give a copy of the report to the Authority a reasonable time before sentencing is to take place.

(3) As soon as practicable after the Authority receives a document under subsection (1) or (2), the Authority must –

(a) file a copy of the document with the court; and

(b) give a copy of the document to –

(i) the person in respect of whom the Authority seeks that the court is to make a civil penalty order; or

(ii) the legal practitioner representing that person.".

194H Examination of person who gives impact statement

For section 134F(3) of the Principal Act **substitute** –

"(3) The court may call a person to give evidence under subsection (1) or (2) at the request of –

(a) if the impact statement is given in accordance with section 134B(1), or the medical report is given along with a statement given that way –

(i) the offender; or

(ii) the prosecutor; or

(b) if the impact statement is given in accordance with section 134B(2A), or the medical report is given along with a statement given that way –

(i) the person in respect of whom the Authority seeks that the court is to make a civil penalty order; or

(ii) the Authority.".

194I Reading aloud of impact statement

(1) In section 134H(1)(a) of the Principal Act, for "sentencing hearing" **substitute** "relevant hearing".

(2) For section 134H(1)(b) of the Principal Act **substitute** –

"(b) read aloud in open court in the course of the relevant hearing by whichever of the following applies –

(i) the prosecutor; or

(ii) a legal practitioner representing the Authority.".

(3) For section 134H(2)(c) of the Principal Act **substitute** –

"(c) is appropriate and relevant to whichever of the following applies –

(i) the determination of what sentence to impose (or whether to make an order under Part 13.2, and if so, what the contents of that order are to be); or

(ii) the determination of whether to make a civil penalty order (and if so, what the contents of that order are to be).".

(4) After section 134H(4) of the Principal Act **insert** –

"(5) In this section –

relevant hearing means –

(a) in the case of an impact statement given in accordance with section 134B(1), the sentencing hearing; or

(b) in the case of an impact statement given in accordance with section 134B(2A), a hearing in the proceeding in which it is given.".

194J Alternative arrangements for reading aloud of impact statement

(1) In section 134I(2)(b) of the Principal Act, for "vision of the offender;" **substitute** "vision of –

(i) in the case of an impact statement given in accordance with section 134B(1), the offender; or

(ii) in the case of an impact statement given in accordance with section 134B(2A), the person in respect of whom the Authority seeks that the court is to make a civil penalty order;".

(2) For section 134I(3)(a) of the Principal Act **substitute** –

"(a) on the application of the person who is to read the impact statement aloud; or

(ab) on the application of –

(i) in the case of an impact statement given in accordance with section 134B(1), the prosecutor; or

(ii) in the case of an impact statement given in accordance with section 134B(2A), the Authority; or".

194K Alternative arrangements for witnesses

(1) In section 134J(2)(b) of the Principal Act, for "vision of the offender;" **substitute** "vision of –

(i) in the case of an impact statement given in accordance with section 134B(1), the offender; or

(ii) in the case of an impact statement given in accordance with section 134B(2A), the person in respect of whom the Authority seeks that the court is to make a civil penalty order;".

(2) For section 134J(3)(a) of the Principal Act **substitute** –

"(a) on the application of the person called to give evidence; or

(ab) on the application of –

(i) in the case of an impact statement given in accordance with section 134B(1), the prosecutor; or

(ii) in the case of an impact statement given in accordance with section 134B(2A), the Authority; or".'.

37N New sections 242A and 242B inserted

After section 242 of the **Occupational Health and Safety Amendment (Dangerous Goods) Act 2026 insert** –

'**242A Heading to Division 3A of Part 15 repealed**

The heading to Division 3A of Part 15 of the Principal Act is **repealed**.

242B New Part 17.3A heading inserted

Insert the following heading before section 188A of the Principal Act –

"**Part 17.3A – Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Act 2026**".'.

37O New Part 17.4 inserted

In section 243 of the **Occupational Health and Safety Amendment (Dangerous Goods) Act 2026**, for "Division 3" **substitute** "Division 3A".'.

31. Long title, after "to amend the" insert "**Dangerous Goods Transport Act 2026** in relation to reckless endangerment offences, the".
32. Long title, omit "in relation to guarantees and supported accommodation".
33. Long title, omit "**Accident Compensation Act 1985** in relation to supported accommodation" and insert "**Accident Compensation Act 1985**".
34. Long title, after "the **Transport Accident Act 1986** in relation to supported accommodation" insert "and certain benefits for children".
35. Long title, omit "in relation to the powers of representatives and coercive conduct".
36. Long title, after "consequential" insert "and related".
37. Long title, before "and to make" insert ", the **Limitation of Actions Act 1958** to remove a limitation period for certain actions".

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (10:12): Before the house considers these amendments, I direct the attention of the house to amendments 19, 23 and 24 made by the Legislative Council. Following examination, the Speaker is of the opinion that the amendments are a direct infringement of the privileges of the house, as they seek to force an appropriation from the Consolidated Fund. Under the Constitution Act 1975, an appropriating clause can only be initiated by the Assembly.

Steve DIMOPOULOS (Oakleigh – Minister for WorkSafe and the TAC, Minister for Sport, Minister for Equality) (10:12): I move:

That:

(1) the Legislative Assembly endorses the Speaker's statement regarding the constitutional questions raised by the message from the Legislative Council in relation to the Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Bill 2026;

(2) the Assembly, having regard to the fact that the public interest demands the early enactment of the legislation, refrains from the determinations of its constitutional right in relation to the Council message; and

(3) the amendments be agreed to.

I could not be prouder of the work of this government, this Parliament and the community on this, and I say all three purposefully. This is a very good bill that will help thousands and thousands of workers that we will never meet. It will also help thousands of families impacted and devastated by traffic accidents and trauma.

This bill has been amended in a positive fashion in the Legislative Council. There were several amendments made. One is to increase the financial support for children, as I said devastated by fatal road trauma, by allowing those children to access better income and educational benefits when their guardians are not their biological parents. There are many different types of families in Victoria. They all suffer and grieve in the same way after a trauma on the roads of Victoria, and they should be treated as equally as possible. This is what this amendment seeks to do.

It also restores and expands compensation and common-law rights for workers with dust-related conditions. It improves sentencing outcomes for occupational health and safety offences. These amendments on dust-related conditions make really meaningful impacts to workers' lives. These reforms ensure workers with dust-related conditions are treated more fairly and consistently in a way that reflects the nature of these insidious diseases. Dust-related conditions – as we know, because we have debated these types of bills over the last 11 years, including when we banned the cutting of stone – develop over long periods, and they worsen over time. A worker may first be diagnosed before later developing other separate conditions arising from the same occupational exposure. The common-law rights extended by the amendments to this bill, allowing other sufferers of dust-related diseases beyond silicosis and asbestosis sufferers to access common-law rights a second time as a disease progresses, are fundamentally decent and fair. The law should recognise the nature of these diseases, and now it will.

On the TAC changes, I have just got to say I have an enormous debt of gratitude to the brave families that came and presented their story to the Parliament of Victoria in the Legislative Council inquiry that was held. I want to thank specifically Bernard and Michelle Robertson from Geelong, who presented a very heartfelt, personal, deeply tragic story, and I want to thank their local MP Chris Couzens, the member for Geelong, for her advocacy both publicly and privately to me in relation to these changes. I would like to also thank Mr Galea and Mr Limbrick from the Legislative Council, the other place, for their strong advocacy, and I want to thank Mr Limbrick for saying in his contribution in the Council the other day that the government has acted really swiftly on this report. We have, because it is meaningful and it matters. It takes a lot of people to produce a good outcome. I am not saying it is perfect, but it is, by a long way, better than it was before.

I want to turn to the house amendments on the sentencing offences. They are also incredibly impactful. The house amendments will create a framework for courts to consider impact statements from affected persons, such as bereaved family members and others, in occupational health and safety sentencing outcomes. That is important because the existing framework that applies in courts around victim impact statements sits clumsily with occupational health and safety tragedies because they do not fit in the same mould. This framework will allow affected families, who are often suffering grief, to express that grief in the presentencing process. It will also repeal improvement project orders, rename

and expand health and safety undertakings and increase maximum penalties. This comes out of really good work by the Sentencing Advisory Council, which found that, in my words – I do not want to verbal that esteemed body – the existing frameworks in terms of the orders that could be imposed on an offender or an employer were not useful. They relied on the employer agreeing to the undertaking, so to speak. This will now be called a 'project order' rather than an 'undertaking'. It will have more meaningful impact. We expect to see more of them in workplaces, and that matters because the more of them you have in workplaces, the more people are likely to be protected from injury and harm.

The third amendment that affects sentencing outcomes is to significantly increase maximum penalties for reckless endangerment – also recommended by the SAC, the Sentencing Advisory Council – and will introduce a new offence within section 32 which applies to contraventions of a health and safety duty, not to be limited by the 'at the workplace' element. These amendments will improve workplaces across Victoria. They will raise visibility of occupational health and safety matters. They will improve safety so that we have less Victorians not coming home at night after going to work in the morning. No-one should die because they had held a job that day. No-one should be grieving someone who died because they had gone to work that day. That is what these laws and these amendments try and prevent.

I want to also thank the Premier, who held the position that I now hold, which is Minister for WorkSafe and the TAC, for his leadership, because he did a fair bit of this work before I got here. I also want to thank Luke Hilakari and his team at the Victorian Trades Hall Council for their advocacy and leadership. I have met with them and others a few times over this, including, to be honest with you, the leadership of employer groups like Tim Piper and the Australian Industry Group. This is very good legislation. This is legislation that I could not be prouder of as a member of a Labor government in Victoria which every single year we have been in office can account for improving the safety of Victorian workplaces so that less people have to suffer the grief, the distress and the devastation of losing someone they love. This is a very fitting way to finish the last day of the parliamentary sitting calendar in this term of the Victorian Parliament and this term of the Victorian Labor government.

Cindy McLEISH (Eildon) (10:21): 'Twas an hour before midnight on the Monday before the last sitting week, very late in the day, when the opposition were advised that amendments to the substantive bill, the Workplace Legislation Amendment (Accident Compensation and Other Matters) Bill 2026, were before us. They were longer than the bill. The amendments that we were given were longer than the bill. I was offered a briefing, and I must thank Rumaan out of the minister's office, who has been at every turn helpful and easy to deal with despite what bombs he was thrown and had to deal with, because that is exactly what happened. We had the briefing at 9:15 on Tuesday, and the amendments were longer than the bill, which makes me think: how organised were the government to actually bring the bill forward in the first place and get these amendments through?

I was rushing around – I had been busy on Monday night at an event and was up quite late reading through the amendments to understand what they were about – but it was clear that the majority of the amendments were related to dust-related conditions. I was quite interested in that. I have a bit of an understanding of those conditions and their impacts and causes. We had the briefing and then it was coming into the upper house. Five minutes before midnight there I heard that the Greens also had amendments, and they were circulated to me quite late. As I read through those amendments, it was hard to work out what the difference was between the Greens amendments and the government amendments. In fact they were almost the same. As it happens, as I was having an informal briefing with the Greens in Queens Hall, Trades Hall were there. I must thank Ted from Trades Hall, who was able then to put both of them side by side, and he said, 'I'll walk you through what is different between the Greens amendments and the Labor amendments.' There was not much of a difference at all.

Mathew Hilakari interjected.

Cindy McLEISH: Good old Ted. He put it in plain English, and it was very simple to see. He could point out quite easily what the changes were. Some of the differences – and I want to put this on record – were that the government's amendments specified dust-related conditions. There are several

lots of amendments, but I am starting with the dust-related conditions. The government's amendments listed asbestosis, asbestos-induced carcinoma, asbestos-related pleural diseases, mesothelioma, silicosis and silicotuberculosis. They listed those six conditions, and I was quite happy with those six conditions. They had specified them. The Greens, on the other hand, had wanted to just include serious illness and not have that list. I understand that this list of six is probably expanded from what we always just looked at: silicosis, mesothelioma and asbestosis. There are complications and other things that come up, so it is possible that over the course there may be another compensable dust-related condition that would be picked up through the Greens amendments.

As it happens, the government decided to adopt the Greens amendments ahead of their own. I thought that was interesting. That apparently caused a whole lot of complications, because in the other place where drafted changes were going to take 15 minutes, they ended up taking just about 24 hours, because it was not simple and it was quite complicated, and coming back to this place it was equally complex. Deputy Speaker, you made some comments about the Council amendments, which I think is indicative that the process here has been quite challenging. The minister spoke about how great their changes are, and I will note that they have adopted the Greens changes. I am not sure if the Greens are going to speak on this. I thought they were doing a bit of horsetrading, but when I was briefed with the Greens on this, the Greens said the government really did not know what they were doing in this space and were trying desperately to get themselves sorted out. Because of the process that happened, that is very clearly what happened in the other place. On top of that, there were some amendments put forward, which were not adopted, by the Legalise Cannabis Party.

So we have these changes relating to dust-related conditions, and these issues are terribly important. I have known too many people that have suffered as young people or as older people from exposure a very long time ago or exposure not so long ago. I met with a young constituent down in my electorate who was an office worker at Boral. They tested everybody at Boral, and she was just going along to have more and more tests because she thought that was part of the process without realising that she was being diagnosed with one of the serious conditions. I have had a bit to do with her. It has been a very challenging situation for her, being of a young age, a young mother and a single mother, and being tired constantly through her conditions and her ability to work. She is bright and bubbly and really quite gorgeous and being hit like this as a young person. Equally I know people who in their more twilight years, possibly over 50, have suffered from these conditions. So we were fine, absolutely fine with these changes being made and even the amendments being put forward by the Greens.

There were other amendments made, and the minister talked about those, to the Transport Accident Act 1986 with regard to having a look at payments that are made to legal guardians. The inquiry by the Legislative Council into claims made through the TAC was reasonably short and was handed down in August. Miraculously – and someone would think there could be an election around the corner – the government responded very quickly, at 5 minutes to midnight this time, not an hour to midnight, on 22 August. While they normally take six months to respond, they managed to turn this around very quickly. I contrast that to the Victorian Law Reform Commission's inquiry into stalking, handed down on 22 October, which still has not been responded to and still has outstanding recommendations. So we have had a very miraculous and fast turnaround.

The changes that are made in this area are absolutely worthwhile. There is a section in chapter 2, 'The TAC's compensation scheme: meeting the needs of clients and medical service providers'. Chapter 2.3.2 is 'How the burden of care and advocacy can fall on families', and we hear the story of the Robertsons and their daughter. I will read findings 23 and 24, because I do want to put them on the record in this place. Finding 23 is:

> Whilst all legal guardians receive the same financial support from the TAC, this amount is different to the amount paid to surviving spouses.

So a surviving spouse, being the parent of children, is treated differently to a guardian or a grandparent who is looking after the child. Finding 24 is:

> The current wording of the *Transport Accident Act 1986* (Vic) does not provide for fair and equitable treatment of all family types, including where grandparents –

as is the case with the Robertsons –

> become legal guardians of children following a transport-related death of the parent.

Recommendation 6 – and this is why these amendments have been included – is:

> That the Victorian Government review surviving spouse and legal guardian payments in the situation where a child is orphaned and a new guardian is appointed.

I think that is particularly important, and I understand that there are probably 55 children in this case at the moment for whom the guardian will be compensated more fairly. On top of that, they have extended some of the support in education and the allowances to educate those children, because again in the case of the Robertsons, they talked about how they had to dip into their superannuation and things to make the payments and look after their grandchild adequately. I think there are about another 900 children who will be impacted positively by this change.

We have dealt with two of the amendments – certainly the dust-related conditions and the TAC changes. The third lot is around the Sentencing Advisory Council changes and impact statements. The government response, when I was briefed, had not been finalised on the report that was done in February 2025, in stark contrast to the turnaround on the response to the TAC. For the Sentencing Advisory Council there were 12 recommendations that were made, and three of those are being dealt with through these amendments. The amendments are around impact statements. There are limits on victims, there are health and safety orders and there is reckless endangerment.

I want to comment briefly on reckless endangerment, because some of the questions that I asked in the bill briefing were not able to be answered. I refer to section 2A in the amendments. There are a new lot of amendments that have just been handed to me today, which are different from the amendments that I was briefed on the other day because they have pretty well just been completed. They are still related to section 2A and conduct that endangers persons at workplaces:

> A person must not, without lawful excuse, recklessly engage in conduct that places, or may place, another person who is at a workplace in danger of serious injury, serious illness or death.

There are quite substantial penalties here, and so I asked what a lawful excuse was – it is mentioned a couple of times. I was not able to get an answer. I was able to get an example that in emergency services sometimes possibly a police officer or a paramedic might need to take action in a particular area. Again, they were very, very vague. I could see that these amendments were put together very quickly – with haste. I also asked during the bill briefing about section 357, which is being amended in the Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013. A section is being repealed. I asked what section was being repealed, and I was not given an answer. They could not tell me, so to think that these amendments have had due consideration by the government is a bit of a tall order. I know that is not the case. They have had a long time, looking at the Sentencing Advisory Council, to put some of these through, and they have not done so.

With some of the changes around common law, there was a gap between when common law was abolished in November 1997 and when it was reintroduced in October 1999 – I think it was – where there were no common-law claims. Now this has been changed for dust-related conditions, and there is a second award possible if conditions worsen – or so I understand these changes. I asked what was driving it, and it was the plaintiff law firms, so my antennae just went up a little bit about what was happening in that space.

Also there were some changes which enabled workers to bypass prelitigation processes, and I asked, 'What does that look like? How long is that going to be?' Obviously it is different in different

scenarios, but it could be something from months to years. Bypassing prelitigation means that they can go directly to the Supreme Court in these instances. So there is a bit of a mixture with these amendments, and the process through Parliament in dealing with them has been nothing short of a dog's breakfast.

The timeframe that we were given – as I said at the outset, the amendments are longer than the bill that we were debating in the first place, where we did have that customary 14 days – meant we had no time to go out and consult more widely on these. I felt pleased, actually, that I had a background in some of this – and certainly with dust-related conditions – and could understand the WorkSafe scheme and these areas. Equally with the common-law entitlements, I had a background in that and could understand the changes that were being made.

The inquiry into claims made through the TAC was brought about by Mr Limbrick in the other place with our support. It was not something that the government brought on themselves. Again, I think that the government might be thinking this is some of their work. They did respond very promptly, and the changes that have been made to the guardianship entitlements and education entitlements for students are fine – we have no problem with those amendments.

As I said previously, the substantive bill – the unamended bill – had sections on surety bonds for self-insurers that we were pleased about. It had some changes around supported accommodation that were fine. And it had an overreach on what the authorised representatives of registered employee associations or health and safety representatives could do in terms of accessing a workplace and documents. The minister in the other place during the committee stage earlier had said she did not know anything about the bill, but then seemed to miraculously say all of these things are happening already. If they are happening already, I am not sure why we are making the changes. They are not happening already. The bill clearly says that health and safety reps or ARREOs can get in there and copy any document. That remains scary to us on this side of the house.

Chris COUZENS (Geelong) (10:38): I am very pleased to rise to contribute on this bill, and I do want to particularly focus on the Transport Accident Commission amendment, because we do have Bernard Robertson in the gallery today to hear this and it is there because of them. I know I am not supposed to refer to the gallery – my apologies, Deputy Speaker – but this is something that is really close to me and to a number of families across Victoria, and I do want to really focus on that amendment. The minister has gone through the content of the bill, which obviously we support. I do want to make my comments around this particular amendment, which came out of the TAC inquiry – it was recommendation 6 – as a result of the evidence given by Bernard and Michelle Robertson, which really highlighted the gap that was there that had impacted their family. I will come back to that in a moment.

I do want to acknowledge the committee chair Michael Galea in the other place for the work that he has done, the Minister for WorkSafe and the TAC, who we have just heard from, and their officers, who have worked tirelessly to get this amendment through the chamber in this final sitting day of this Parliament. For those families that have been impacted, this has been a very long journey. I know the committee's work is so important.

Having listened to the member for Eildon's allegations about how it is an election time and we are pushing it through, that is just not true. We have both been on committees together for a very long time, and I have every respect for the member. We both know how making those recommendations is so important to our communities, and to have an outcome where those recommendations are accepted by government and you see them roll out is really, really important. But I will say, in the almost 12 years that I have been in this place doing committee work, this is the first time I have ever seen such a speedy passing. That is because of the impact it is having on a small group of Victorians and the ridiculous gap that has impacted their lives.

In saying that, I also want to acknowledge the former minister for the TAC, who is now the Premier, and his office for their strong advocacy when I went to them with the issue, which has led to the outcome today. It was only recently that I joined the minister for the TAC on a visit to the TAC offices in Geelong to meet the staff there and talk to them about the work that they do, the importance of their work and their incredible work supporting TAC clients and their families. They know best what to fix. I want to pay tribute to the work that they have done at the TAC. I have the greatest respect for them and their work.

Going back to the Robertson family and their experience, I want to read the email that I got from the Robertson family back in August 2025. It starts with:

> My name is Bernard Robertson, and my wife is Michelle Robertson.

They are from Geelong West.

> Last year, on October 16, we tragically lost our daughter, Thalia Robertson, in a motor vehicle accident on Forrest Road, near Winchelsea, Victoria. Thalia was 31 years old at the time of her passing. She was a single mum by choice and did not have a partner.
>
> Thalia had a beautiful daughter named Alice Rose Robertson, who was five years old at the time of the accident. Alice was conceived through IVF sperm donation.
>
> Thalia lived with Michelle and myself in our house in Geelong West from the time she was born. As part of the journey of bringing Alice into the world, Michelle and I agreed to financially and emotionally support Thalia. As Thalia was already living with us, and was continuing to live with us after Alice was born, we renovated our home to accommodate them. We played an active role in raising Alice alongside her mother, which allowed Thalia to return to work and we would care for Alice. For all intents and purposes, we were her other partner. Thalia was contributing to household costs after the renovation and therefore this was a co-dependant situation.
>
> Since Thalia's passing, Michelle and I have gone to the Family Court of Australia to become Alice's Legal Guardians, honouring our promise to Thalia that if anything were to happen to her, we would raise Alice.
>
> Thalia was employed as a nurse at the time of the accident.
>
> This has been a very hard time for our family both emotionally but also financially.
>
> Regrettably TAC does not recognise Michelle and I as being a legal partner which means we miss out on significant financial support to raise Alice. This we feel discriminates against Alice and places her at a disadvantage. This could also be a disincentive to other people who may be placed in the same situation but could not afford to take on the financial responsibility, even though they would be the best suited person/people.
>
> Under the current legislation we receive a weekly payment of $225 for Alice. An additional $225,000 was put in Trust for Alice to receive when she is 18.
>
> If we were to be recognised as the other partner, we could receive up to $1620 per week as well as the lump sum from TAC, which is currently in trust, and it would be paid to us instead, which we could use in raising Alice …
>
> As it is now, we are needing to change our work hours and sell our house to financially help with supporting Alice, as our plans were to be both retiring in the next 2–3 years.
>
> We feel the legislation has not kept up with the modern-day society where more women are choosing to be single mothers by choice, where there is not the same level of support from TAC. We feel they are treated financially different if something were to happen, because these women consciously choose not to have a partner in their life.
>
> We believe there should be a provision made that in the situation of these women not having a legal partner, there should be a nominated or legally appointed person/people through the Family Court who would receive the same provision as a partner would receive.
>
> Michelle and I feel passionate about this and we want to bring it before the current Government to try to make the changes needed. We are very keen to advocate this.

This is something that the Robertson family have advocated for. They have played a huge role and are a huge part of this change. They should be so proud of what they have achieved in a short space of time. I have no doubt that Thalia would be very proud of her parents. Alice was always going to be

well cared for by Bernard and Michelle. However, this important change will make life for the Robertson family that bit easier.

This amendment is life-changing for those families, for those impacted who have experienced that significant trauma. As MPs we play a significant role in changing what is not working in the best interests of Victorians. As a member of the Labor government I am so pleased and so proud that we have worked hard, and it has not been just in the last couple of weeks. It has been just over 12 months that we have been working on this, advocating and looking at how we could make this change. The opportunity to have this amendment put into this bill is something that I never thought would happen, but it has happened. I am so delighted for those families that will be impacted, because it is so important for them to be able to provide a good life for those children that they are now taking care of. I commend this amendment to the house.

Motion agreed to.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: A message will now be sent to the Legislative Council informing them of the house's decision.

Motions

Liberal Party policy

Sonya KILKENNY (Carrum – Attorney-General, Minister for Planning, Minister for Prevention of Family Violence) (10:48): I move:

> That this house notes that the Liberals have committed to cutting $40 billion from the budget, requiring at least 30,000 public sector jobs to be cut, devastating the frontline services Victorians rely on, meaning:
>
> (a) longer hospital wait times;
>
> (b) fewer nurses and hospital beds;
>
> (c) less police; and
>
> (d) cuts to local infrastructure.

There is a very simple question that Victorians deserve an answer to, and that is: what will the Leader of the Opposition cut? Because you cannot take $40 billion out of the Victorian budget and pretend it will not affect schools, hospitals, police, child protection, housing and services that women and families rely on. This is about something bigger than numbers. It is about what sort of Victoria we want to be. Victorians are decent people. We are compassionate people. We look after each other. We do not believe needing help makes someone weak or that caring for people is a waste. Compassion has value and care has value, and governments should never become so focused on what they can cut that they lose sight of the people they exist to serve. That is exactly what is at stake this November.

Independent analysis by the Australia Institute published earlier this month has directly challenged the opposition's fiscal strategy. The Leader of the Opposition says billions can be saved through a hiring freeze on so-called back office roles, but the independent analysis that we have seen earlier this month by the Australia Institute describes that strategy as simply implausible. Its analysis concludes that achieving those savings would require more than 30,000 public sector jobs to disappear, and it estimates the plan could push Victoria's unemployment rate from a projected 4.75 per cent to around 5.4 per cent. When you cut 30,000 jobs, you do not just remove numbers from a spreadsheet; you are taking wages out of households, you are taking spending out of shops, cafes and businesses, you weaken demand and you put other people's jobs at risk.

These cuts do not stop at the doors of the public service, either. So there are 30,000 jobs on the chopping block, but many more thousands of jobs at risk as well, because these kinds of jobs flow right through our communities and right into the private sector. It is not simply a debate about government expenditure, it is about jobs, it is about Victoria's economic activity and it is about the services Victorians rely upon. When all of these numbers do not add up, it is ordinary Victorians who are going to pay the price. Cutting too hard and too fast reduces jobs and it shrinks our economy. That

is not responsible – it is reckless, it is cruel, it is ruthless and, frankly, it is fiscally irresponsible. So when the Leader of the Opposition talks about cutting jobs from backroom offices, Victorians deserve to know which jobs, which services, which schools, which programs and which hospitals.

Nowhere is this clearer than in health. We know that health is actually the biggest part of the Victorian budget, so you cannot claim to be cutting $40 billion from our budget without somehow impacting our health and health services. We know what Liberal cuts to our health system look like, because we have seen them before. When they were last in government, they ripped $1 billion out of health. They closed hospitals right across the state – I do not think there was one community that was not touched by these closures and cuts. They closed Koroit Hospital, Macarthur, Mortlake, Eildon, Murtoa, Mildura, Red Cliffs, Clunes, Lismore, Elmore, Waranga, Burwood, Preston and Northcote community hospitals, Beeac and Birregurra. They cut back the Northern Hospital, they closed the Infectious Diseases Hospital at Fairfield, they privatised Latrobe Regional Hospital and they defunded 25 community mental health providers. That is what cuts look like. They are not numbers on a Treasury spreadsheet; they are hospitals, they are beds, they are nurses and doctors and ultimately patients – Victorians.

Now there is the prospect of One Nation holding influence over a Liberal–National coalition government in this state, because we know that the Liberals, to form government, will need to partner with One Nation. One Nation is a party that wants to privatise and Americanise our health system here in Victoria. I can tell you, I have lived in America. I have seen a health system where the first question is not: what kind of care do you need? The first question is: do you have insurance? What will it cover? What can you afford? None of us on this side want that for Victoria. None of us want a parent worrying about whether they can afford to take their child to hospital. I do not want an older Victorian putting off treatment because they are frightened of the bill, and I do not want the size of someone's bank account dictating and determining the quality of health care they receive. We are proud here in Victoria that our health care is built on fundamentally different principles than that. When you are sick, you should receive the care because you need it, not because you can afford it, and that is a principle that is absolutely worth defending.

But all of that is at risk from the $40 billion in cuts proposed by the Leader of the Opposition, and it is at risk because we have seen it before. We have seen it before, and be in no doubt that the best indicator of future action is looking to past action. Let us compare the records. We have already listed the number and names of the hospitals that they closed. They cut $1 billion from the health system. It is shameful. It is absolutely pathetic. It is the Liberal–National Party. Just imagine, then, what they would do as a Liberal–National–One Nation coalition government.

If we contrast that, we as a government have invested in our hospitals, in our nurses and in our world-class healthcare system, and we are so immensely proud of it. While they closed hospitals, we have built them. We have opened the new Footscray Hospital; the Joan Kirner Women's and Children's Hospital in Sunshine; the Peninsula University Hospital in Frankston; the Bendigo Hospital; the Victorian Heart Hospital, Australia's first dedicated heart hospital; and the Orygen youth mental health facility. We have built community hospitals in Mernda, Craigieburn, Cranbourne, Phillip Island, Pakenham, Point Cook and Sunbury, and we have expanded or redeveloped the Angliss Hospital, Maryborough and district hospital, Latrobe Regional Hospital, Wonthaggi Hospital, Goulburn Valley Health, Shepparton hospital, Casey Hospital, Northern Hospital, Monash Medical Centre, University Hospital Geelong and Swan Hill district hospital. We know that work is well underway on the new Melton hospital, with cranes in the sky and visible for miles and miles. We have delivered a record 28.4 per cent wage increase for our nurses and midwives. We are the proud party to have legislated nurse-to-patient ratios here in Victoria, and we have continued to strengthen those ratios. That is the difference between a Labor government that invests in our healthcare system and a Liberal–One Nation coalition that will decimate our healthcare system with $40 billion in cuts and cuts to 30,000 jobs. One approach sees hospitals and health workers as a cost to be cut. We see them as something worth investing in, because behind every hospital budget is a nurse, a paramedic, a doctor,

a hospital bed and ultimately a Victorian patient who needs care. That is why this Liberal cuts agenda matters so deeply for Victorians and matters so deeply this November.

There are also other kinds of cuts we need to talk about, and they are cuts to compassion, cuts to care and cuts to the safety net that is there when life gets hard. As I have said, government is never just about maintaining a spreadsheet. It is about whether someone is there when your child is sick and needs help, when your mum needs a hospital bed, when a family is in crisis or when someone is at their most vulnerable.

There is another area I really want to talk about, where the prospect of a Liberal–One Nation coalition is truly terrifying, and that is in the realm of women's safety and women's rights. I am deeply concerned about what $40 billion in cuts would mean for women's rights, women's safety and women's health here in Victoria. This is so much more than a budget bottom line. It is about the laws we pass, the services we fund and the priorities and the values we bring to government. One Nation's formal policy seeks to roll back abortion laws. That is a very clear policy position. Pauline Hanson has described family violence as a two-way street and said that women in family violence situations should just leave. The Australian human rights commissioner and the sex discrimination and children's rights commissioners rejected these comments outright. We still have not heard the Leader of the Opposition condemn these comments. I call on her to do that. I call on her to condemn these comments. Women escaping violence need somewhere safe to go. They need housing. They need financial security. They need specialist family violence services. They need a government that believes them and a system that invests in them, listens to them and protects them. Labor has spent years and years building that system, from the Royal Commission into Family Violence to reforms that prevent violence, protect victim-survivors and make our justice system safer. Cuts can mean cuts to women's safety, cuts to support and cuts to the progress that we have fought so hard to achieve.

Then there is community safety, and I know this is a priority for communities right across our electorates. We have seen time and time again those opposite demanding that we spend more time with police, demanding that there is more investment for police and in our police services. But when they were last in government, they cut $130 million from Victoria Police and slashed hundreds of positions, including specialist forensic staff. You cannot claim to be tough on crime whilst your history and your record show that when you have the chance, you cut that spending and you cut that investment. When they talk about cutting back office staff, who do they think picks up that work? We know that we want to see more police out on the beat, out from behind those desks, but when you start cutting those back office positions, who is going to fill them? The police officer who should be on patrol or the investigator who should be pursuing an offender.

They have also called for the scrapping of the violence reduction unit. I recently attended one of the community forums, and who was there putting themselves front and centre in the community photo? The very member who called for the violence reduction unit to be scrapped. Dismissing the violence reduction unit as bureaucracy in Parliament and then turning up to see it all coming together with police, with communities and with local organisations to prevent violence is so hypocritical. The violence reduction unit was formed only last year, only nine months ago, and it is data led, evidence backed and based on really, really successful models that have worked well and worked successfully in Glasgow and London. It is about mentoring, it is about early intervention, it is about working with community and it is about connecting up the services, as I said, based on evidence, data and intelligence to ensure the right programs are going to the right places to prevent crime. This is about taking a public health approach to crime prevention, because as we continue to say, violent crime is never inevitable; it is entirely preventable.

We have always said we believe in serious consequences for serious violence, and we have done that by introducing adult time for violent crime. We have done that by reforming our bail laws by strengthening them. We have seen the impacts that they are having, with record numbers of people on remand and of bail refusals. But we also believe in stopping the violence from happening in the first place. Whilst we have built the biggest police force in the nation, backed by record investment, we

have a plan to recruit another 1500 police officers, expand training and get a new police academy up and running in the west – more police, more frontline support, serious consequences for violent crime and early intervention to prevent it, because you cannot ever cut your way to a safer community.

There is another cut I want to talk about. This is a promise that the Leader of the Opposition has made to deliver in her first 100 days if she assumes the office of Premier in this state, and that is that she will cut and rip up treaty – a cut to treaty. The Liberal Party have said they will scrap treaty within their first 100 days. Victoria's first Statewide Treaty commenced only in December last year. This is not something theoretical. This is something Victoria has legislated, negotiated and entered into in good faith with First Peoples here in Victoria. At its heart is something so very simple. It is about First Peoples having a greater say over the decisions that affect their lives, that affect their families and that affect their communities. It is entirely about self-determination. It is about truth-telling and building a relationship based on truth, justice and respect. Scrapping treaty is not just about cutting. It is about cutting a commitment, a commitment that we have made with our First Peoples and a commitment we have made with all Victorians. It is walking away from that incredible opportunity for First Peoples to have a greater say in decisions that affect their own lives and their own future. You can never talk about compassion and care while cutting self-determination and cutting treaty. You cannot say you want better outcomes for First Nations people here in Victoria while removing the very mechanism that they helped design to achieve that very goal.

What is really at stake this November? The Liberal argument is that government should simply spend less and that we need to find $40 billion in cuts to deliver a budget surplus within the timeframe they have set. But we know that that is not possible without cutting more than 30,000 jobs. Cutting 30,000 jobs is not some abstract concept. As we know, it is about people. It is the nurse, it is the police officer, it is the teacher, it is the child protection worker and it is the social worker. It is the social workers who are part of the community connectors program that work with the violence reduction unit at our train stations across metropolitan Melbourne, with assertive outreach reaching vulnerable people. We have seen those results, with significant reductions in violent incidents at stations like Frankston and Dandenong, where that program has been operating for about two years. It is about people: the police officer, the PSO and the TAFE teacher who is teaching our free TAFE courses. These are the services that Victorians rely on every day.

The $40 billion in cuts that are proposed by the Liberal–One Nation coalition from November are not just some harmless exercise in trimming government spending and government waste. Independent analysis has already confirmed that their public sector savings alone would require 30,000 jobs to disappear. So there are two questions for the Leader of the Opposition – two questions that all Victorians should be asking and all Victorians deserve answers to: what are you going to cut, and who are you prepared to hurt? You cannot cut $40 billion and protect everything. You cannot cut $40 billion and continue to build the schools we need. You cannot cut $40 billion and provide the health care that Victorians deserve. You cannot cut $40 billion and strengthen services for women fleeing family violence. You cannot cut $40 billion and continue to keep communities safe. You cannot cut that deeply without cutting something else too.

I come back to the point about compassion and care and opportunity and dignity, because ultimately governments are about people. This can never be simply a question of numbers. It is ultimately a question of what kind of Victoria we want to be – a Victoria that the Labor Party says should be investing in its people, its schools, its hospitals, its homes, its communities; a Victoria that listens to its First Peoples; a Victoria where women are safe, respected and equal; a Victoria where a child's opportunities are not determined by their postcode or how much their parents earn; and a Victoria that believes governments should be there when people need them most. Cuts of this magnitude, of $40 billion, do not happen somewhere else to somebody else. They reach into our hospitals, our classrooms, our homes and our communities. They mean fewer people providing the services that we all rely on. They mean opportunities will disappear. They mean people who need help being told there

is less help available. That is where my values are fundamentally different to the opposition leader and the Liberal–National–One Nation coalition.

We believe in compassion. We believe in looking after each other. We believe every child and young person deserves opportunity, every woman deserves safety, every person deserves dignity and every Victorian deserves a government that does not walk away when things get difficult. When the answer to every problem is cut, you just cut. Where the cuts are cuts to compassion, cuts to care, cuts to opportunity and cuts to dignity, that is not the Victoria I believe in. I believe here in Victoria we have a responsibility to each other and to one another. I believe in a Victoria that is strong enough to be kind, prosperous enough to care and confident enough to leave no-one behind. That is a Victoria worth fighting for this November.

Sarah CONNOLLY (Laverton) (11:11): I rise to speak on the motion put forward this morning. There was a little pause there while I got up, because I thought those opposite might have a speaker who might want to stand up and talk about how they are not going to be cutting over 30,000 jobs. But there you go, there is still no-one in the chamber to reject this motion before the house, which just makes me so much more worried for Victorians this coming November if ever we were to see the horror of a One Nation–Liberal coalition take power here in this place.

I am really glad to speak on this motion. I want my community to hear me loud and clear when we talk about those opposite planning to cut over 30,000 jobs here in this state and the impact it will have on every single Victorian, because those cuts are going to come from the frontline essential services that Victorians rely on day in, day out. I have to say, westies absolutely rely on these sorts of services.

What I will say and what I will start with is that I was not surprised to see that number of 31,700 jobs being proposed to be cut with the $30 billion worth of cuts that those opposite will make to the state budget if elected this November. I was not surprised, because I am one of the members who sat here in this place and fought tooth and nail to ensure that Victoria got its fair share during the one-in-100-year pandemic that was COVID, which hit this state, and we were hit worse than any other state. We had to fight tooth and nail even to get the vaccinations that would save lives in this state, because we had a federal Liberal coalition government at the time. I remember a guy called Josh Frydenberg, the former member for Kooyong. Remember him? That famous federal Liberal Treasurer who I think now works for – remind me, who does he work for?

A member: Goldman Sachs.

Sarah CONNOLLY: Of course, yes – which is maybe where the member for Kew hopes that her future career will go, following her former boss, if she does not make it through this election. But what I will say is that the member for Kew sat alongside the member for Kooyong while he was the federal Treasurer and made decisions that affected every single Victorian in this state. He refused to give us money, refused to help keep businesses here in this state open and afloat and refused to send us the vaccines, for God's sake. That was a man who said, 'I'm proudly a Victorian,' but he was never for Victoria in its deepest, darkest hour.

I would say that the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Kew, pretends to be for Victorians. She pretends to have a plan – 'I've got a plan. I've got a plan for a fresh start.' Well, I would say to the member for Kew and anyone thinking about voting for a One Nation–Liberal coalition this November, that is not a fresh start. That is a typical Liberal coalition government plan to cut and close and create chaos here in the state of Victoria, inflicting pain, inflicting misery and further driving up the cost-of-living crisis that we are experiencing here and across the country at the moment. This is a typical Liberal plan, and it has been called out independently by the Australia Institute. I read that report – I think it was last sitting week – and I have to say I am not easily shocked but I was gobsmacked.

It must have been a dismal day for the member for Kew, the Leader of the Opposition, to read in black and white that $40 billion worth of cuts would result in the loss of 31,700 jobs. Do you know what I did the next day after Parliament finished? I went out doorknocking in Braybrook. Braybrook is a

pretty tough suburb. We are pretty tough people in Braybrook. I happened to knock on the door of a public servant, and she wanted to talk to me about these cuts. She knew the number. She did not know 'just over 30,000'; she knew the exact number – the 31,700 job cuts that it would inflict. She asked if one would be hers, and I said – and this is a true story; you will like this one; my kids like this one – 'Look, I can't guarantee that it won't be your job, but what I can guarantee you is that under a Liberal–One Nation government you'll probably have to bring your own toilet paper to work. It will be an episode out of *Utopia* because the cuts will be that deep. You might keep your job, but you will need to bring your own dunny paper.' That is what a One Nation–Liberal coalition will deliver for Victoria.

The minister – the previous speaker, the member for Carrum – talked about the impact that this will have on health services, on hospitals and on our schools. Then she spoke directly to what it will mean for women escaping and fleeing family violence. We have talked just a little bit this week about the absolute tragedy that continues to unfold – the scourge in our community, not just in Victoria but across the country – of how many women are harmed and killed by their partner and by men here in Victoria and Australia. The member for Carrum is right in asking the question of what will happen if those opposite take government. How many jobs will be cut in the domestic violence and family violence sector? That is a sector that we have tried to build up to ensure that young men here in this state are being raised to have respectful relationships and to understand how to respect girls and women, because the royal commission found that one of the reasons why there is such terrible violence and murder happening in too many homes across this country is because boys are growing up not respecting women. We have tried to build up this sector from the ground up to prevent violence against women. How many job cuts will happen in that sector? I am not even going to begin to imagine, and I do not think anyone would be surprised by what that will result in. I notice that those opposite are not here in the house, in this place, to even interject to say that that would not happen.

We talk about the cuts, the closures and the chaos, and I do not say this while making it up, because this is what happened last time they were in government. I talk to my community a lot about cuts and what the $40 billion worth of cuts will mean not just in terms of jobs but also in terms of essential infrastructure that people in Melbourne's west need. Without a doubt the rebuild of Tottenham station will be off the table.

A member interjected.

Sarah CONNOLLY: It is time for Tottie under Labor. Tottie will be timed out under a One Nation–Liberal government. It will not go ahead. That station has been desperate for an upgrade. There are many things that I could describe and say about that station, but what I will say is it is much loved, it is overly loved and it is time for Tottie. That station does not just need a face lift and a lick of paint; it needs a rebuild, and under Labor that is exactly what it is going to get. Do you know what else is going to be cut? The rebuild of Albion station. Albion is just a couple of kilometres down the line from Tottenham, and that station is another much-loved, well-loved, overly loved station that is in desperate need of not a face lift but an entire rebuild. And under Labor it turns out it is time for Albion.

Daniela De Martino interjected.

Sarah CONNOLLY: Albi – well, that is going to be a catchy phrase. I can use that out on the hustings. They are two stations that have needed an upgrade for a long time. That will not happen under a Liberal–One Nation coalition. Do you know what else is likely to be cut? The Sunshine superhub. They tried to cut that at the last federal election, and luckily Labor came through. They tried to cut the Sunshine superhub. They will build Melbourne Airport rail, but they will cut the Sunshine superhub. What westies know is the Sunshine superhub is the gateway and the enabler of electrification to Melton, which is underway under Labor, and the future electrification of the Wyndham Vale line. But those opposite, the blockers and the cutters, the party of chaos, would cut the Sunshine superhub. You know the other thing they are going to cut if elected – and this was an announcement made, much to my shock and horror and maybe his, but it slipped out of his mouth and he has not retracted it – they intend to cut the essential services on the Wyndham Vale line. That means

when you turn up for a train, you will not get on one, because they will not be turning up that often and they will be too crowded to get on. Whereas under Labor we have increased capacity on that line with the nine-car carriage VLocity trains that will be running more often to take more people where they need to go and get them there a whole lot sooner. This is a party of cuts and chaos – 31,700 jobs and counting. They would bring a terrible, terrible, terrible time for Victorians if elected to government this November. Every Victorian needs to be aware of what is on the line.

Danny PEARSON (Essendon) (11:21): What a delight it is to be here, standing in this great place to speak on this motion on my last day in this house. I did consult the standing orders, and I noticed that in the 1970s they were amended to allow men to wear a safari suit. In my first term I did say to the member for Sunbury that on my last day I would wear a safari suit. The safari suit is at the drycleaners, but nonetheless, baby blue has come out one last time. But it is a delight to be able to speak on this because I was reflecting upon budgets. Indeed if you look back at the history of public sector finances, you really must go back to Augustus. Augustus created the aerarium Saturni, which was the city's own budgetary fund which was housed in the Temple of Saturn. Separately he created fiscus, from which we now derive fiscal policy, which was under the emperor's direct control. So again I must say we have much to be grateful to the Romans for.

Katie Hall: What have the Romans ever done for us?

Danny PEARSON: Well, where would you start, and where would you end? I would need an extension of time, I think. But in terms of that – and I say this from the perspective of having been the finance minister for six years in this great state – we made it very clear in the time of the pandemic that we would look at developing a fiscal strategy. The first step was to create jobs, and I think if you look at the hundreds of thousands of jobs that have been created since that time, that demonstrates that. The second point was to look at having a cash surplus, and that was achieved in the 2022–23 financial year. For the benefit of my colleagues, a cash surplus is where money comes in and that is more than the money that goes out. The third step was to look at having an operating surplus, which means you make allowance for depreciation – this point is very important. The fourth is to stabilise debt as a proportion of the economy, and the fifth step is to reduce debt as a proportion of the economy.

Why that is important – and I will just seek the house's indulgence for a moment – when you look at having that cash surplus, effectively that is what is used towards your capital expenditure. I give the Leader of the Opposition credit. Unlike Jeff Kennett, who told people no-one was going to lose their job and everything was going to be fine – it was just business as usual – to the Leader of the Opposition's credit, she has been honest. She has said very clearly what she wants to do, which is to unleash $40 billion worth of cuts and to look at having basically a neutral cash position by 2032 – that is, once you look at the cash surplus, what your capital expenditure is. So indulge me for a moment. If we go back to my favourite budget paper of all, budget paper 5 – for those who want to take themselves seriously in this caper, it is the only game in town – I refer the house's attention to page 13 of budget paper 5. You look at the fiscal aggregates and net cash flow from operating activities: $6.477 billion for this current financial year, going out to $6.538 billion in 2029–30. What the Leader of the Opposition is saying is that when you look at the tax cuts that she is going to impose, coupled with the savings cuts, I would assume they would roughly approximate and cancel each other out. So we are sacking a whole lot of people and we are reducing taxes. That is in their ideological wheelhouse.

But then you look at it and think, okay, that means that in a capital expenditure sense you are spending no more than about $6.5 billion in 2032. Now think about that for a moment. The last time Victoria was spending that sort of money on capital expenditure was back in 2010. By 2050 we are going to have a population the size of London. It is not going to be possible. The Leader of the Opposition can say these things, but given the combination of what her party room will demand in the event that she wins, coupled with the fact that we are just going to be growing at a great rate of knots, it is not possible and is not feasible. I say this because I have spent years looking at this issue. I have spent years trying to find a way of making sure that we can faithfully adhere to the fiscal strategy. It has even been opined that I have got the fiscal strategy tattooed on my body, and those who have said it probably think it

has got a level of truth to it. It has been ingrained in me. When you think about that from that perspective, we have stuck and adhered to this, and it resulted in the fact that we are the only jurisdiction on the eastern seaboard with an operating surplus – the only one. New South Wales has talked about having an operating surplus. For the last five years they have said they will have an operating surplus in two years time, and it has not happened. If you look at Queensland, with the expenditure they are embarking upon, they have got budget deficits as far as the eye can see. Indeed if you look at their debt levels at the end of the forward estimates, they will probably be exceeding us with their level of debt. So it is just simply not possible.

With this level of global uncertainty, there is a need to make sure that the public sector continues to provide that ballast in the state economy. The public sector is worth about one-seventh of the state economy. You need to make sure that you have still got a good, solid basis, and I think that because of the fiscal strategy that we have embarked upon, we have got that ballast. I think that what I would suggest to those opposite – and I know that they would have a an ideologically different view on this – is that the way forward is to grow the economy. Yes, of course the fiscal aggregates clearly state that by the end of the forward estimates, debt will be at $199 billion. But it is patently obvious that if you have an economy that is the size of, say, $800 billion or $900 billion, it is far easier to sustain that level of debt and service that level of debt than if you have got an economy of $500 billion in size.

If you want to lift material living standards in the economy, it comes down to the three 'p's – population growth, participation rate and productivity. We have got one of the fastest growing economies, from the point of view of population, in the country, and that is a good thing. I think it is really important that we have this honest conversation with the community as we head into November as to the sort of Victoria we want in 2050. I want us to be a progressive, kind, welcoming society that recognises that we have got a responsibility in the global community to welcome people, particularly, for example, from the Pacific Islands, who are going to be impacted by climate change, or who are seeking refuge from war, like the people from Ukraine. I think that is a really good thing that we should be doing, and we should have that debate about how that should go.

The second 'p' is for the participation rate. Victoria has got an above-average participation rate, and I suspect that a big factor of that is the ability for people to work from home at higher rates here in Victoria than in other states. That level of flexibility makes it easier for primary caregivers to go into the workforce and to be able to participate more fulsomely.

The third comes down to productivity, and that is exactly why, when I was the minister, I wrote the AI mission statement, because I could see the way in which AI has the ability to not only engage in process redesign but play to our competitive strengths. In Victoria we are very good at food and fibre, as the Minister for Agriculture at the table knows only too well. We are very good at health, pharmaceuticals and medical technology. We are very good at transnational education. So the real smarts in all of this are going to be about how we actually embrace and adopt AI in process redesign, to play to those competitive strengths and to look at expanding and improving our economic output. These are the things that we should be looking at doing.

The concern I have with the plan of those opposite is that they will lay waste in relation to the state's economy. I think that there is a role for the public sector in playing that really important role and providing the services that people rely and depend upon but also in making sure that we have got a workforce that is gainfully employed, that is going out to work and that can have some level of confidence that it is not going to be sacked on some whim. I think people need to be really clear about this. At the end of the day, I was involved in six budgets, and the deliberative process you have to go through to get a budget formulated, prepared and delivered is exhaustive. The Leader of the Opposition has indicated she wants to have a mini-budget by December. The only way I would suspect that the Leader of the Opposition can unveil a mini-budget in December is just to slash and burn and cut and close. That is the only way that that can be done. I think that that is a very concerning development.

Where we find ourselves now is we have just got to be really open and honest with the Victorian community about the sort of Victoria we will be living in under a Liberal–National–One Nation government. I fear that it will be harsher, it will be crueller and it will cause significant damage to the state's standing. Indeed I fear for what will happen in terms of the fiscal strategy. We have got to make sure that we get the balance right. A state economy is a finely tuned machine, in my experience. The way forward is to give people hope, to give people confidence and optimism, to grow and expand the economy in the same way Augustus did when he led the magnificent Roman Empire. I have to say, member for Footscray, we owe the Romans a great deal.

Gary MAAS (Narre Warren South) (11:31): Jeez, isn't it terrific to follow the member for Essendon. What a wild ride he takes us on every time he rises in this place – a wonderful ride, but a wild ride nonetheless. He went from safari suits to budget paper 5 – wow! – and finished off with some truths from the Roman Empire as well. It is interesting that you mentioned the safari suit. There used to be a weatherman on the ABC, a fellow by the name of Edwin Maher, who to used to really rock the safari suit, sometimes with a pith helmet as well. It was the glory days. But jeez, the member for Essendon speaks with passion, doesn't he? Most of us had to wade through the puddle of tears that he left behind yesterday –

Danny Pearson interjected.

Gary MAAS: No, but it was a beautiful and very heartfelt speech, and your presence is certainly going to be missed in this place, member for Essendon. But I should probably get to the motion that is on the notice paper. I will just say, because it is a fact, that those opposite just do not support working people and – has this already been said? – they are not even making the effort to stand up in this place and rebut what we are putting forward here. We do know what they support, though: they support cuts to public sector jobs, more than 30,000 of them. We know the other thing they support: it has to be One Nation, right?

There will be $40 billion in cuts to frontline services. We all know you cannot cut public sector jobs without cutting the crucial services that people rely upon – the hospitals, schools and those other frontline services. What is that going to mean in practical effect? It is going to mean longer hospital waiting times. It is going to mean fewer nurses and fewer hospital beds at our local Casey Hospital. It is going to threaten the wonderful healthcare options that this government has delivered to make sure that no matter where you live you can get medical assistance when and where you need it. This includes our urgent care clinics, the fantastic Virtual Emergency Department and of course our promise to deliver 10 free dental clinics. It will mean communities that are less safe, because you cannot cut $40 billion out of the budget without cutting the police on the front line who help keep us safe.

It means cuts to upgrades in schools and no more building of new schools. The now opposition leader made this clear in her Sky News interview on 16 August 2024. She said that current spending is:

> … simply not sustainable … Schools aren't going to be built or even fixed.

That is not a slip-up, that is an actual quote. The building and upgrading of local schools means so much for every single one of our communities, including mine in Narre Warren South. We recently opened the Kala Primary School in Cranbourne North, a part of my community. It has not only given that growing suburb in my electorate a state-of-the-art local public school but formed a new community for so many in that area, and it has taken enrolment pressures off many other nearby schools, one in particular which has had some overcrowding issues. What does that mean? It means that for the kids and the teachers at that school and a nearby school – Lyndhurst Secondary College, which is currently getting a $13.6 million upgrade for a double gym, food tech spaces, an auditorium and music rooms – those sorts of investments continue to support the learning outcomes for students well into the future.

The other thing that the member for Kew said – it was in her first speech in this place – is that business creates jobs, not government. I think John Maynard Keynes would probably have had a very different view to that, because certainly other Labor governments in this place have been known to pump-prime the economy. But if that is your sole way of creating jobs, cutting them is not going to assist. The Victorian government funds our nurses, our teachers, our paramedics, our police and our emergency services. You cannot decrease income and increase expenditure. Something has to give, and that is cuts to the public service. As they say, the math certainly ain't mathing. The member for Kew also details cuts to public sector roles across 46 Victorian government departments and agencies, including the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, who do critical child protection work and provide housing support helping our most vulnerable; the Department of Transport and Planning, who keep our public transport system running with buses, trains and trams; and the Department of Education, who run our schools and teach our kids. Victorians cannot afford the risk of a Liberal–One Nation government, because come November it is a choice between Labor's plan to fight for working people or the Liberal–One Nation plan to cut services and hurt working people.

In the short time I have left I want to speak to this Carroll Labor government's commitment to delivering free dental clinics if elected. I believe this goes right to the heart of what a Labor government believes in and indeed what Labor governments should deliver and have delivered. Our promise of 10 free dental clinics will save families hundreds of dollars through a significant shake-up to our dental system, bringing welcome relief to families across my community of Narre Warren South. These free dental clinics will help break down the cost barrier that many face to getting the care they need, providing urgent dental care, check-ups and emergency help. They will operate similarly to our successful urgent care clinics. You will be able to walk in and get the care that you need without the bill and without an appointment. Recently, together with the member for Narre Warren North –

Belinda Wilson interjected.

Gary MAAS: yes, that is you – and with the Premier, we went over to the Narre Warren urgent care clinic. I know that the Premier was impressed to see that urgent care clinic in operation, the number of community members that it was servicing and just the incredible work that our dentists are doing there and that doctors are doing there as well. The people of Narre Warren South and Narre Warren North know just how vital dental health is for people's overall health as well. But they also know the strain that it can put on the family budget. So this will be a change in our healthcare system that will help people on the ground. It is a structural cost-of-living support and will make a real difference, and only a Labor government is going to make it happen. Labor's 10 free public dental clinics will also create new jobs across the state as part of the $230 million investment, and that includes 180 full-time equivalent roles created to operate all 10 clinics.

To come back to what I said at the beginning of this debate, it is only Labor that fights for working people, building a strong dental workforce and delivering free dental care that saves families hundreds of dollars. We already know the impact our Smile Squad is having. It is helping families save on dentist fees by offering free dental check-ups in our state schools. A Liberal–One Nation coalition would put all of that at risk with their $40 billion in cuts, forcing families to pay the price.

To finish up, I will just note that that is but one example of the services that the coalition will cut. It will be the same across the board, unfortunately, throughout every portfolio and through every department. The services that our communities have come to expect will be wiped out. They will just simply no longer be there. With no other avenues or option for help, those cuts will just leave an empty void, with people having nowhere else to turn.

Katie HALL (Footscray) (11:41): What a pleasure it is to rise to speak to this motion. Indeed the member for Narre Warren South is correct. Listening to the member for Essendon in this place is a unique joy that we have. I was going to send the member for Essendon a text message outlining what the Romans have done for us: the aqueduct, sanitation improved, of course wine and roads. But rather than quoting Monty Python in this place, I will get back to the motion at hand.

I spoke yesterday during the grievance debate about the risks we can anticipate with a Liberal–One Nation government for my community of Footscray, where we have delivered transformational investment into infrastructure, such as the magnificent $1.5 billion new Footscray Hospital. We have free TAFE at Victoria University. We have upgraded every government school in Melbourne's inner west. We know what happened during the Kennett era and the era of the Baillieu–Napthine government. We had cuts and closures. Footscray High is a great example of how it does not take long to tear something down, but it can take a hell of a long time to rebuild it. Footscray High was a great local school on Wembley Avenue in Yarraville. It closed in the Kennett era. For decades afterwards the community campaigned to bring that school back. Thanks to the government, I have been proud to be a part of the advocacy of previous members for Footscray and indeed the member for Williamstown, who led the community campaign for a new Footscray High. We have invested tens of millions of dollars into Footscray High, which is a fantastic three-campus school. Of course the young people of Footscray did not matter to the Kennett government. They were happy to close that school and sell it off to developers.

One of the things I really worry about is one of the most exceptional opportunities we have in Melbourne's inner west, and that is the site of the old Footscray Hospital. I speak a lot about the new Footscray Hospital. But the old Footscray Hospital of course was called the people's hospital because money was raised by residents of Footscray to buy that piece of land. Now that the old Footscray Hospital is entering a stage of demolition, it will take two years for that site to be demolished and for an environmental audit. I worry about what the Liberal Party would do if they got their hands on that parcel of land, if they got their hands on the old Footscray Hospital site. We all saw what the member for Bulleen did when he was planning minister. We saw what he did in Footscray, and that was to approve towers hanging over the Maribyrnong River with no developer contributions. Residents were living in these very large apartment developments with gravel roads. Again, Labor had to come in and clean up that mess by retrospectively requiring the developers to pay for basic essential services within the estate that they had built. What will happen at the old Footscray Hospital if the Liberal Party and One Nation get their hands on it? This enormous opportunity we have for public open space, for high-quality social housing and affordable housing is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to build something really, really special in Footscray. It should not be sold off at the highest price to the highest bidder, but I know that is exactly what the Liberal Party will do and residents in my community need to be aware of that.

As the member for Laverton mentioned, we have a great opportunity with Melbourne Airport rail to rebuild Tottenham station. The member for Laverton and I have had a great time running our Time for Tottie campaign. It was so exciting to see that the station would be rebuilt in its entirety so we can finally get a rail line out to the airport – that would be gone. There are so many risks with the cuts and closure and chaos that we know will come.

I was speaking to some local residents about cuts and closure, and I was speaking in the context of the new Footscray Hospital. In the past it has not been beyond those opposite to privatise health care. Again, we had to clean up the mess in Mildura to bring that hospital back into public hands. It is not beyond them to do it again. The nurses and hardworking staff at Western Health know that our advocacy for public health can always be relied on, and I am not sure about those opposite. That is, I suppose, one of the most challenging things with $40 billion in cuts coming. Which aspects of the public service will be cut? We have just, thankfully, negotiated for Victorian teachers to become the highest paid in the nation. Coming from a family of teachers and nurses, that is something that I am enormously proud of. But we know that things like fair pay and conditions will be again under threat if the Liberal Party and One Nation are to have the great honour of governing this state. For the public servants who live in my electorate, that is something that they should be aware of heading into this election, that a mini-budget before Christmas could indeed be a very bad Christmas present.

There is so much that we have secured, so much that we have delivered and so much damage that we have undone. When I speak to people in my community, I am very proud to represent a very

progressive part of Melbourne. We have not forgotten what the Liberal Party did last time they were in government in my community. The residents of Joseph's Road in particular – our newest residents in Footscray – deserved all of the infrastructure that comes with buying a home. They deserved footpaths and sealed roads, and they deserved public open space, but over the last eight years we have had to try and retrofit that into my community. For the old Footscray Hospital, that is the risk that we are facing again, and that is what I am going to be speaking to my community about in the lead-up to this election. Only Labor will be able to deliver high-quality public open space and social housing for the people of Footscray. Otherwise, that site will be sold off to the highest bidder.

Pauline RICHARDS (Cranbourne) (11:51): How lovely to see you in the chair, Acting Speaker Addison, overseeing this really important debate on this extraordinary notice of motion that has been brought to us today, which really speaks to the foundational battle of values, ideals and ideas that elevate this important place that we have the great honour to serve in. It is a place where perhaps we can see Parliament at its best as we really think about and reflect on what is at risk as we sit here on this potentially last day – actually, not potentially – of this parliamentary sitting term. I am so pleased to be able to follow on from my colleagues and note that there are never enough discussions about what the Romans have ever done for us and to hear the reflections of the member for Essendon. Always he elevates us all with his insights into whatever it is that he is reading and whatever other insights he has on what the history of democracy brings to us in our role here.

I am very pleased to have the opportunity as well to reflect on what Cranbourne has been able to achieve – not just in the last eight years, alongside the roles that I and my colleagues in my electorate office have had, but also in the previous period, under the unforgettable and extraordinary Jude Perera, who preceded me as the member for Cranbourne – and reflect again on what is at risk and what happened last time the Liberal Party held the seat of Cranbourne. We know and I have obviously illuminated in the chamber many times the impact that the Liberal Party had on Cranbourne last time when they did not just hold Cranbourne but cut the ambulance service.

I would like to take a moment to take this chamber and the people in this community on a tour of Cranbourne. I know, Acting Speaker, you have been on a couple of tours of Cranbourne as you have found your way through the streets of our beautiful community and my beautiful neighbourhood. If I were to leave my community and my home in Cranbourne South, if somebody was on a tour with me, it would not be many metres up the road that people would be able to see one of the first really important pieces of infrastructure that was able to be established thanks to the SES volunteers, and that is the sparkling new Cranbourne SES site. This is a beautiful facility that our volunteers deserve. Not only is it a beautiful facility but we have acquired land in Devon Meadows for a second new SES. This is all at risk if those opposite with their coalition partners in One Nation are given the opportunity to serve our community on the government benches.

In my community of Cranbourne you do not have to look far to see what government can achieve. You can see it when you drive over the new Camms Road bridge. When you drive to the left and look you will see Cranbourne West Secondary College. There are over 2000 students at this beautiful new school that is just about to have only its sixth year in operation. It is a school that is identified often in media in the *Herald Sun* and the *Age* for its extraordinary NAPLAN results and achievements and the extraordinary way that the school leadership at Cranbourne West Secondary College has guided those students to achieve those amazing results, including those ATAR results for last year's VCE students.

Further down the road we have got Quarters Primary School, another brand new school, and not far behind where I live, Botanic Ridge Primary School. These are schools that did not exist before I was able to take up this role in this place. Further along the road, as I take you on this metaphorical journey, you will see St Peter's College on the left. St Peter's has two campuses and they have been refurbished with the support of the Andrews, then Allan and now Carroll Labor government, with Premier Carroll, then in the role of Minister for Education, ensuring that these schools are well resourced with performing arts centres, new classrooms and everything else that is needed.

As we journey further and head east through Cranbourne there is a children's health and wellbeing hub where our young people can get access to free clinical care from psychiatrists, from psychologists and from occupational therapists. These services are fundamental to ensuring that we have a healthy, strong, aspirational community in Cranbourne. And there is the Orange Door. Something that is a matter of great pride for me is that, whilst identifying that family violence is the leading cause of criminal activity for so much of my community and that my community has some of the highest rates of family violence in the state, we have a beautiful Orange Door that serves our community and ensures women and children get access to care and advice and all of the other complex elements that can support people experiencing family violence.

No contribution of mine would be complete without recognising the jewel in the crown of Cranbourne, the community hospital. This community hospital is a three-storey public hospital. We have ophthalmology, dental and dialysis. We have mental health services and we have an urgent care clinic coming soon. I am going to take a moment to acknowledge and recognise our nursing and midwifery community across Cranbourne and say how proud I am to have those extraordinary members of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation staff at the Cranbourne Community Hospital. There are those in the other place, in particular Mrs Hermans, who say this is not a real hospital. There are real clinicians working in that real hospital and there is real surgery going on in that real hospital. We know that with $40 billion of cuts and a decimation of our public service workforce there is no way that the Cranbourne Community Hospital is safe, because Mrs Hermans has said the quiet bit out loud. She says it is not a real hospital. They have got form. It is in their DNA. By the time they try to scramble for frontbench places, if they are given the gift of government, we know that they will not be able to help themselves, and the Cranbourne Community Hospital will be one of the first casualties of the cruel cuts that those opposite want to inflict on the Cranbourne community. Those opposite appear to have a philosophical view that government support is unnecessary and that the money will trickle down. We believe in government support for our communities.

With your indulgence I am going to take a moment, while I have the opportunity, to thank the electorate office staff who are continuing to fight for Cranbourne and fight to make sure our community has access to the best services available. I am going to take a moment to thank the iconic Jamie Trotter, known everywhere for his commitment to service. He knows everyone's names, he cares for them and he gives them all of his attention. I am so grateful to both Margie Raman and Alison Edwards, who have been with me for so long. Both are extraordinary, hardworking and the keel that keeps our office afloat and without whom our community would be poorer and less connected. And to our younger crew, Tess Robb, Vasu Kaushal and Sanjay Kandel, your energy and compassion have added fire to the bellies. We are very lucky to have them.

I am going to use these last couple of minutes to say something about the way my family have supported me for the last eight years and will be continuing to support me, as I intend to continue in this role. I am very proud of my daughters Erin Richards, Ruby Richards and Sophie Richards, incredibly supportive and loyal young people who have given me amazing love and nursed me through all of my troubles and all of my successes.

And of course the beloved Kyle Leslie, who is my daughter's beloved partner, I am proud to have added to my family. I am going to, with the house's indulgence, say how grateful I am to my husband, Paul Kearsley, who lifts his eyes to the sky to check if there are any cool birds but always keeps my feet grounded. And to Paul's lovely children and the children I acquired, Thomas, Ollie and Maddie Kearsley. I am grateful to all of them for everything.

Ella GEORGE (Lara) (12:01): I rise today to speak on the motion:

> That this house notes that the Liberals have committed to cutting $40 billion from the budget, requiring at least 30,000 public sector jobs to be cut, devastating the frontline services Victorians rely on, meaning:
>
> (a) longer hospital wait times;
>
> (b) fewer nurses and hospital beds;

(c) less police; and

(d) cuts to local infrastructure.

Thirty thousand public sector jobs – let that number sink in. Thirty thousand public sector jobs will be cut under a One Nation–Liberal coalition. That is 30,000 hardworking Victorians who are relying on a public sector job to support their families. Sometimes those opposite forget that behind every job they plan to cut is a person or a family – a hardworking family that will be devastated and thrown into financial uncertainty when the One Nation–Liberal coalition comes smashing through, slashing 30,000 jobs. Analysis shows that this means at least 1500 workers across regional Victoria will be cut. Across regional Victoria this cuts plan means more than 430 workers would go in Geelong and the Barwon south-west region. More than 350 workers will be ripped out of Ballarat and the Grampians region. More than 260 workers would be cut in Bendigo and the Loddon Mallee region. More than 230 workers will be slashed in Gippsland, and more than 200 workers will be axed in Wodonga and the Hume region. I know that in Geelong we cannot afford to have 430 jobs cut from our public sector. These are hardworking Victorians and they are doing jobs that are often really tough.

I think that when we have this conversation about the 30,000 jobs that the One Nation–Liberal coalition plan to cut, it is easy for those opposite to make the argument that this is just about saving money without talking about what impact cutting 30,000 jobs has on our communities. Let us talk about that. Let us talk about some of the professions that they plan to slash. Public sector workers are child protection workers protecting our most vulnerable children.

Cindy McLeish: On a point of order, Acting Speaker, on facts, the member for Lara is absolutely misleading the house with her information, which is incorrect.

Ros Spence: Further to the point of order, Acting Speaker, on the contribution being made by the member, the issue raised by the member for Eildon is a matter for debate.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Wayne Farnham): It is pretty well expected that everyone on their feet is to be factual. The member is being relevant to the motion.

Ella GEORGE: I am being relevant and factual. To those opposite, I say: which jobs are you cutting? I think that is something Victorians would like to know. Member for Eildon, I have a lot of time and respect for you. I do enjoy the points of order that the member for Eildon raises against me, and I look forward to continuing in this place next year alongside the member for Eildon.

Public sector workers are social workers who are making sure that children have what they need to get to school and continue their learning. They are counsellors helping vulnerable children with the trauma that they have experienced. What about allied health workers in our mental health system? They are the social workers and the occupational therapists who provide wraparound support for Victorians experiencing mental ill health – Victorians who need that support and who would suffer if those jobs were cut. Public sector workers work in our court system, like family violence practitioners. Family violence practitioners support women and children on what is one of the most challenging experiences – navigating the court system when they have experienced family violence. They are there for women and children to help them report family violence and apply for intervention orders. They sit with victim-survivors of family violence while they wait for their court hearings to start and while they give evidence. They provide invaluable support to people who desperately need it.

Those are some of the jobs at risk under a One Nation–Liberal coalition when they have a plan to slash 30,000 jobs. They have said that there will be no cuts to frontline services, but if there is a plan to cut one in seven public sector jobs, then you cannot avoid cutting frontline jobs. I think the real questions here are: how many teachers will they sack? Or will they go after Victoria's hardworking nurses first? How many nurses will be sacked from Geelong hospital, how many dental nurses from Barwon Health North and how many radiographers and imaging specialists and allied health workers? These are real jobs, and the people in these jobs rely on them, as do their families. I would remind those opposite

again that behind every job that a One Nation–Liberal coalition plans to slash is a person and a working family that relies on that wage to pay the bills and put food on their table.

Every time I visit Barwon Health North it is full – full of local residents coming in for their appointments and full of our amazing healthcare workers that work in Geelong's north. You can go to Barwon Health North for dental services. They run an emergency dental clinic every morning of the week. You can go there for dialysis services, which people rely on. There is medical imaging and an urgent care clinic. Hundreds of residents rely on the world-class health services at Barwon Health North every single week. Under a One Nation–Liberal coalition plan to cut $40 billion in funding from public services and 30,000 public sector jobs, those services that the people of Geelong's north rely on are gone, because you cannot slash 30,000 jobs without slashing the healthcare services that people in Geelong's north rely on. This is a real One Nation–Liberal plan which will hurt working people in Geelong's north and devastate the services that they and millions of Victorians rely on. If you do not believe me that the One Nation–Liberal coalition have a plan to cut 30,000 jobs, then let me quote what the member for Kew herself has said. On 16 August 2024, live on Sky News, she said current spending is:

> … simply not sustainable … That means that we're going to have to make cuts when it comes to our health services. Schools aren't going to be built or even fixed.

Cuts to hospitals, cuts to schools and cuts to frontline services. That was not a slip of the tongue, that was the truth, because that is who they are. Cuts are in the Liberal Party DNA. In her first speech to Parliament, the member for Kew said: 'It is business that creates jobs, not government.' But I would like to remind the member for Kew that it is the Victorian government that funds nurses, teachers, paramedics, police, firefighters and child protection workers. These are real jobs with real people relying on them and real working families that need that wage. These are real services that millions of Victorians like those living in Geelong's north depend on, and they would be cut under a One Nation–Liberal coalition plan. They have even outlined it in their plan, which details cuts to public sector roles across 46 Victorian government departments and agencies, including the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, who do critical child protection work; the Department of Transport and Planning, who keep our public transport system running; and the Department of Education, who run our schools and teach our kids.

Cutting 30,000 jobs is unacceptable. It is simply disgraceful. But it is something we should know to expect from the Liberal Party, who have shown Victorians time and time again that when they are in government all they do is cut. I remember the Kennett years. My mum was a state school teacher, and I remember the uncertainty when state schools were being cut, when teachers were being sacked and when the schools were being closed and sold off by the Liberal Party. I remember the last time the Liberal Party were in power, when they went to war with our ambos and crippled our health system.

In the time that I have left I would like to touch on the impact on young people and why this is so important. I am raising this today because I am meeting with members of my northern Geelong youth advisory council to listen to them and to hear from them, because it is so important that we hear the voices of young people. The decisions that politicians make in this place impact young people, and I am proud to have a youth council made up of representatives from local schools, including Northern Bay College, North Geelong Secondary College, Lara Secondary College and Western Heights College – schools that this Labor government is proud to support and young people that this Labor government is proud to support. I am deeply concerned about this plan to cut 30,000 jobs out of our public sector, and I condemn it.

Martha HAYLETT (Ripon) (12:11): I rise to speak on this motion, and it is fantastic to do so immediately after the member for Lara. That was a great contribution, and she is a dear friend of mine. Thank you so much for everything you have done for the electorate of Lara.

As we have come to the final sitting day of this parliamentary term, I have been thinking a lot about what brought me here and what we have achieved over the past four years for the people of Ripon.

When I think about why I am here, my mind always goes back to where I grew up. I was just a country kid from a small town. Becoming a member of Parliament was not something I ever imagined for myself. I got my first job stacking shelves at the local IGA when I was 14 years old. Like so many country kids, I learned pretty quickly the value of hard work, pitching in and looking out for your neighbours. My mum worked with people who were doing it tough, people who often felt invisible and people who felt like nobody was listening. She taught me something that I have carried with me my whole life. She used to say, 'You have to be in it to change it, not stand on the sidelines and not complain from a distance. Get involved, roll up your sleeves and be part of the solution.' Even now I hear those words in the back of my mind almost every day. They are a big part of why I decided to put my hand up and run for Parliament, and they are a big part of why representing Ripon has been the honour of my life.

When I travel across our electorate today, I do not just see buildings and projects happening, I see people: I see parents dropping their children off at childcare centres that were not there a few years ago; I see students learning in upgraded classrooms in places like St Arnaud, Wedderburn and Ararat; I see patients receiving care closer to home; and I see volunteers, community leaders, nurses, teachers and local advocates who never stop fighting for their towns and never stop believing that their communities deserve better. I feel incredibly proud to have worked alongside them, because every investment that we have delivered has ultimately been about improving people's lives.

When it comes to health care, that commitment is deeply personal to me. As a child, I had hearing difficulties and needed surgery. My family did not have a lot of money, and the truth is that without the support available to us at that time, that operation would have been out of reach. I have never forgotten that. I know what it feels like when your family's future depends on being able to access health care when you need it, and I know how much it matters when help is there. I know how frightening it can be when it is not, and that is why I have always believed that where you live should never determine the quality of care that you receive. People in country Victoria deserve access to great health care just as much as anybody living in Melbourne.

That is why I have fought so hard for investments in our local hospitals. It is why we have delivered upgrades and improvements at Inglewood hospital, Maryborough hospital, Beaufort hospital, Ararat hospital and the Ballarat Base Hospital, and it is why we have secured pay rises for our hardworking, incredible nurses who do such a fantastic job caring for our communities. We have also built new ambulance stations in Avoca, Inglewood and St Arnaud and upgraded the Ararat ambulance station as well. These projects matter not because they make headlines but because they make life better. They help people get care sooner, they provide local jobs and they give families confidence that the services they rely on will still be there in the future. The same can be said for our investments in schools, childcare centres, transport and community infrastructure. Every one of those investments has been about making sure country Victorians get the opportunities that they deserve.

But all of that progress is at risk. In just 65 days time, Victorians will make a choice about the future of our state, and the choice could not be clearer. On the one hand we have a government focused on investing in people, creating jobs and strengthening rural and regional communities. On the other hand we have a Liberal–One Nation coalition that is already telling Victorians exactly what it plans to do – cut – cut jobs, cut services, cut the support that communities rely on. 30,000 jobs are on the line. That is not just a number on a spreadsheet. Those are real people, real families, real communities. One in seven public servants would lose their job under those opposite if they ever have the privilege of winning. That is police officers, firefighters, teachers, nurses, child protection workers and family violence support workers, the people who keep our communities safe, strong and connected. We have seen this horror film before. When the Liberals were last in government, they promised there would be no cuts to the public service, full stop.

Cindy McLeish: On a point of order, Acting Speaker, the member for Ripon appears to be reading, and perhaps she can save some time and just table that report or document she is reading from.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Wayne Farnham): Member for Ripon, are you reading a speech or referencing –

Martha HAYLETT: I am referring to notes, Acting Speaker.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Wayne Farnham): Referring to notes – the member can continue.

Martha HAYLETT: When those opposite last had the privilege of being in government, they cut more than 4000 public sector jobs when they said they would cut none. They ripped $1 billion out of our health system. They went to war with nurses and paramedics. They closed 22 TAFE campuses and sacked more than 3000 TAFE workers. That was just in four years. They were very active in cutting down this state in a very short period of time.

People of Ripon still remember it. I meet with them all the time: former railway workers in Ararat whose jobs disappeared overnight were completely cut off at the knees, teachers in Maryborough who lost their jobs and their livelihoods, families who were left abandoned and forgotten. Many of them never fully recovered from those cuts. Now we are being asked to believe that it will not happen again, but this time they are not even pretending. This time they are telling us up-front that the jobs will go, that services will be cut, that communities will have to do more with less, and country Victoria will be among the hardest hit, because when services disappear from rural and regional areas, there often is not an alternative around the corner. A cut to a country hospital matters, a cut to public transport matters, a cut to local jobs affects the entire community. It affects whether people stay, whether businesses invest and whether towns continue to grow. That is what is at stake, because our vision for Victoria could not be more different. We are focused on building – building hospitals, schools, ambulance stations, homes and opportunities. We are focused on making life easier for families. We are focused on delivering free dental care, and we are focused on expanding public transport and improving access to services. Most importantly, we are focused on making sure no Victorian is left behind simply because of where they live.

One thing this job has taught me is that the most important conversations do not happen in this chamber. They happen at the footy, at the local pub, in hospital waiting rooms. They happen outside supermarkets and on the main streets of our towns. Over the past four years I have had the privilege of speaking with thousands and thousands of people across the electorate of Ripon – teachers, nurses, truckies, tradies, small business owners, volunteers, retirees –

Cindy McLeish: On a point of order, Acting Speaker, the member for Ripon said she was referring to copious notes, but I did notice that when she finished one page she put it down and continued reading from the next page, so I really do think she is reading from rather than referring to notes.

Martha HAYLETT: I am still referring to notes, Acting Speaker.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Wayne Farnham): The member for Ripon to continue.

Martha HAYLETT: I have spoken to people from every walk of life in Ripon, and what has always struck me is their resilience and the resilience of country Victorians, no matter what challenges come their way. Over the last four years we have had many floods and a huge drought, we have had multiple fires, we have had rising fuel costs, but through it all, people have really stepped up. They have helped each other, they have supported each other, and they find a way through. I have seen volunteers give up countless hours to keep local sporting clubs thriving. I have spoken with healthcare workers who continue showing up every single day because they care so deeply about the people that they serve. And I have met community leaders who have never stopped fighting for their towns.

Those people have inspired me so much. They remind me every day why this job matters, and they are the reason I never take this role for granted. Representing Ripon has been the greatest privilege of my life. I know the election ahead will not be easy; I have a huge fight on my hands. There are Liberals, Nationals, One Nation candidates and far-right independents all lining up against me. But I am ready for that fight, because there is simply too much at stake. This election is about more than politics; it is

about what sort of future we want for regional Victoria. It is about protecting jobs, protecting services, protecting opportunities, and making sure that the next generation of country kids has even more opportunities than we did. A Liberal–One Nation coalition would be devastating for Ripon and it would be devastating for Victoria. Thirty-thousand jobs is only the tip of the iceberg. It is only the beginning. The stakes are far too high. We have come too far to go backwards, and I will keep fighting every single day to make sure that we do not.

Chris COUZENS (Geelong) (12:21): I am delighted to speak on this important motion on our last sitting day before the election, and to remind our communities that jobs are important. One of the things that we have done as a government in my whole time of nearly 12 years in this place has been to have a huge focus on job opportunities, creating jobs in our communities and in particular in the regions. This government has enabled a jobs pipeline in Geelong from the time we were elected right up until now, and that has been really important for my community. We need to ensure that the job opportunities are there because that is what keeps our economy going and that is what keeps our regions thriving, and we need that to continue.

Those opposite and their plan to cut $40 billion out of the budget are going to have a profound impact on communities like mine and around the rest of the state. You cannot sack thousands of workers without devastating impacts, we know that, and we have seen it under previous Liberal governments, whether it was the Kennett government or the Baillieu or – I forget his name, sorry –

Mary-Anne Thomas: Napthine.

Chris COUZENS: the Napthine government. We saw the consequences of those Liberal governments that really impacted regions like mine. There were massive job losses in the public service, but there were also job losses from the lack of infrastructure being built in our community, from public servants being sacked by those Liberal governments and frontline services just disappearing overnight. They were really concerning matters that arose in my community on both those occasions, whether it was the Kennett or Baillieu government, such as Kennett shutting our schools and then selling them off. We are still seeing the consequences of that today because we do not have enough schools in our community; in my electorate, we could do with another two primary schools. They were closed by the Kennett government in the central Geelong area, so we are now looking at planning additional schools to accommodate the families that are now living in the CBD area.

But the teachers that lost their jobs out of that were significant as well. I remember having conversations with many of them at the time about how devastated they were, and the impact on those children that they were there to teach and support which they could no longer do because they did not have jobs. The number of nurses that were stripped out of our hospitals, the health staff that were stripped out of our hospitals, had a significant impact on my community as a regional city. That impact was so significant and so many people were really impacted by that, as were their families.

The big one for me was seeing the Gordon TAFE on its knees under the Baillieu–Napthine governments. The privatisation of basically what the TAFE sector were providing at the time had such a significant impact on my community. The Gordon TAFE were virtually on their knees when we came to government – they were barely surviving, as were many other TAFEs across Victoria. If we had not won government, we would not have seen the continuation of TAFE. I am pretty convinced of that. The slashes to their funding were significant.

To now be talking about slashing $40 billion out of the budget, how the heck is an institution like TAFE going to continue? How are health services at Geelong hospital? We have a brand new women's and children's hospital being built right now, due for completion in 2028. If we are not in government and the other side are there – the One Nation–Liberal–National coalition – are we going to see that hospital just stand abandoned without any staff in it? That is a very real situation that we could see as we go forward.

I am really concerned about the job cuts that would occur, and we know that around 430 workers would lose their job in the Geelong and Barwon south-west regions within the public service. That public service provides support to our community. We need them there, whether they are delivering housing or child protection or whether they are teachers, ambos or firefighters. All of those essential services that we rely so heavily on could be lost or restricted to the point that they can barely function, which is what happened during 2010 to 2014. Many public servants lost their jobs.

Cindy McLeish: Acting Speaker, it appears there are not sufficient numbers in the house, and I ask you to call for a quorum.

Quorum formed.

Chris COUZENS: As I was saying, under the previous Liberal government between 2010 and 2014 there were severe consequences of those cuts in our regional city of Geelong. But I do want to spend my last 2 minutes – thanks, Cindy –

The ACTING SPEAKER (Wayne Farnham): Proper titles.

Chris COUZENS: My apologies, Acting Speaker. I am not having a good day today on that. I want to talk about those opposite claiming that they will tear up treaty. Every Victorian should be disgusted to know that that is the intention of an incoming One Nation–Liberal–National government. It tears at the heart of everything that we have done over probably a 10-year journey, if not longer, to work with First Peoples of this state to ensure that we have treaty, that it is done in the right way, and that it is done over a period of time so everybody has their opportunity to have input and the outcome is exactly what was required. We signed that treaty back in December last year. It is just beginning to start building on the work that it is required to do. Sadly, if there is a One Nation–Liberal–National coalition, we will see that treaty torn up. We will also likely see a lot of the services that are funded by government cut from those First Nations or First Peoples in Victoria. They deliver really significant services to our First Nations people in this state. They provide support, but they provide it in a self-determined way, which is what treaty is all about. It is about closing the gap, providing that self-determination to say, 'This is what our community needs.' To have those cuts will be devastating to First Peoples in Victoria.

Mary-Anne THOMAS (Macedon) (12:31): I want to pick up where the member for Geelong left off, because I have seen firsthand the real difference that can be made when you put Aboriginal health in the hands of Aboriginal people. We are making some good progress here in Victoria through our fantastic network of Aboriginal community controlled health organisations and the people that have worked so hard for so long – the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service recently celebrated its 50th birthday – towards self-determination and towards treaty. To know that that will potentially be torn up by an incoming Liberal–National–One Nation coalition government is an absolute kick in the guts to Victoria's First Peoples. I want to put on the record my disgust with the announcement by the opposition that, so mean-spirited are they, it would in fact be a 100-day priority to tear up treaty.

You cannot reduce revenue without reducing services. It is quite simple. You cannot cut $40 billion from the state budget and not impact the health care that is delivered to the people of Victoria. Now, with around $30 billion a year invested in health, that represents around a third of the entire state budget. It follows that if you take $40 billion out of that budget, you will have a real and material impact on the health and wellbeing of Victorian people. If a One Nation–Liberal–National coalition government is elected in this state, there will be real consequences for Victorians, including, obviously, some of the most vulnerable members of our community as well as the very many working people and working families who we on this side of the house, Labor members, come into this chamber every day to represent. It really is time for the member for Kew to come clean, both as the Leader of the Opposition and also as the Shadow Treasurer, and to outline to the people of Victoria the hospitals she intends to close, to outline how many nurses will be sacked and to let Ambulance Victoria know how

they will be required to downsize our ambulance service, because these are the very real consequences of a $40 billion cut, which the Australia Institute tells us will see 30,000 jobs lost in this state.

A number of my colleagues have already made the point that each and every one of these 30,000 jobs is held now by a person in the communities that we represent. And to lose a job is to experience absolute devastation and loss of control. If you lose a job, you lose the ability to continue to pay your mortgage and to meet the needs of your kids at school for school equipment and so on. It can ruin people's lives. That is the intention of those on the other side, because they will add 30,000 people to Victoria's unemployment statistics. We do know of course that, when we came to government in 2014, we had the highest unemployment rate on the mainland under the last Liberal–Nationals government, and we are headed there again if those on the other side should win in November.

I became the Minister for Health at a time when our system was emerging from the greatest public health emergency that we had faced. Our nurses, doctors, paramedics and health workers were absolutely exhausted, planned surgery had been disrupted, emergency departments were under extraordinary pressure and demand for care had changed. We had to go about investing unprecedented funds in our health system and implementing change in the way that health care was delivered. We could have retreated, but instead we focused on rebuilding and reforming. We wanted to build our health system back better, and we did that by continuing to invest in our healthcare workforce and by changing the way in which care was delivered by continuing to innovate.

Here in Victoria we proudly led the nation in the establishment of what we called at the time priority primary care centres, now our urgent care clinics. The urgent care clinics set the model for what the Albanese Labor government has now rolled out right across the state. We introduced the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department. Our nation-leading and indeed some would say world-leading investment in women's health care has delivered an additional 20 women's health clinics, brand new clinics that were not there before our government came to office. My question again to the opposition is: which of these new investments will be cut? Which women's health clinics will close? What will happen to the virtual emergency department? Our state still funds some of the urgent care clinics. Are they on the chopping board as well? The people of Victoria need to know. It is only fair that those on the other side of the chamber come out and tell the truth. That is all we are asking. Where is the detail?

I have talked about these reforms, and I want to make the point that these reforms do not come out of thin air. They come about because here in Victoria we have some of the best public servants in the nation, who are absolutely committed to delivering high-quality public services for the people of Victoria. I was reflecting last night on the member for Murray Plains and his valedictory speech and the way he spoke so dismissively of the bureaucracy. I worked in the Victorian public service, and I know some of my colleagues did as well. I was proud to be an employee of the Victorian public service between 2002 and 2011. I even served briefly under the Baillieu government, and that was an eye-opener, I can tell you. I have already shared in this house how as director of communications in the Department of Premier and Cabinet the first job I had was to print the business cards for the chief of staff to the Premier, and he was not happy with them, so much so that he had to ring me at 7 o'clock in the evening to express his displeasure.

Cindy McLeish interjected.

Mary-Anne THOMAS: I was there to serve the government of the day, member for Eildon. These are the jobs they gave me. The second job they gave me was to redo the briefing template – and this is the kicker – away from Arial, back to Times New Roman. That tells you all you need to know about how Liberal–National–One Nation governments will always take us backwards. But it is the people, the hardworking public servants, who have designed so much of the reform we have delivered in health. I think about the planned surgery blueprint. I think about the work that is underway right now and under clear and present threat and danger to reform the way in which specialist care is delivered so that more Victorians can access, through our public health system, the specialist care they need and

deserve. I think about the standards for timely ambulance and emergency care delivered by hardworking public servants who lead the work in conjunction with our clinicians. All of this is under threat.

I will go back to where I started. You cannot proudly proclaim that you are going to get rid of various revenue streams and then say, 'Nothing to see here. Nothing's going to change. We're going to cut $40 billion but nothing is going to change.' You cannot treat Victorians with contempt in that way. The Leader of the Opposition needs to come clean, and she needs to do it now. Victorians need to know who she has got in her sights for sacking, which hospitals she is going to close and which schools she is going to close. She has already announced that she is transferring six comprehensive government schools into elite select entry schools. We need to hear from the Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Treasurer about her plans to take Victoria backwards, because that is what Liberals do. They cut, close and privatise.

Nathan LAMBERT (Preston) (12:41): I would like to pick up exactly where the member for Macedon left off in her contribution, talking about the potential impact of this $40 billion cut on our health system. Of course I will not necessarily try and match the expertise of the member for Macedon, as a former health minister, but as the member for Macedon is aware, this is an issue that is of importance to so many Victorians but of importance to our family particularly. I will in my contribution particularly touch on my worries about what the effects of these cuts will be on medical research, which the member for Macedon knows is such a critical part of our health system. As you might be aware, our daughter is a regular patient at the Royal Children's Hospital. I have spoken before on a number of occasions about the wonderful work they do down there, but I remain worried and concerned about the profound effect on our health system, not only directly, as this motion speaks to, in terms of waiting times, in terms of nurses and in terms of beds, but also in terms of medical research, which is so critical to advancing our medical system.

I would like to just, in speaking on that topic, acknowledge particularly Associate Professor Andrew Kornberg, who has done wonderful work with us – I know he is known to people in this place and known to the member for Macedon through his work – and Eppie Yiu, who is a wonderful paediatric neurologist there. In fact members will remember that the member for Melbourne in her contribution and her condolence speech on the late member for Brunswick Dr Tim Read told a funny story – a heartbreaking story, but a funny story – about the way that there were some locals in the Brunswick area who had benefited from Dr Read's practice as a GP and of course his medical research, and some who apparently jokingly said they were not going to vote for him to be an MP in Parliament because they would rather him doing his important medical research work. We sometimes joked – and you would not expect a Labor MP to stand up and say that they hoped a Liberal would win – about Amelia Hamer, who people might remember was the Liberal candidate against Monique Ryan in Kooyong, unfortunately unsuccessful. But Monique Ryan was actually a very, very widely regarded, well-regarded paediatric neurologist and researcher, and we in our family would love to see Monique going back to her research work. So I do not want to wish her ill, but we would like to see that.

We are very grateful for a whole range of professionals there. They include Mark Oliver, the gastroenterologist; Dr Joanne Harrison, a respiratory physician there who does wonderful work; and Dr Monica Cooper and Dr Eric Levi, who are part of, amongst their many roles, the saliva clinic there. That has become a big part of our lives, and of course we are often down in ED. And when you are down in ED at the moment at the Royal Children's Hospital you do see that our government's expansion is currently underway there, which is great and important work. There has actually been some talk recently in the media about the staffing and capital allocation there, but I say in this place that our big, big concern is that both of those things are under threat from a future Liberal–One Nation government. I do not think any of us want to see the children's ED expansion that we are doing held back – ditto very much the similar expansion that we are undertaking at the Northern Hospital. That is particularly important to people who live in Reservoir, for whom that is the closest ED.

Again, we have family connections: Daniel Tsen is a great paediatrician there, and we are grateful for his work, and Tarryn Thom is a dietician there who supports us. So we know the wonderful work that

is done there. Again, I say we fear the impact. When the Liberal–One Nation government and the Liberal Leader of the Opposition say they are going to slash capital spending, will the Northern Hospital ED be one of the projects that they slash? Exactly as the member for Macedon said, it is a very legitimate question. If they are claiming they are somehow going to get capital expenditure down to $5 billion a year or some very low figure, they will have to be cutting projects all over the state. We ask on behalf of people in Reservoir –

Cindy McLeish interjected.

Nathan LAMBERT: The member for Eildon interjects. As we all know, this hiding behind the corruption number is ridiculous. Geoffrey Watson's number refers to the past; it refers to the sector-led CFMEU that no longer exists. There is no $15 billion saving to be made by making the changes that the administration of the construction and general division have already done. Acting Speaker Farnham, with your familiarity in this area, you would know that Geoffrey Watson was talking about a past version. This is not the place for a long discussion about that union. The point I will simply make – perhaps the member for Eildon should check her stats – is that even the opposition leader is not using that $15 billion number as part of her explanation, because she knows that is a historical figure and not one from which you can get future savings.

Coming back, I did want to get to medical research because this is a particular topic I am passionate about. I was speaking of the Northern Hospital and the Royal Children's in particular, but for any hospital, if you go in there, the things that doctors and nurses do today are incredibly different to what they would have been doing 100 years ago because of the incredible work of medical researchers. Perhaps the most profound difference, particularly if you think about children, is that if we go back 100 years before the medical research we have had, children died at an astonishing rate in our society. One in 20 children 100 years ago did not survive past the age of four. The tragedy of losing a child was no less than it is today. It was heartbreaking and devastating. All of us in this place will know people who have lost a young child. It is a terrible thing to happen. It was a terrible thing to happen then. But fortunately, thanks to medical research, these days the chance of losing a child before the age of four has plummeted dramatically.

When we go to our hospitals – again I say this is something that we directly benefit from as a family – with the kind of condition I have talked about our daughter having, familial dysautonomia, for a long time it was exactly the same thing. It was a fatal condition for children, who would not live beyond the age of five. But now, thanks to the amazing work of some medical researchers in the United States, there is hope not only for people with that condition to live fulfilling long lives but also that some of the most degenerative effects of it can in fact be reversed. Unfortunately, that wonderful research that we are seeing in this state is under threat from a very similar political movement, the MAGA movement, which has directly led to huge cuts from publicly funded medical research in the United States, threatening the very work that we are relying on for our family here in Australia.

We are very grateful. There is an amazing gentleman, Stanley T Crooke. I do have to give a shout-out to Stanley because he has had a remarkable life. He grew up incredibly poor in Indianapolis and then he became somehow the president of R and D at SmithKline, the predecessor to GSK. Then he founded a company called Ionis Pharmaceuticals. He and his researchers developed a particular technology, antisense oligonucleotide (ASO) technology, a form of gene therapy that is absolutely remarkable. It is remarkable particularly for the conditions that our family face but also for spinal muscular atrophy and some other forms of muscular dystrophy. It is a technology that potentially has application to Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and MND. Stanley T Crooke made a wonderful contribution, and to his absolute credit most of that was commercial. I think, to be honest, he made a fair bit of money out of it on the way through, but he then took his money and founded a non-profit, the n-Lorem Foundation, and Sarah Glass, Amy Williford, and Jason Wood are on the board.

A whole bunch of people continue on, as all of them have done for years. They have done decades of really great evidence-based research that, as I say, is helping people right around the world. Of course,

we are grateful for that because they are doing fantastic work with respect to a disease which we are only too familiar with. Like any researchers they have had to do that collaboratively. In this case there is another group, Professor Adrian Krainer across at Cold Spring Harbour Laboratory. Stanley Crooke developed this ASO technology and then Krainer has developed the way to actually adjust people's RNA so it fixes the problem that they have genetically. That has led directly to therapies for spinal muscular atrophy, which patients right here in Victoria are now getting and will hopefully lead, in our case, to some medicines for familial dysautonomia that will have the same effect. I cannot stress enough, though, that over there – even the Familial Dysautonomia Foundation, with whom we work – these are not political people at all. Faye Ginsburg and Lanie Etkind and all the great people there are not naturally political at all. But once Trump came into power, on the hook-ups that they provide for families like ours to learn about what is happening with our disease, they were imploring people to write to their congressional representatives and beg Trump to reverse these changes. And this is my huge fear here: that we are going to see this MAGA mentality.

It frightens me that we already have MPs in this place who wear MAGA caps and share this scepticism about modern medical research. We have seen Malcolm Roberts in the federal Parliament – people will remember COVID and talking about bleach and ivermectin, I think it was. These people are profoundly sceptical about the benefits of modern medical research, and I cannot emphasise enough how directly devastating it will be for so many Victorian families if the coalition and One Nation are elected into government and come into this place and say, 'We're just going to slash operational infrastructure support funding and we're going to slash medical research funding because we don't believe it works.' As I say, it will hurt all Victorians but it will particularly hurt children. It will hurt children for whom this research has made such an extraordinary difference. It will directly hurt families like ours. So I could not agree more with what the member for Macedon has said: we need to know the details of these cuts. And particularly we need to know, as the motion refers to, how they are going to affect our health system, how they are going to affect medical research and how they are going to hurt Victorians' lives.

Lauren KATHAGE (Yan Yean) (12:51): I was listening to the member for Preston, and he really gave me reason to reflect. I just want to pick up on what he was saying and take it a bit further: I think he is right to say that this cuts agenda is an opportunity to hide their ideological agenda and make changes across our state to match some of the stranger beliefs of those opposite under the cloak of fiscal responsibility. The first one that came to mind is around all of the wellbeing supports for young people in schools that have been put in place through this government. If we talk about how they want to use the language of 'back office roles', I am thinking in particular about the mental health menu that we have made available for each school to choose supports for their students. I am wondering about some of the options on that mental health menu and whether the Leader of the Opposition would consider them to be back office, when the reality is that taking away those options for schools to be able to support children and children's wellness will have a real impact on them and on their families.

At my daughter's state school she gets to see an OT. My daughter sees an OT in school hours on the school site, a fully trained professional that is there providing support to children of the school. All of these types of supports that we make available through schools are at risk from those opposite. When I hear from parents in the community around issues with schooling, it clusters around three main things. One is around enrolment zones and access. Another one – and I am sure most people get this as well – is around cases of bullying. But the third one is for parents whose children are not really coping at school in terms of mental health and wellbeing. To potentially remove this really important pillar that our government has introduced is worrying. We have heard just recently the One Nation candidate for Yan Yean complaining that part of the curriculum for children in Victoria for mathematics for year 1 involves thinking about brolgas having two wings, and if there were three brolgas dancing, then how many – you know, what is three times two, essentially. He was railing against this. 'Did you know that the Victorian curriculum makes your kids do Aboriginal dance?' was what he was saying.

My daughter is in year 1. The reality of the Victorian curriculum is that it sets out the learning goal – I am sure there are many teachers that can state this more clearly than me; for example, adding up within 10 or something like that – and then it provides a whole list of ways that a teacher might choose to teach that to the children. These are things to help teachers and give them ideas for different things they can do, so you can imagine a teacher in any area of Victoria with a higher proportion of Aboriginal students might think it is fully fitting and effective to talk about how many brolga wings there are. To somehow say that there is something wrong with our curriculum as a result – he did not state the case truly and fairly, obviously, in his social media. They do not do that. But these are the types of people we are dealing with. When we think about what cuts are coming, when they come to the point of making the decisions about cuts, they are going to be stuck cheek to jowl with One Nation, and they are going to have to follow them, one hand each on the scissors, as they cut, cut, cut. They will be pulling towards their ideology, and they are going to make a real mess across the state. There are many examples of things that we need to be concerned about.

Broader than jobs, I want to talk about work, because work takes many forms. There is paid work and unpaid work – work that keeps businesses running, hospitals running or families running. There are also people heading off to construction sites and teachers that are preparing lessons after their own children have gone to bed. But there is also a lot of work that does not appear on a pay slip – somebody caring for their ageing parents, a president of the local sports club who finishes their day job and then spends hours sorting out uniforms and rosters and coaches, volunteers at community houses. I really believe that all of that work has value. I think sometimes in this place we lose sight of the people behind the numbers. I was really struck by the Leader of the Opposition's statement in her first speech to Parliament about business creating jobs, not government. when I look around my electorate of Yan Yean, I do not think she has quite got it. Of course business creates jobs. I represent thousands of people who work in small and large businesses, and I want those businesses to succeed, to invest, to grow and to employ more people. But governments employ people too. We fund nurses, teachers, police, child protection workers and people that keep the transport system going, and government build the infrastructure that allows private enterprise to grow. We can see that a lot in my community.

If we look, for example, at the Beveridge intermodal precinct, for years lots of people up my way in the north saw houses being built and houses coming up, but the question was also, 'Where are the jobs for these people that are moving here? Where are they going to be?' Because we do not want a future where we have more and more people living up my way that have to travel long distances to get to work, and we need those jobs closer to us in the north. That is what makes the Beveridge intermodal precinct exciting for our community. It will be a major freight and logistics hub connected to inland rail, with substantial investment from the Commonwealth government, and it will create around 8000 jobs within the precinct and support around 17,000 jobs at its peak. They expect that 70 per cent of those people in those roles will be from the northern suburbs. When you think about my area, that means jobs in logistics; jobs in warehousing, rail and construction; jobs for engineers and lots of IT, I am sure; and then all the jobs in the businesses that grow and form around that major employment precinct – all of that from the government investment and planning. I think the Leader of the Opposition is wrong when she says that government does not create jobs. Other examples are the Mernda Community Hospital; the Yan Yean Road upgrade, which is happening right now; Donnybrook Road upgrade preconstruction, all the work on Whittlesea –

The ACTING SPEAKER (Wayne Farnham): The member for Yan Yean will have the call after lunch. We are at that time of the day – time for a pie.

Sitting suspended 1:00 pm until 2:02 pm.

Questions without notice and ministers statements

Road maintenance

Danny O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) (14:03): My question is to the Premier. When asked how many of the 500,000 potholes he has promised to fix have so far been fixed, the Premier stated:

> I'm the Premier, not the Roads Minister.

That was nine days ago. Can the Premier now give Victorians the answer?

Members interjecting.

Danny O'BRIEN: On a point of order, Speaker, the opposition is happy to grant an extension of time if the roads minister would like to provide more information.

The SPEAKER: That is not a point of order, Leader of the Nationals.

Ben CARROLL (Niddrie – Premier) (14:04): We have made it very clear that, after the privatisation of road maintenance by Jeff Kennett, we will bring it back inside.

Danny O'Brien: On a point of order in respect of debating the question, Speaker, the Premier might like to explain how much he got for the privatisation of SprayLine Road Services one month ago.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Nationals, you know that is not a point of order. It was a good try, but it was not a point of order. The Premier has only been on his feet for a few seconds.

Ben CARROLL: We will bring road maintenance back inside. We have already removed over 80,000 potholes. They are promising to remove 250,000; we will remove 500,000. And we will get minimum-security prisoners out there on the job too.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Member for South-West Coast, you are warned.

Danny O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) (14:05): How many potholes did the Premier fix when he was the roads minister?

Ben CARROLL (Niddrie – Premier) (14:05): Unlike those opposite, we do not do selfies in front of potholes or spray-paint around them or skip over them. We fix them.

The SPEAKER: I acknowledge in the gallery the honourable Andre Haermeyer, former member for Yan Yean and Kororoit and former minister.

Ministers statements: government achievements

Ben CARROLL (Niddrie – Premier) (14:06): On this side of the chamber we make no apologies for supporting working people and fighting for working people. Our policies are focused firmly on the future – the best start for every child, a great healthcare system, making sure we build on the 121 new schools that we have built so every child, no matter where they come from, has a bright start. We are building 12 new hospitals and putting 17,000 nurses and midwives inside them. We are providing cost-of-living support all the way from free kinder to free TAFE, making sure there are opportunities at every stage of life. And, yes, we will put 1500 police out on the street, have more PSOs and have a brand new academy in Melbourne's western suburbs. We will fix half a million potholes, and we will have medium-security prisoners out there helping us do it too. I promised a royal commission on my first day as Premier; it is up and running now. I also am promising 10 free dental clinics – not a one-off but a structural cost-of-living measure that will stand the test of time. We are delivering a new direction on law and order, on the economy and on integrity. We are fighting for working people on health, education, schools and the cost of living. There is so much at stake at this election: a choice between a party fighting for working people and a Liberal–One Nation coalition that will fight the

working people. They took away the work-from-home right. They will take away penalty rates. They will take away paid parental leave.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Youth, this is your second warning. Member for Broadmeadows, I know you do not want to be here, but you are.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, the Premier is required to be factual, and he mucked that one up all on his own.

The SPEAKER: I do not uphold the point of order.

Ben CARROLL: They preferenced One Nation in Nepean, who said they would Americanise the public health system, and that is what will happen under a Wilson–Pickering government.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Member for Caulfield and the Premier, it is not too late to remove you both from the chamber.

Emma Kealy interjected.

The SPEAKER: The member for Lowan can leave the chamber for an hour.

Member for Lowan withdrew from chamber.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, the Premier knows not to misuse his ministers statement to attack the opposition.

The SPEAKER: I remind ministers when they are making their ministers statements to be very cautious about not attacking the opposition.

Construction industry

Jess WILSON (Kew – Leader of the Opposition) (14:09): My question is to the Premier. Why did the Premier do a dodgy eleventh-hour deal with the Greens to block a previous royal commission recommendation, leaving his government and former premiers able to withhold information from the Big Build royal commission on public interest immunity grounds?

Ben CARROLL (Niddrie – Premier) (14:10): I think anyone who watched the royal commission yesterday would say Justice Kourakis has set up the strongest terms of reference. He is leaving no stone –

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Rural and Regional Development is warned.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, this question went straight to the Premier. On relevance, this question went straight to the dirty deal over public interest immunity.

The SPEAKER: I remind the member for Brighton that he has been here long enough now as Manager of Opposition Business to know the correct way to raise a point of order. That is not one.

Ben CARROLL: This is the toughest royal commission in Victoria's history, and it will get on and do the job it needs to.

Jess WILSON (Kew – Leader of the Opposition) (14:11): How can the Premier claim that this is the toughest royal commission in Victoria's history when his government refuses to implement an integrity recommendation from a former royal commission that it has already accepted?

Ben CARROLL (Niddrie – Premier) (14:11): The royal commission is underway. The broadest terms of reference possible –

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, the Premier is being evasive. Relevance does require the Premier to deal with the substance of the question. The Premier cannot respond generally, as previous Speakers have found. The Premier has not dealt with the substance of either the main or the following question.

Anthony Carbines: On the point of order, Speaker, points of order, according to *Rulings from the Chair*, must not be used to deliberately disrupt proceedings or to respond to debate. That is exactly what the member for Brighton is doing.

The SPEAKER: I do not uphold the point of order. The Premier has only been on his feet for just over 8 seconds.

Ben CARROLL: The royal commission is underway, and I noticed that Justice Kourakis was very clear: no stone unturned, and carpetbaggers will not get away with anything.

Ministers statements: racing industry

Anthony CARBINES (Ivanhoe – Leader of the House, Minister for Artificial Intelligence and the Digital Economy, Minister for Major Events, Minister for Medical Research, Minister for Racing, Minister for Economic Development) (14:13): I rise to update the house on Australia's original major event, the Victorian Spring Racing Carnival – 600,000 attendees across three months of statewide action, including 26 country cups for a total economic contribution of some $800 million. The Carroll Labor government's $72 million Victorian Racing Industry Fund has been a game changer, with track upgrades at Bendigo, Benalla, Ballarat and a horse hospital at Cranbourne. The Major Racing Events Fund of $15 million has backed the big events, including the Caulfield Cup Carnival and a historic Cox Plate to be run at headquarters while Moonee Valley is completely rebuilt, including thousands of new homes. The spring carnival across the state will see 72,000 interstate visitors and 11,000 international visitors. All eyes will return to Flemington for the race that stops the nation, the Melbourne Cup, plus the return of DJ Fisher on Champion Stakes Day.

As we cast our eyes over the November prospects, I see them rounding the bend into the famous Flemington Straight. Free dental is travelling well after a late plunge and 10 new dental clinics. The people's champ for the Frankston line is looking strong after today's crime stats down again. A change of jockey has worked miracles there. But the Nationals are looking for a solid run. They are always in the placings. The upper house has gone backwards. No-one can read their form. It is Geelong strong with the Bellarine link drawing plenty of interest. Not much love for Brighton or Bulleen, but they do fancy themselves and can never be ruled out. Into the final hundred; now we wait. But it is One Nation making a late run, one out and one back with some cover from the blue silks. It could be the Liberal Party – often the frontrunner, always the bridesmaid. Clerks of the course have been busy again, and we thank them for their service. The reins have been pulled from Malvern, from Macedon, from Melton and Mill Park. We thank them too. There are some late scratchings also. Fifty metres to go – the royal commission is travelling nicely, but I make no predictions. Flying home, coming fast, 17,000 nurses, the highest paid teachers. It is neck and neck. It is a head bobber. Here comes Aberfeldie boy, the first past the post on 28 November. Put down your glasses or raise one in December. That is racing.

Construction industry

James NEWBURY (Brighton) (14:15): My question is to the Premier. Following the government's grubby cover-up deal with the Greens, why is it Carroll government policy to provide a protection racket with public interest immunity to former premiers Daniel Andrews and the member for Bendigo East?

Ben CARROLL (Niddrie – Premier) (14:16): This is from the man who did a dirty deal with One Nation to cut work from home. We are on integrity. You are all talk.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Member for Bulleen, I note that you have just come back into the chamber. The Premier will direct his comments through the Chair.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, this question is serious and goes to integrity. If the Premier has none, he should just say that.

The SPEAKER: I do not uphold the point of order. The Premier has concluded his answer.

James NEWBURY (Brighton) (14:17): Will the Premier guarantee that every government document of the last 12 years requested by the royal commission will be provided to it in full?

Ben CARROLL (Niddrie – Premier) (14:17): I am not surprised that the Shadow Attorney-General has not done his homework. We have given the royal commissioner the power to compel information, and he should know that.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, this question was a very, very simple question, and the Premier is misleading in his response by not being relevant.

The SPEAKER: That is not a point of order. I do not uphold the point of order. The Premier has concluded his answer.

Ministers statements: health system

Colin BROOKS (Bundoora – Treasurer, Minister for Industrial Relations) (14:18): The Carroll Labor government is pouring record investment into the health system Victorian families rely on, and regional Victoria is getting its fair share. This year we are locking in a record $32 billion for Victoria's health system, including $3.9 billion in fresh investment. We have backed that up with more than $59 billion in additional health funding since taking office in 2014, a decade in which we have built and upgraded hospitals right across the state, from Footscray and Frankston to Maryborough, Cranbourne and Craigieburn. We have hired an extra 17,000 nurses and midwives to make sure every Victorian can access the health care they need across the state. We are driving that investment deep into the regions. This budget pumps $75 million into the Regional Health Infrastructure Fund on top of the $655 million we are spending to upgrade Ballarat Base Hospital and the $115 million to rebuild Maryborough hospital as well, just to name a few. That is what responsible economic management delivers: 10 years of growing investment in the hospitals and health workers that regional and metropolitan Victorians count on. But this election puts that record at risk. There are some who would rip $40 billion out of the budget and put more than 30,000 Victorian jobs on the line, cuts that would smash health services first –

Danny O'Brien: On a point of order, Speaker, all members are required to be factual, and the minister is not being factual.

The SPEAKER: I do not uphold the point of order.

Colin BROOKS: While Labor will protect health services –

Danny O'Brien interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Nationals, this is your last warning.

Colin BROOKS: there are some who will cut from those services. It is in their DNA – cut, cut and cut. They have done it before; they will do it again. Jess Wilson's One Nation–Liberal coalition will leave Victorians without the health care they need.

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer knows that you need to refer to members by their correct titles.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, it is also a misuse of a ministers statement.

The SPEAKER: The minister has concluded his ministers statement.

Homelessness

Will FOWLES (Ringwood) (14:20): My question is to the Premier. At the 2021 census an estimated 30,660 Victorians were experiencing homelessness. Housing is the foundation from which people can find work, care for their families and rebuild their lives. I congratulate the government on their new plan to tackle rough sleeping, including tenancy support for another 1000 people at risk of homelessness. What steps is the government taking to end rough sleeping in Victoria?

Ben CARROLL (Niddrie – Premier) (14:20): I thank the member for Ringwood for his question. One of the first things you need to do to end rough sleeping and homelessness is appoint a Minister for Homelessness. I notice we are the only party in here that has one. Can I also say, though, that you need to have more than words; you need to back it up with deeds. I was with the minister to release a six-point plan, with a $25 million investment, to have a comprehensive approach for the first time in a generation to tackle homelessness. It begins with a name list – actually putting together every single name of someone who is rough sleeping – to look at the services they need, the complexity, what led them to homelessness and how we give them the door and the services behind the door to give them all the support they need. We also know it is a complex issue, and that is why we are employing complex care coordinators and more assertive outreach officers to go out to all those regions and help people. We are also doing youth foyers and making sure that people that are young can continue with education and can get the housing that they need too. We are also –

A member interjected.

Ben CARROLL: I will not take up the interjection, but I will say, as the party that believes in treaty, that we are giving money to Aboriginal-controlled organisations to support their homelessness endeavours too. We actually stand for working people on this side. We believe in giving people a leg up, and we will always support people no matter who they are.

Will FOWLES (Ringwood) (14:22): I thank the Premier for his answer and for the early investment to deal with the scourge of rough sleeping, but I am interested to know: what targets has the government actually set in relation to reducing the prevalence of rough sleeping?

Ben CARROLL (Niddrie – Premier) (14:22): Our target is to end it, and that is what we will do. What you do not do is create more rough sleeping and homelessness with $40 billion in cuts.

Ministers statements: education system

Gabrielle WILLIAMS (Dandenong – Minister for Education, Minister for Skills and Training, Minister for First Peoples, Minister for Women and Gender Equality) (14:23): Victoria is the Education State for students of all abilities, not just the ones at the top of the class. Victoria has the best students in the country taught by the best teachers in the country. We have topped the NAPLAN results two years in a row, and we have backed in our teachers with the best pay and conditions in the nation. Getting the best out of every student does not happen by accident. It happens not only through a commitment to evidence-based pedagogy and curriculum – phonics and explicit instruction, for example – but also through investing in the things that ensure that kids are ready to learn. It is free breakfast clubs. It is free glasses for kids and affordable school uniforms. It is ensuring that every child has the opportunity to attend a school camp or an excursion. It is mental health support in schools. Labor built 121 brand new schools, and we have completed over 2300 school upgrades. Those opposite want to close six schools.

Understanding the transformational power of education is in Labor's DNA. We understand that education can disrupt intergenerational disadvantage, that it can create new pathways and that it can unlock potential in every child. Those opposite see it differently. They might say 'no child left behind',

but what they really mean is 'no child left behind, provided that they are already ahead'. The Education State is a statement about equity, about opportunity and about inclusion for all Victorian students, irrespective of postcode, of background or of readiness. The Education State is a Labor state because under the Liberals the vast majority of students will be on their own.

Government performance

Jess WILSON (Kew – Leader of the Opposition) (14:25): My question is to the Premier. After 12 years of Labor and three premiers, Victoria has the highest taxes, the highest debt, the highest unemployment, record crime, roads littered with potholes and failing services, with $15 billion siphoned off the Big Build. Why is every Victorian, other than bikies and criminals, worse off after 12 years of Labor?

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: The Minister for Housing is warned. The Minister for Public Transport is warned.

Ben CARROLL (Niddrie – Premier) (14:26): I thank the opposition leader for that Dorothy Dixer, because 12 years, 12 new hospitals, 121 new schools. When we came to office, this state was stagnant and still. We have rebuilt this state, and we are making sure everyone has opportunity, security and prosperity. We are making sure everyone can fulfil their dreams. We have the highest paid teachers in the nation. When we came here, we were 11 out of 20 in NAPLAN. Now we are 18 out of 20. We have changed this state for the better, and we will stand for working people every single day.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: The member for Monbulk is warned. The member for Polwarth is warned.

Brad Rowswell: Speaker, on a point of order on relevance, I thought the house had determined that valedictories were to be later in the program today.

The SPEAKER: The Premier has concluded his answer.

Jess WILSON (Kew – Leader of the Opposition) (14:27): The Premier sat around the cabinet table for almost a decade, backing his predecessors' decisions. Why should Victorians trust this government with another four years when even the Premier is ashamed of the legacy he has been a part of?

Ben CARROLL (Niddrie – Premier) (14:27): We make no apologies on this side for fighting for working people, for security, for prosperity and for nation-building. They are One Nation building – grievance, division. Victorians know that with Labor we will always fight for them, not $40 billion in cuts that will go straight to the heart of working people, and we will always make sure that we have a great state. We will not let a Liberal–One Nation coalition come in here and destroy this state, which we have rebuilt for the better over the past 12 years.

Ministers statements: crime

Paul EDBROOKE (Frankston – Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (14:28): Crime is going in a new direction under the Carroll Labor government: down. That is right. Crime is falling across Victoria. Youth crime is down, burglary is down, motor vehicle theft is down and the number of victims is down 7.6 per cent, the biggest decrease in five years. Bail refusals are up almost 30 per cent. We have the toughest bail laws in the country, and they are delivering serious consequences. More police, tougher laws, stronger powers, serious consequences. But a single victim of crime is still one too many. Crime is still too high. There is still more work to do. That is why we will continue to deliver more police on the beat. We will back Victoria Police with enhanced stop-and-search powers to get more dangerous weapons off the street. While today's crime stats are positive news, we do have concerns on this side of the house about the increase in online scams and deception. There is one particular scam that Victorians

should be very, very worried about this November. That is the Liberal–One Nation coalition scam, promising one thing and delivering another.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker: misuse of a ministers statement.

The SPEAKER: The minister will come back to his ministers statement without attacking the opposition, if he can.

Paul EDBROOKE: He is as sharp as a box full of hammers, that one. Promising one thing and delivering another, they will cut 30,000 workers, they will close hospitals and they will shut schools. They should hang their heads in shame. They might be happy –

The SPEAKER: The minister will resume his seat.

Paul Edbrooke interjected.

The SPEAKER: Actually, the Minister for Police can leave the chamber for half an hour.

Minister for Police withdrew from chamber.

Constituency questions

Mornington electorate

Chris CREWTHER (Mornington) (14:32): (1838) My constituency question is for the Minister for Housing, Building and Precincts. What is the minister doing to address the many vacant public housing properties in the Mornington electorate and Victoria to make them available to people in need? Constituents have repeatedly raised concerns about public housing properties sitting vacant and in disrepair when we are in a situation of having over 65,000 Victorians on the public housing waiting list. The Mornington Peninsula has the highest rate of rough sleeping in Victoria, making the availability of public housing crucial. My constituent Ric Howard specifically raised with me concerns about the transparency of public housing figures and the management of vacant government properties. At a time when so many Victorians are waiting for housing during a cost-of-living crisis, the government must provide clear and transparent information about the number of vacant properties, the reasons for those vacancies and what is being done to return them to use.

Broadmeadows electorate

Kathleen MATTHEWS-WARD (Broadmeadows) (14:33): (1839) My question is for the Minister for Police, and I ask: will the updated list of locations where police can deploy PSOs include Broadmeadows shopping centre? The Carroll Labor government has announced an additional 200 PSOs across Victoria, and we know that PSOs in shopping centres work. Since the commencement of Operation Pulse there have been more than 1700 arrests made and over 3500 charges laid. Retail theft is down 70 per cent, and 84 per cent of customers felt safer. PSOs at Broadmeadows station are doing a great job, as are the new community connectors, helping those who need extra support. With Labor's record investment in police funding more than 3600 new officers, we now have the largest force in Australia. Bail refusals are at a record high, and we have seen a 70 per cent increase in remand. Our new laws to crack down on crimes against customer-facing workers are making things even safer for both shoppers and workers. PSOs at Broadmeadows Central shopping centre will make it even safer and more pleasant to work, shop – *(Time expired)*

Ovens Valley electorate

Tim McCURDY (Ovens Valley) (14:34): (1840) My question is to the Minister for Consumer Affairs, and it is on behalf of James Brogan in Yarrawonga. I ask: how will the Victorian government support communities like Yarrawonga who continue to be ripped off by collusion and illegal practices by the privately owned fuel stations in Yarrawonga? For years fuel in Yarrawonga has been 25 to 30 cents higher than the surrounding areas of Cobram, Wangaratta and Rutherglen. The ACCC has told me previously that investigation into similar country towns in regional New South Wales can only

prove that the fuel proprietors phone each other regularly, but they cannot prove collusion. That is a cop-out. Victoria's new Servo Saver, which is supposed to assist in the price gouging, has only assisted fuel stations in Yarrawonga from having to physically drive down the road and compare their prices. They can do it from the comfort of their office chair without leaving their business. When people leave town to fuel up, they usually shop for groceries and other items, which means the small businesses miss out on trade. The Victorian government needs to assist communities like Yarrawonga from the daylight robbery that continues on a daily basis.

Cranbourne electorate

Pauline RICHARDS (Cranbourne) (14:35): (1841) My constituency question is to the Minister for Education. How has the Victorian Labor government supported Marnebek School? Marnebek School is amazing. Last Friday I was pleased to host a terrific chai and chat in Cranbourne East. It was made so much better by the support of the students at Marnebek School who did the catering for the event. I would really like to thank and acknowledge the principal Chris Murray; teachers Helen Phillips and Maddison Toohey; and students Liam Ayton, Lorraine Phillips, Joseph Pulo, Benji Ferrari, Pipier Allen, Sofia Amira, Fletcher De Wilt, Jumiya Khisa, Elizabeth Oakley, Kenoli Pinto, Mawada Rashim, Marna Reath, Peace Rhema, Sonja Ruggieri, Erin Salim, Heidi Schmidt and Gregory Williams. Marnebek students represent the best of us, and I am tremendously proud of these students, the teachers, the school support staff and the school's leadership. I look forward to the minister's response.

Prahran electorate

Rachel WESTAWAY (Prahran) (14:36): (1842) My constituency question is to the Minister for Environment. Why is the Carroll Labor government forcing Stonnington ratepayers to pay for the rollout of a mandatory fourth glass recycling bin by 1 July 2027? The City of Stonnington has joined councils across Victoria in raising concerns about Labor's mandatory purple bin roll out and the additional costs it is going to impose, despite continuing uncertainty about the final requirements that they will be expected to meet. Councillors have also questioned whether expanding Victoria's container deposit scheme and other alternatives could deliver comparable environmental benefits at a substantially lower cost. The Liberals and Nationals have committed to scrapping Labor's mandatory fourth bin. Like many local families, my husband Simon, my children Scarlet, Fletcher and Jasmine are committed to being environmentally responsible, but household budgets already are under pressure. We all deserve to know why we should be forced to pay for another bin.

Preston electorate

Nathan LAMBERT (Preston) (14:37): (1843) My question is for the Minister for Agriculture, and my question is: how is the Victorian government supporting wool producers to move away from outdated ways of managing flystrike? As you will be aware, Victoria already mandates pain relief for mulesing, but I ask this question on behalf of Andy Kondopoulos, a Preston resident who collected 165 signatures on a petition pointing out that the regulations do not specify exactly when that pain relief is administered and calling for multimodal analgesia and then a legislated shift to alternatives, including genetic selection. I should say that my father and my late grandfather Will McKenzie were both wool producers – sheep farmers – and I know that they only did crutching because they were up in the Mallee. As the member for Mildura will know, they do not need as much mulesing up in that part of the world, but I know if they were here, they would point out that a sheep dying from flystrike is a truly horrific thing to witness, and all good farmers would support any outcomes that stop that happening. We appreciate any information that the minister and her team can provide.

Ringwood electorate

Will FOWLES (Ringwood) (14:38): (1844) I look forward to the Preston graziers association contribution in the upcoming election. My question is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. What support is available to businesses at the Heathmont shops affected by the Canterbury Road roadworks?

Local traders at the Heathmont shops have raised concerns about lost trade, parking difficulties and reduced customer access during the Canterbury Road roadworks. Changes to the scope and the timing of the project have also made it difficult for businesses to plan ahead and give their customers reliable information. My community welcomes necessary investment in our roads – of course we do – but local traders should not be left to carry the cost of that disruption alone. They need clear timelines, they need genuine consultation and they need ultimately practical assistance to keep customers coming through their doors. I look forward to the answer from the minister.

Glen Waverley electorate

John MULLAHY (Glen Waverley) (14:39): (1845) My question is to the Minister for Police. How is the Labor government continuing to build on the work already underway to ensure local residents feel safe across my electorate? Community safety is not negotiable. We are backing Victoria Police with the resources and powers they need to tackle crime. As a result of our reforms, more offenders are now being jailed rather than bailed. Adults who recruit children to commit serious offences are also facing tougher penalties. We are also increasing the police presence on the ground, with more police officers and PSOs at our stations and in our community. Local residents have told me that seeing more police makes a real difference to how they can feel safe every single day. That is what this is about, and that is the work that Labor will continue to deliver for my community.

Polwarth electorate

Richard RIORDAN (Polwarth) (14:40): (1846) My question this afternoon is for the Minister for Health, and my question is a simple one: Minister, will you match the coalition's commitment to a $15 million upgrade to the urgent care service at Colac Area Health? Recently I was pleased to welcome the Shadow Minister for Health Georgie Crozier to Colac to offer this great incentive to Colac Area Health to fully refit and refurb the current urgent care service. The urgent care service, as it stands today, was built for around 6500 presentations. There are some nearly 12,000 presentations today. This is a growing service in a growing region in a growing community. Urgent care, of course, carries much of the burden of immediate health care in rural and regional communities. It is a great service. It is important that it is fit for purpose into the future. Minister, are you prepared to back what the Liberals are prepared to offer and a fresh start for Victoria?

Monbulk electorate

Daniela DE MARTINO (Monbulk) (14:41): (1847) My question is for the Minister for Public Transport. What progress has been made in addressing the need for a direct bus service between Emerald and Monbulk? Many residents from across my electorate, from school students to our older people who struggle to drive, have told me that travelling between Emerald and Monbulk without a car is difficult and time consuming. Despite being two of the major townships in the Dandenong Ranges and only about 10 minutes by car from one to the other, the public transport journey between Emerald and Monbulk involves two buses and travel times of over an hour each way. This lack of a direct connection affects people of all ages, including the young travelling to school, sport and work, locals attending medical appointments and community members seeking access to services. My petition for this route to be established has reached over 800 signatures in under a week, and the numbers are growing. The call from my constituents is loud and clear. I look forward to the minister's response.

Motions

Liberal Party policy

Debate resumed.

Matt FREGON (Ashwood) (14:42): I will have a bit of a chat on the motion as well. This is probably my last contribution in this Parliament. It is fitting, I guess, to run the hypothetical bizarro world that is put forward in messages from the other side, because it is concerning. It is concerning

about possibilities that may happen and hopefully do not. Thirty thousand public sector jobs being cut is by no means insignificant.

AI gets a bad rap sometimes, and fair enough. We have to be very careful. I applaud the Premier's and ministers' strategy that came out this week. It makes a lot of sense. Actually, while I am on that, it is those sorts of decisions that are why we need Labor governments in Victoria. Obviously there is massive investment around the world. It is not just us. Everyone is competing for the investment in AI, but at what cost? It is not just the financial cost. We see the US bond rates now going up over 5 per cent, along with many other parts of the world, because they are competing for the same investment that AI is competing for. That will have an effect on all of us, amongst many other things going on in the world. Even in that competing atmosphere in an industry where we want to get that investment in Victoria, we still need to consider at what cost. Knowing we have a government that says we need to have expectations from this industry to make sure that renewable energy is provided, that grey water is used or alternatives are found and that you cannot be close to residential areas – all really important things that our communities expect us to do – I do sometimes worry about the rhetoric from others that will only focus on, say, the investment side or the profit side and not necessarily the cost side.

Talking about AI, I did a google. It is good old Adam Bandt's best line he ever said, 'Do a google.' The Victorian public service is currently about 58,000 people – give or take a few – or 55,000 full-time equivalent. I am going to guess that this 30,000 figure that is projected in the figures that have been put forward by others is going to be across the wider public service. Let us give them that benefit of the doubt. That wider public service, Mr Google tells me, is 322,000, so we are talking about a cut of around about 10 per cent. What would that do? I asked Mr AI that as well. Mr AI told me – and you can do it yourself to get the finer details, Speaker; I am sure you will do that as soon as you rush home after this wonderful day – that essentially it will increase unemployment by 1 per cent in the state of Victoria. That will be the effect. What will that do in a world with investment in government bonds and AI and a world where the oil price is going up because orange people are deciding to do silly things over in other countries? We are already risking recessionary triggers for not just our state but the Western world, if you like, and the whole world. This is a proposal from others that will potentially lift the unemployment rate by 1 per cent at the same time.

I do not downplay the significance of managing debt or the benefits of an operating surplus – or, if you want to project further, others on the other side have talked about net surpluses – and we can have those discussions, but at what cost? It will be the cost to the Victorian people. It is not necessarily the people who you may think directly use the services. It is also small businesses. If you own a nail salon or if you own an IT company or if you own the milk bar down the road – there are not many milk bars left, but still there are some – your clients are the very people that are affected by these things. If unemployment goes up by 1 per cent, that affects the very people who are the ones trying to build up the economy. That does not say you cannot make sense when you are making fiscal decisions, and sometimes they will have effects that are not always positive. That is the role of government. But be very careful. Whatever happens at the end of November, we have to be very mindful of the granularity of this. When you make potentially 30,000 cuts – and presumably it will be over time; I presume no-one is silly enough to come in and do it tomorrow – it has an ongoing effect, not to mention the effect of the lack of institutional wisdom that our public service has that you will never get back.

Look at the selling off of our public entities in the 1990s – and yes, we have continued it. I am so glad the Premier has talked about bringing road services back in so we can actually employ people and have institutional wisdom and we can have a system of having apprentices move up like we used to do in the SEC – and yes, we are bringing that back too. These things are important. Forty years of outsourcing everything – I have said this before, and I will keep saying it for as long as I have the grace to be in this place – whilst increasing productivity for a lot of that time has come at a cost. It has come at a cost that we now cannot get more blood from the stone, so now it is just cost. With all this, the economic boffins will tell you, 'Yes, we need more productivity.' Sure – of course we need more productivity. I ran a business. You have got to make a profit. You have got to do things. You have got

to be clever. You have got to make more money. But if you do not have people who can effectively live their lives and have hopes and dreams and aspirations to bring their children up, you will not have that productivity, because you have just stuffed your society in the name of an economy, and that is the danger.

If people want to understand why there are orange T-shirts with a lot of popularity around the place, maybe have a think about the last 40 years and the hope that we have taken away from a lot of people without meaning to, obviously unintentional, but that is where we are. I think the world is ready. Again, for the Premier it may seem a small thing to say that road workers will now be employed by the government, and it will take some time to get that in place. But that is a very good step, and I hope the next government, in whatever form it is in, continues that because I think the world is ready for it to understand that this sort of gold-plated history that did not quite exist in the minds of some. We might want to remind people that the top income tax rate was about 56 per cent, unions had more power, industries were owned by the people and that was the world where you could buy a house on an average wage and could raise your kids, educate them and probably have holidays in your retirement. That seems to be the world that these people want, and why wouldn't you?

There is a lot of benefit out of the last 40 years, but we have given that away. So on the motion and the options before the Victorian people, at what cost? Consider this: this Labor government has done a lot of good for the state of Victoria and, I believe, will continue to do so. And in the last 30 seconds, I did say a bit of a thankyou in my last members statement, so indulge me. I would never acknowledge the gallery because if my wife Rebecca was sitting there that would be against the standing orders, and I could not do that. But I thank her greatly for her assistance and love her dearly wherever she may be, and we will see how we go in another four years in this place and we can both share this together.

Daniela DE MARTINO (Monbulk) (14:52): I was listening fervently to the member for Ashwood and his contribution with a smile on my face towards the end, but with great concern whilst he was speaking at the substance, because I concur with him. It was good to hear another small business owner on this side of the chamber – there are actually several of us. There are many who seem to think that somehow amongst small business owners, we must all somehow vote for the other way, and it is simply not the case. There are a number of reasons for that, and it is a conversation I have daily with people when they say, 'But you owned a small business, why didn't you vote Liberal? The simple answer to that question is, first of all, my values are very Labor. They always have been, and my parents values were Labor, and they were small business owners.

The second is that the Liberals actually never did anything for small business. Not for them, not for me and not for any of us. If anyone wants some proof in that pudding, let us even just look at payroll tax in this state. Under the previous Liberal government I think maybe there was a tiny fractional move in the last of their four years that they were in government. They did nothing else for the first three. The threshold for payroll tax has been increased by our government over time, and the rate has decreased, especially for those in regional areas. So I say if anyone wants to know who is out there helping small businesses, we have actually done tangible things to assist them. And in small business it is tough – it is always tough. Well, not always. There are some out there that might find the magic unicorn small business, but like the member for Ashwood was saying, you have to be smart, you have to be clever. Just because someone wants to open a small business does not mean it is always going to succeed. I know, I lived it myself. We bought a good business. We made it even more successful. We opened up another business, and it was tough going for those two years and juggling two and a staff of 40 between the two of them at once was really quite a stretch. It nearly did me in, to be quite honest. I was on the edge, and so we sold one. As the member for Glen Waverley just said, it helped me prepare for this job. It certainly did. I tell you what, it built my resilience. You need that.

But I have to say, in small business I learned a lot of things. I also learned that you have to be deft and you have to be clever, but you cannot control the economics around you. So nothing gave me greater fear as a small business owner than watching things like petrol rise in price, because discretionary spend drops when that goes up. It was well known amongst all of us in hospitality that you would sell

fewer coffees and you would sell less food when petrol went up, because people's budgets could only stretch so far. If all of a sudden the cost of their fuel went up by $30 in that week or more, they had less to spend on the coffee or the chocolate or whatever it was that you were selling, so watching that was always nerve-racking for me.

But the thought of $40 billion being ripped out of the economy – I would not be sleeping at night now if I owned my business, because the economy, the amount of money out there, is the pie. When you are in business, you get a fraction of the pie. If you are good at what you do, you can grow the fraction, but if you are not great, the fraction shrinks; it is pretty simple. But if the actual pie itself contracts, no matter what proportion you have of it, it is going to contract as well as a percentage. Your income, the money flowing into your business, starts to wither, but your costs do not. They pretty much remain static, and that is terrifying. If there are small business owners out there thinking, 'I want to vote Liberal because they'll take care of me,' they have another think coming. There should be nothing that concerns them more than an economy potentially crashing and burning because $40 billion has been ripped out of it. Because if 30,000 public service workers in this state lose their jobs, all their wages and salaries go with them, and they cannot go and get their hair cut at the local salon and they do not go out for dinner at the restaurant and they cannot go and buy the coffee. They cannot do the basics, or they can only just meet the basics if they are lucky. For the small businesses relying on those people to have money to come and spend at them, all of a sudden, as I say, that pie will have shrunk, and their doors close. It is very, very hard.

For people working in construction, the tradies out there I have been speaking with, thinking that life will be grand when $40 billion comes out of the economy, I remember what happened in the recession of the 1980s. I remember my friends whose dads were tradies, and they lost their houses. I remember it as a kid. It was visceral and real, and there was fear amongst them all. Our next-door neighbour was an accountant. He ended up driving for Pizza Hut delivering pizzas. He lost his job in the city. My other friend's dad was a plumber; his business crashed and died. I cannot express to people how dangerous it is. The proposed cuts from the Liberal Party, some Institute of Public Affairs dream that they are enacting as their policy, should cause concern for everyone in this state.

I was listening also to the member for Ashwood talking about bringing roads back in. I am thrilled that we are talking about government once again directly employing people to do the job, because in the fever dream of neoliberalism, of Thatcher, of Reagan, of the 1980s and 90s, which spread like some kind of virus across the Western world, everything that was sown then, those rotten seeds, we are reaping now, and it is terrible. It is terrible for all of us. We have seen it with the privatisation of energy. We ended up paying more and got a terrible service instead. The SEC was listed as one of the best electricity systems in the world at the time. I have spoken about it before here; I have put it into *Hansard*. I do not have it to hand now, but I can tell you it was revered internationally for how robust it was. Our energy supply was reliable. Do you know what happened when Kennett and the Liberals privatised it and they sold the poles and the wires off? There were so many good contingencies built into the SEC that if the power tripped, if there was an issue along the line, there was a contingency, a backup, a plan B that kicked in like that. Then when they privatised it, those companies that bought the poles and wires stripped out the contingencies to store them in a shed as spare parts. Then the brownouts started and the blackouts started and people started to go, 'Why am I paying more for energy that's no longer flowing into my house the way it used to?'

The fever dream of neoliberalism has turned into an absolute nightmare and we are all living it now. We have seen it bear fruit. For us to talk about putting direct employment of roads back into government hands should bring joy to the people of Victoria, because it means we will have direct oversight. We will be employing people who will take absolute pride in the work that they do, and we will have that direct oversight. As we pay these people to do the work, we will be able to see it, they will work for government and it will be secure. They will not have to be filling out their ABNs and their BAS reports. They will not have to worry about that, because they will have dignified jobs

directly employed by this government. That is a fabulous thing. I am thrilled with where we are going in that direction, can I say.

But back to where I started, we should be very, very worried about what the state of Victoria's economy looks like if the Liberal–One Nation coalition gets their way and slashes our budgets, because people will hurt. The hairdresser down my street in Belgrave will not have people flowing through the door like she does now – and she is fabulous, by the way; shout-out to you, Caz – because people will have less to spend. The physiotherapists out there – all of a sudden people who need to see a physio are not going to be able to go for their monthly tune-up. If they are lucky, maybe it is once every six months when they can scrape the money together again, because they have lost their jobs out of the public service. For every frontline worker left there – every nurse, every teacher, every person out there who needs backup support staff: do not take comfort from the fact that they are saying to you on that side of the chamber that your frontline job will be saved, because who will be left to do all the work that supports you in the background? No-one. Which means every frontline worker will be doing double the work they did for no more pay, and they will somehow have to keep delivering their frontline service while they are scrambling in the background to do the work that the previous support people used to do for them, because they are gone.

You cannot rip out 31,000 public service jobs and expect that service delivery in this state will be the same. People will suffer. The waiting lists will increase for elective surgery. Children will not get the attention they need at school. Where we are right now: our NAPLAN results for two years in a row are leading the nation. That is fabulous. It is not going to be the same if we are ripping out support staff from the public school sector. No way. It cannot. It does not work that way. Anyone thinking that the plan from those opposite is somehow clever, that it is some great way for our state to go forward, really needs to seriously consider what it looks like. I am very concerned about it. I am incredibly concerned. I do not say this for theatre; it is not antics. It is a deeply held fear that I have. I sincerely hope the people of Victoria think very carefully and very clearly about the choice they make at this election. I sincerely hope they do, because the alternative is frightening. I commend the motion to the house.

Nina TAYLOR (Albert Park) (15:02): Thirty thousand jobs and what that would look like for our state. Something that I think about almost every day is the historic outcome for our state with treaty and the treaty process. We actually had a meeting the other day, an historic meeting between cabinet and Gellung Warl, and we saw the two come together in unity, recognising the importance of a future shared, of working collaboratively and of driving much better outcomes across the board for everyone in our state through that unity of spirit. We know, and those opposite have already said very clearly, that one of the first things to go, should they be elected, would be treaty. I actually feel sick to the stomach when I think about that and when I think of so many years of advocacy on the part of our First Nations peoples and the truth-telling process, which was very important. It would have been extremely painful to share those stories, but they were necessary, and they are part of the healing of our country. All that incredible work, only to have it sliced just like that. It would be like a dagger to the heart, to be honest, and I am not exaggerating.

The duplicity, though – when I go to citizenship ceremonies and I have members of the Liberal Party go there and talk about 65,000 years of history et cetera, knowing full well they will come back in here and go, 'Slice the treaty.' I think to myself: do they actually mean anything that they say at that citizenship ceremony when they are feigning to acknowledge the importance of 65,000 years of history, all the while saying, 'If we get elected' – and that will be shared with One Nation, and we all know the position of One Nation when it comes to First Nations peoples, and it is not a pretty one – 'we will slice and dice it, and that is okay'? There is not a lot of deliberation and consideration in those comments. It is harsh. I personally think, and I know everyone on our side, let alone our First Nations peoples, thinks – and I cannot reflect for every single person of course, that would not be appropriate, but those that I know would be absolutely devastated.

I know certainly in my seat, the seat of Albert Park, indeed there is strong recognition and respect for treaty and what it means. It should not be about an us and them. It is a shared, important process and

a constructive way of moving forward. That is what really backs it in. That framework means that it has appropriate governance, it has structure and it has a purpose. Any of the cuts are going to have drastic ramifications. On a very personal level I am reflecting, but I know that my colleagues will share this despair at the thought that treaty could and would be at risk. And it would, because I have heard a number of times in the chamber those opposite quite emphatically say, 'If we get elected, treaty's gone.' I think on many levels, fiscally but also emotionally, that would be absolutely devastating for our state, and it would be a step backwards. The hope is that in Victoria that step forward could then be shared across the country and actually inspire other states to move forward – I think there is some movement in South Australia – but more broadly that we can move ahead as a nation. I think that sometimes, rather than seeing it as just a cost, we know self-determination is critical in terms of empowerment and in terms of driving real outcomes when we are talking about employment pathways but also health and other basic and fundamental elements that we all should value.

I know when I was Parliamentary Secretary for Education I had the great privilege of attending many wonderful educational events on behalf of the now Premier. One of them was specifically about targeted work from our government through – and I say this – honouring the self-determination of those employed specifically, First Nations people, to provide targeted support to help more First Nations people reach year 12 and complete full schooling to drive better outcomes for the future. I could see some of the most beautiful outcomes as a result of empowerment and constructive processes targeted to drive the best possible outcomes. Of course education is a gift, but it should not only be a gift. It is something that we expect all Victorians to have the right to: a good-quality education.

On that note, I will say that thanks to Labor's investments, Victoria's students and schools are leading the nation. We have opened – well, it says here over 100 schools, but it is actually 121 schools. I note that it is Labor in the seat of Albert Park who have built the schools there, because if we had left it to those opposite, it would have been absolutely dire: South Melbourne Park Primary School, South Melbourne Primary School and Port Melbourne Secondary College. Narrarrang Primary School is the latest one, built with a kinder onsite, so it is also recognising that for parents the double drop-off can be quite convoluted and so simplifying those processes. I was actually at Narrarrang Primary School the other day with the Minister for Children, and they were talking about how there can be a really beautiful and supportive transition by having the kinder onsite with the school. They can take the kids gently to see the school, to get familiarised with it and to understand that connectivity and that transition in their lives. It is a little less intimidating but also something to look forward to as they mature. Free kinder is certainly something that we have backed all the way because on this side of the house we value education and we also value equity of opportunity.

The government and the AEU have reached an agreement that means that Victorian teachers are the best paid in the country, with the best conditions. According to the most recent NAPLAN data, Victorian students are leading the nation for a second year in a row. I can say that when the Liberals were last in power this was not the case. Again, this is the result of strategic and constructive backing in of our teachers and helping them to do what they do best and helping Victorian students to achieve their dreams and realise their best outcomes. I should say Victoria is ranked in the top two in 16 of 20 measures, cementing our status as the Education State. But I lament that with 3000 cuts, sure as eggs, those cuts will be in our schools, in health – you name it, across the board. To be able to achieve the $40 billion worth of cuts, they are going to have to go far and wide. As has been stated already in the chamber, the ramifications would be fierce – longer hospital wait times, fewer nurses and fewer hospital beds. It will mean communities are less safe, and it will mean local infrastructure cuts. We know they are good for it. They have done it before; they will do it again. As a state we cannot risk a Liberal–One Nation government because of the devastating impact that it would have on our state.

There is one other point I want to make on something that always mystifies me. I am just going to do a little tangent into energy, because it is a secret passion of mine. Everyone is dependent on it. We all need it to stay warm and all the rest of it. We know that those opposite have already said they will sell off the SEC. What will that mean for the hip pocket of the average –

A member interjected.

Nina TAYLOR: It will mean nuclear, and we know there is no social licence for that. But what would this reckless political decision do? It would send bills skyrocketing by over $500 a year. It would destroy the reliability of the grid – I must dispel this baseload myth – and deprive regional Victoria of almost $10 billion in investment and thousands of jobs. I am coming back to the original premise of this motion, and that is: what do the cuts of 30,000 jobs look like? It certainly would deprive regional Victoria of thousands of jobs in the energy sector, let alone other sectors that we have discussed here. I think that would be absolutely devastating for our state. But there is a way through this, and the way through this is actually to vote Labor. Then you do not have to worry about all that, because we are backing it in. We are backing in the SEC, we are backing in education, we are backing in health and we are backing in transport. That is who we are. And we are backing in treaty.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Wayne Farnham): For the last time, member for Melton.

Steve McGHIE (Melton) (15:12): Thank you, Acting Speaker, and do not rub it in. I was not expecting to get up, and it took me a bit to get out of the seat. I was actually nearly nodding off there, with apologies to the member for Albert Park.

Nina Taylor interjected.

Steve McGHIE: It was a great contribution. It was not you. It was just a late night last night. I have to apologise for that. If I told you about my late nights here, this speech would go longer than 10 minutes, I can tell you. We have had a few. I just hope that if the opposition do win the election they do not sack – I should not call them barmaids and bartenders and things like that – the people that run hospitality places, because that would really disappoint us. They are really good jobs, secure jobs and hopefully with good wages. When you go out in Melbourne each night when you are here, it is just fantastic. It is just amazing.

A member interjected.

Steve McGHIE: And in Melton too. There is good nightlife in Melton. But anyway, I am rising to speak on this motion, which of course is about something that matters to every family in my electorate of Melton, and that is jobs. Melton is the fastest growing area in the metro region, with another 200,000 people coming into Melton over the next 20 years, which will double the population. All of those people will rely on jobs. They are going to be buying into the housing market or paying rent, and all of them will rely on jobs. We have a lot of people that work in the public sector in Melton. They are quite concerned about what is being proposed by the opposition. Jobs are not just about numbers. It is about security. It is about families being able to pay their mortgage or pay their rent, put food on the table and have a day out with the kids or even take their kids to sport or go away on a holiday, like some families are at the moment with the school holidays. That is what jobs are all about – that security. People can plan longer term with the security of their job. It gives them independence. It gives them a purpose. It gives them dignity, and it can have an enormous impact on a person's wellbeing and their mental health – having, again, a good job, good security and good pay. Thank God for the unions, the mighty trade union movement, for supporting workers in their wages and conditions, and they will continue to do that. Let us hope they do that well and keep securing people's jobs. No doubt the public sector unions will fight very, very hard if they see any cuts in jobs.

I am concerned by what we are hearing from those opposite, and that is about the cuts to Victorian jobs. The prediction is about 30,000 jobs, even though the opposition say it will be through natural attrition. I will tell you about a bit of my history in the ambulance industry in regard to natural attrition and how they cut public sector jobs. Back in the Kennett era they cut a lot of public sector jobs, including ambulance jobs. They were the most senior paramedics within the industry. What they did is that they did a restructure and they changed the job titles and made station officers and assistant station officers apply for their own positions. A lot of these people had been in the industry for 20 and 25 years, the most experienced paramedics in the state of Victoria and the most capable paramedics in

the state of Victoria. We are talking about this happening in 1993. What happened was they took these station officers and assistant station officers away. They changed their title to team manager. They made them apply for the new classification. They took them away in a brainwashing campaign. Most of those people put in for a redundancy because they did not think they would be selected for their jobs. What it did, effectively, is cut the number of people that worked on the road in the ambulance industry. That is how you get job reductions in the public sector. You change titles; you change classifications. You make people apply for their own positions that they have held for many, many years knowing that they are not going to be selected. That is what happens, and that is what will happen in the public sector if the opposition get into government.

The Liberals and Nationals have said it is just a hiring freeze, which they claim will deliver something like $22 billion in savings. Independent analysis by the Australia Institute has examined those numbers, and it concluded that achieving the $22 billion in savings through public service job reductions would require around 31,700 jobs to be eliminated. The opposition dispute the suggestion that its policy amounts to cuts on that scale. It says its announced policy would reduce the Victorian public service by only 7184 full-time equivalent positions through attrition. Even if the opposition's figures were right, nearly 7200 positions are still a lot of positions. That is a lot of people that are out of work. That is a lot of families that will suffer, let alone the local communities around those families. And who knows, as I say, if historically what happened in the past was to happen again, to transpire again, with people fighting for positions that they have held for a long, long time just because they have changed the title or the classification. The opposition say 7000 jobs or just over 7000. The Australia Institute says it will be 31,700 jobs. There is a big difference, a big discrepancy there. I think the community need to consider that when they go to the polls in November. Reducing the workforce at that scale, as I say, has an effect, even if the opposition's figures were right at 7000-odd. Again, what is the broader network in regard to those affected? Kids, families, school communities, local communities and local businesses are all affected because of the reduction in jobs, job security and income. Then also a number of those people will end up on Centrelink entitlements. How demoralising is that for some of those families that had secure work but then are out of that secure work.

You can see with the investment by our government over the last 12 years what has been delivered. If you have been driving towards Melton in recent times, there are 13 cranes on the skyline. It is unheard of, never been seen before. It is flatland. We have got roofs of houses, but now we have 13 cranes.

Mathew Hilakari interjected.

Steve McGHIE: My favourites are the six cranes at the hospital site, all coloured, absolutely glorious. Get out there at night. It is almost like real entertainment at night in Melton. We have got the coloured cranes at night, 13 cranes in Melton. It is just incredible. I think we have got more cranes in Melton than we have got in the city at the moment. It is really good.

It just goes to show what is being built in Melton. We have got a major hospital being built that will house 300 beds. It will be the most magnificent thing. I see the member for Footscray here. She has got the best hospital in the world, which has just been opened. It is five-star. You could not get a hospital better than that – if not a hotel better than that. A few of us have stayed in the hotels in the city here, and I will tell you what, I would rather stay in the Footscray Hospital.

Mathew Hilakari interjected.

Steve McGHIE: Give it a chance; I might make it. I know which room I want. I want the room overlooking the Flemington Racecourse in November. We will be right. We will get there.

The investment at Melton has been enormous in my time of eight years, with the Melton hospital, four level crossing removals, the new Melton station and six brand new public schools, and every other independent, non-government school has received an enormous amount of funding from our government to upgrade their facilities and build new campuses. Out of that there are thousands of jobs locally and thousands of apprenticeships locally. That money is retained within Melton for local

businesses. That is what it means – investment by government to create jobs, to give people security, to give families money to enjoy themselves and to be able to spend money on what they want to spend their money on, not only just on mortgages and food and things like that but on entertainment.

Local sport is so important nowadays, and sport is not cheap. To put kids into sporting clubs and things like that is expensive for families. I have got to say the Get Active Kids vouchers are enormous. I think it is about the fifth time that we have run that program, and it is enormous. The take-up is enormous.

Secure work is important. Slashing 30,000 jobs is critical. The community need to consider that come November – the difference between the two sides of politics. It is about whether people want to be secure at work and be able to bring in a good income to be able to support their families. If they do, they need to vote Labor, and if they do not, then they are stupid. It is simple. I commend the motion.

Eden FOSTER (Mulgrave) (15:22): It is a pleasure to follow the member for Melton. Thank you for your friendship and your learnings. You offer so much to this place. I have only known you for a short time, but it has been a good time. You have created a lot of memories for everyone here, and I look forward to a continued friendship, even though you will not be in this place.

A member interjected.

Eden FOSTER: Oh, yes, one of the privileges that many of us have had, particularly on this side, and I am sure many on that side as well, is being McGhie-ed. I will not go into detail as to what that looks like or define that. But, Hansard, I am happy to spell that for you later on. I digress. I just wanted to acknowledge the great member for Melton and the hard work that he has put into this place and in his former work as a paramedic as well. Thank you.

I stand here today in support of this motion and really to condemn the 30,000 jobs that will likely be cut under a coalition government. The choice before Victorians at this upcoming election could not be more stark, nor could the stakes for working families be any higher. On one side we have an opposition shackled to their junior partners in One Nation, marching to an extreme agenda that demands $40 billion in ruthless budget cuts and the outright sacking of at least 30,000 hardworking public sector employees. On this side, though, stands the Victorian Labor government, a government rooted in the community, proven in our delivery and unshakeably committed to standing shoulder to shoulder with working people.

Let us examine what those opposite mean when they talk about fiscal discipline. It is code for dismantling the social fabric of our state. When the Liberals were last in government, their bloodthirst for cuts saw them slash a billion dollars from our healthcare system. They went to war with nurses and paramedics. They shut 22 TAFE campuses and threw over 3000 vocational education staff into the scrap heap. They cut $130 million from Victoria Police and $66 million from our fire services. They have form, they have a history, and as independent economists have confirmed, their current $40 billion savings target is a mathematical fiction that can only be achieved by swinging a wrecking ball through our schools, our hospitals and our frontline emergency services.

When the member for Kew admits openly on TV that current spending is not sustainable and that schools will not be built or fixed, we must listen to what she is telling us. The Liberal coalition with One Nation based their policy of cutting one in seven public servant jobs on ripping money from our health care, from our education, from our public transport, from all of those services that Victorians need. It means fewer allied health professionals, fewer child protection workers protecting vulnerable children and fewer forest firefighters to keep our country towns safe. Worse still, look at who they choose to partner with. The coalition and One Nation are joined at the hip. In the other place the One Nation member has already voted in lockstep with the Liberals for spending caps that force deep cuts to public services. One Nation's agenda is an Americanised race to the bottom. They want to privatise our hospitals, abolish the Department of Health, rip away penalty rates and paid parental leave and saddle regional communities with nuclear powerplants in our food bowls and near our waterways.

Mathew Hilakari interjected.

Eden FOSTER: That could kill people, member for Point Cook. The poor people of Narracan could be vulnerable. When working people needed a voice, One Nation has sided with the boss every single time – voting against industrial manslaughter laws, voting against protecting tradies from deadly silica dust and voting against same job, same pay. In stark and proud contrast, the Victorian Labor government has spent the last decade building a fairer, stronger and more resilient state. We know that a strong economy and a fair society go hand in hand. That is why we have added over 674,000 jobs since 2020 – leading the nation – and grown our economy to be 28.7 per cent larger than it was when we first came into office.

Look at how we support families across every stage of their lives. When it comes to regional support and infrastructure, we are upgrading and building regional hospitals, ensuring families receive world-class care close to home regardless of where they live. Closer to my home and closer to the home of the community of Mulgrave, we have put money into building the world-class heart hospital, we have upgraded Dandenong Hospital and we are upgrading Monash hospital. With regard to fair work and workplace rights, Labor has always backed the worker. We stand firmly for job security, fair wages and safe workplaces, rejecting the race-to-the-bottom mentality of the coalition parties. When it comes to early childhood and free kinder, we have delivered free kinder for three- and four-year-olds, and we are giving every child the best start in life while easing the cost-of-living burden on working parents. Just in my electorate we have had the Ngalambi early learning centre open this year and soon we will see the Carwatha learning centre open as well at Carwatha P–12. Community safety and emergency services have also been things that we have invested in. Unlike the Liberals who slashed police and fire budgets, we continue to invest heavily in our police, emergency services personnel and dedicated frontline workers to keep our neighbourhoods safe, and we are seeing this investment come to fruition. We are seeing the outcomes of it, with recent data showing that Mulgrave crime rates are down by 7.2 per cent.

In the couple of minutes that I have, I want to just continue to make my contrast between this side of the government and those opposite and their coalition partners, One Nation – a choice that people have on 28 November We have heard that there will be cuts to education under a One Nation–Liberal coalition. We heard the thought bubble of bringing nuclear to Victoria if Pauline Hanson gets her foot in the door here. We have heard about the abolishment of the Department of Health if she comes into this state and joins forces with the Liberals. It would be detrimental to Victoria. Victorians have a choice, and I know Victorians are intelligent people. They will think wisely at the end of this year. They will make a wise choice for their families, their communities, their schools and their hospitals and for public transport. They will make the best choice. I trust in Victorians to do the right thing by other Victorians and vote wisely, because what is to come is a concern if there is a Liberal–One Nation coalition. It scares me as someone of colour. As a woman of colour, having One Nation trickle into this Parliament would be concerning. It would breed hate and it would breed division. My community is one of the most culturally diverse communities we have in this state, and I am concerned for their safety, their wellbeing and their mental health. So I urge Victorians: stand with one another, vote Labor and support a government that has invested in its people, that has contributed to this state significantly over the last years and has had to do so because cuts were made in previous terms under Liberal–National governments. If a Liberal–One Nation government comes into force at the end of this year, that will be detrimental to the people of Mulgrave and the people of Victoria. I commend this motion.

Kathleen MATTHEWS-WARD (Broadmeadows) (15:32): I rise in support of this motion, because what is at stake in this election in November is not an abstract line in a budget paper; it is a nurse finishing a night shift at Broadmeadows Hospital, it is a police officer walking the platform at Broadmeadows station, it is a teacher at Glenroy College helping a student find their path, and it is the route 536 bus that finally runs on a Sunday. It is every service that families in my community rely on, often at the hardest moments of their lives. Behind every hospital bed there is a nurse, and behind every nurse there is a roster that either has enough people on it or does not. Public services are not a

cost to be trimmed, they are a promise we make to each other as a community that when you are sick, someone will care for you; when you are in danger, someone will come; and when your child walks through the school gate, someone will be there to teach them, to guide them and to hold their hand.

That promise is the opposite to what the opposition are putting on the table. The Liberals have announced a plan that requires more than $40 billion in cuts in its first five years. That is the Liberals' plan. If they have to make a coalition with One Nation, which we know they will have to –

John Mullahy interjected.

Kathleen MATTHEWS-WARD: One notion – they are, yes, but hopefully they never get to put one motion in this house. We know how divisive and hateful they are. We have seen the worst of the worst, but we can only imagine how much worse it could be.

The Liberals have announced a plan that requires more than $40 billion in cuts in the first five years. You do not find $40 billion on the back of a couch. You do not find it by trimming the stationery budget or cancelling a few consultancies. You find it only in the places a state budget has that kind of money – in the people who deliver our frontline services and in the projects that build our communities. The Leader of the Opposition has made it clear she wants to cut one in seven public service jobs. Can you imagine? That means at least 30,000 Victorians who keep our hospitals, schools, police stations and kinders running.

We have heard that they want to bring out a budget around Christmas time, like 30,000 of our families are going to find out they do not have work just over Christmas, and what a horrible Christmas present to receive from those people opposite and from their cronies in One Nation, and that will be the start of the disaster. Let us be very clear about who the people are that will suffer. The public sector is not some faceless office tower in the city. It is a ward clerk who makes sure your mum's surgery is booked, it is the education support worker who sits behind a child with disabilities so that they can learn alongside their friends, it is a maternal and child health nurse, the TAFE teacher, the transit officer and the police administrator whose work keeps a police officer out on the beat instead of sitting behind a desk. When those opposite say, 'Cut the public service', they mean cut the people who make our services work.

Let me turn to what this would mean, starting with our hospitals – longer hospital wait times. In this year's budget, the Labor government is providing a record $32 billion to our health system, including $3.9 billion in new investment. That includes a new fast track so children can see a specialist and get surgery sooner, and we know that if that does not happen, the lifelong impacts on them are profound. We know that with wait times for children in particular, they can miss out on some of those developmental milestones because they are in pain or because they are not able to participate in the things they want to do. So that fast track to see specialists and get surgery sooner will make a massive difference to their life and their trajectory.

We have opened the new Frankston hospital and the new Footscray Hospital, with hundreds of new beds, new operating theatres and capacity for tens of thousands more patients every year. We are building and upgrading hospitals across the state because demand is growing, our population is growing and people deserve care close to home. I have been out to the Northern Hospital a number of times with –

Brad Rowswell: Acting Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the house.

Quorum formed.

Kathleen MATTHEWS-WARD: I was talking about the recent visits we have made to the Northern Hospital. In fact I have made a lot of visits to the northern hospitals and, sadly, too many visits to hospitals in my life. I have spoken in this place before about my dad and his spinal injury and the incredible health care he got both at the Royal Melbourne Hospital but also at Caulfield rehab, and in the many years since I unfortunately have had three very complicated pregnancies. I cannot fault

the health service that our state has provided over many years. When you are in the worst of times it is our nurses, it is our doctors, it is all of the care providers in the system who look after us.

When I was an adviser for ageing and carers, I saw firsthand how incredibly hard our aged-care workers work. We have got in the state public aged-care system nurse-to-patient ratios which work so well to keep people safe, and they did such a good job during COVID. It was so, so hard in the aged-care sector right across the board. We know the importance of having adequate and skilled staff, and we know that that sort of stuff gets cut. That is the first thing they cut, and I bet you it will be public aged-care beds and services that they will cut first, because they are heartless.

Back to the Northern Hospital, I have been there with a number of colleagues. The work there is incredible. It is still the busiest emergency department, I think, in the Southern Hemisphere. My sister works there with all of her incredible colleagues. They work so hard. They do such a good job. They often have some of the most complex cases. We are expanding it. We are doubling the size. We are building a whole new emergency department. We went out to see the ambulatory care centre. It looks incredible. All the workers were so happy to be working there. They could not wait to officially get their new patients in the next day.

There are so many things to be proud of that this government has achieved. The biggest worry for me is that if we are not in government again, we know how all of that can be gone in a second, gone with a stroke of the pen, gone at Christmas time when Jess Wilson brings out the scissors and cuts 30,000 jobs. All of those families –

Brad Rowswell: On a point of order, I just want the chamber to note, Acting Speaker, that my degree of tolerance and self-restraint has had the opportunity to be expanded in the circumstances.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Wayne Farnham): What is the point of order?

Brad Rowswell: The point of order is that the correct use of parliamentary titles is within standing orders, and I would ask you to remind the member on her feet of that requirement.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Wayne Farnham): I remind all members to use correct titles while they are on their feet.

Kathleen MATTHEWS-WARD: I apologise for not using correct titles. I am incredibly concerned, though, about a potential new Liberal–One Nation government coming in and cutting health services and 30,000 jobs potentially at Christmas. Instead of cutting out wrapping paper, you will be using the scissors on all sorts of things – not ribbons, 30,000 jobs going. No presents to wrap for those 30,000 families – people going without care.

Mathew Hilakari interjected.

Kathleen MATTHEWS-WARD: Yes, coal in the stocking. That is absolutely right. It is really not something to laugh about. It is incredibly concerning to me – the cuts in the health system in particular, the cuts in police numbers, the cuts in ambulance services, all of the things that we rely on.

Anthony CIANFLONE (Pascoe Vale) (15:42): I am very pleased to follow my good friend and electoral neighbour the member for Broadmeadows in supporting this motion, which states:

> That this house notes that the Liberals have committed to cutting $40 billion from the budget, requiring at least 30,000 public sector jobs to be cut, devastating the frontline services Victorians rely on, meaning:
>
> (a) longer hospital wait times;
>
> (b) fewer nurses and hospital beds;
>
> (c) less police; and
>
> (d) cuts to local infrastructure.

On every single one of those metrics, you better believe it, at this election all of these things and so many more are on the ballot paper. We are a welcoming, inclusive, vibrant state, and I want Victoria

to remain that way economically, socially, and culturally as well. As someone who is a member of the Victorian Labor government, which was elected back in 2014, we have continued to do the things that matter for every single Victorian and every single Victorian household when it comes to the cost of living, job creation, education, transport services, health and wellbeing services, community sport investment, major events, tourism and visitor economy, real action on the environment, climate change and renewable energy, and also when it comes to matters around social justice, community safety, prevention of family violence and so much more. We have been very clear all the way through as a government that these are the things that are a priority for government, but they are also a priority of course for the community. They have been on the ballot paper every single time we have gone to an election – in 2014, 2018, 2022 and again in 2026.

To be perfectly frank, we really do not know to a large extent where the Liberal–National–One Nation coalition stands on many of these things because they have been silent on a lot of these things. They have been silent intentionally, because just as much as you need to look at what people say and what political parties say, you also need to look at what they do not say. There has been a deafening silence, I have got to say, from many members on that side of the chamber with respect to where they stand in terms of, should they form government, how and where they would be investing in these areas. They have been silent because they have no intention to invest more in any of these areas. The reality is if they were to come to government, there would be $40 billion in cuts at a minimum across the Victorian state budget. They are absolutely kidding themselves if they believe this is not going to impact frontline services. The maths has been done that it is at least one in seven public servant jobs that will go. That will have a devastating impact on frontline services right across the public service, hospitals, police stations, schools, classrooms and so much more. They have no intention of investing in these things that matter, I have got to say.

On the contrary, we have continued to invest since 2014. We have created almost 900,000 jobs; I believe it is in the order of about 600,000 that have been created following on from the pandemic years to today. That is because we have been investing in all the frontline services – that is more doctors, that is more nurses, that is more police officers, that is more people working in the community and social services spaces. It is in the construction sector. Many of our big infrastructure projects have generated thousands of good, well-paying jobs for good, ordinary working people, men and women, that have built the Metro rail tunnel, which the opposition opposed and would not have built; that are building the North East Link, which the opposition and Liberal Party never would have built; and that have delivered in the order of 100 level crossings, four of which are in my community at Moreland Road, Munro Street, Reynard Street and Bell Street. The two stations, Coburg station and Moreland station, created jobs. Again, the opposition never would have delivered those level crossings through the project on the Upfield line. Whether it is the new hospitals; the upgrades that are happening at the Northern that the member for Broadmeadows was talking about, which services my community; the upgrades at the Austin Hospital in the member for Ivanhoe's electorate, which also services my community; or the ongoing investments in the Royal Children's, the Royal Melbourne, the Royal Women's and that whole Parkville precinct, which is so important and employs many people from my community – that never would have happened under the opposition.

In community sport we have upgraded the Cole Reserve precinct for the Coburg Districts footy club, with $1.25 million to provide a new outdoor playing surface, new lighting and greater facilities. Again, that never would happen under a Liberal–National–One Nation coalition. We have upgraded local schools. The amount of funding we have delivered for local schools I am particularly proud of, because I grew up at a time in the 1990s when we had a Kennett Liberal government in this chamber that decided to close hundreds of schools across our community. Twelve of those schools were closed in my community of Merri-bek, and one of those schools they decided to shut, sell off and demolish was the original Coburg High School that my older brother and sister used to go to prior to its closure. The school was sold and closed, and that meant a generation – mine – really did not have a viable local high school for much of the 1990s. We had to go to other schools as a result of that decision. That was

one of the big decisions that really got me interested in politics, because I realised very quickly, for better or worse, that governments have a huge impact on the life chances of local communities.

Fast-forward to today and it is a Labor government that is investing almost $18 million, the biggest ever investment, in the new Coburg High School, which was reopened from 2015 onwards with about 250 kids originally. There are over 1300 students enrolled now, as of this year. We are delivering a new $18 million technology hub which we are looking to open before caretaker, but it is probably more likely going to be in November or December that I will hopefully be able to cut the ribbon on that new technology hub. There is $6.1 million for Merri-bek Primary School to help them deliver their concept master plan – a beautiful school community. Again, it is an investment that never would have happened under those opposite – or the Greens, I might say, who never would have been able to deliver that investment. It is a Labor government that is providing that funding and will see that project through. We have delivered funding, $22.5 million, to build the new Coburg Special Developmental School, a brand new school in the heart of Coburg, and so much more.

But it is on so many other metrics as well that we continue to invest and support our community, including in our community sporting clubs. I just want to congratulate, on that note, as the Parliamentary Friends of Football here in this chamber with the member for Hawthorn, the Brunswick Juventus Football Club on their senior men's side recently being promoted to the top flight of Victorian football. We are supporting grassroots football, and the opposition would never support and invest in that matter. But these are the clubs we are investing in, these are the community groups that we are investing in and those opposite simply would not be in any way, shape or form.

When it comes to transport too, I am very pleased to say that we have introduced more services on the Upfield and the Craigieburn lines. This is something I have been campaigning for for a very long time with the member for Broadmeadows and my other northern suburbs colleagues. We have introduced, as of August, 20-minute services from first train to last train – on average every 20 minutes or better. Again, that is a huge uplift from the previous situation – which was an average service outside of the peak period of 30 to 40 minutes – that we have managed to deliver. We have started to roll out the new X'Trapolis 2.0 trains that are proudly being built in Ballarat, creating local jobs in Victoria. Again, the contrast there is very simple: the opposition would never invest in the Upfield or the Craigieburn lines, and they have said they are going to build new trains in Barcelona, not in Ballarat. We have removed those level crossings, but we have also got the business case and the planning underway for further upgrades through the northern rail corridor study, because we know we need to do more to continue improving the Upfield corridor.

On buses I am so proud of the investments we have made – through a lot of community advocacy, I might add. The 526 bus to North Coburg will be running every 20 minutes, seven days a week, including on Sundays for the first time. The 508 bus from Brunswick West will run every 15 minutes during weekday peaks, with weekend services doubled to every 20 minutes and extended services running until midnight Monday to Saturday. The 503 bus in Brunswick West will have an additional 25 weekly services and 20-minute weekday frequencies outside peak times. The 561 bus from Pascoe Vale to La Trobe University will have increased weekday peak and weekend frequencies, and the 542 bus in Pascoe Vale will receive a full service uplift from Monday to Saturday, with Sunday services extended to 10 pm.

When it comes to trams, again the contrast is very stark. On this side we are investing $115 million to redevelop the Brunswick tram depot, which is at the heart of our local Brunswick tram network. It will help to almost double our tram stabling capacity once completed. I thank the community for their patience during the roadworks. We have had different times when Sydney Road and Moreland Road have been closed to through traffic. That is all going to be completed by the start of October. We have got funding in the budget this year to start planning for accessible tram stops along Sydney Road, which is the first step towards finally delivering accessible stops down Sydney Road. We are progressively rolling out the first of the 50 new Melbourne G-class trams. They will be firstly rolled out for my community along route 58 on Melville Road, but the Brunswick tram depot project will

help boost services along Sydney Road route 19, Moreland Road route 6 and Nicholson Street's route 1 too.

When it comes to environmental action, we continue to invest, whether it is in Moonee Ponds Creek, Merri Creek, Edgars Creek or the container deposit recycling scheme, which is going gangbusters across my community. Or community safety – more police, PSOs and police reservists. We are taking real action on serious crime and the root causes of crime. That is what is at stake at this election.

Kat THEOPHANOUS (Northcote) (15:53): I rise to support this motion. The opposition has promised a $40 billion cut to the state budget, including $22 billion from the public sector alone. The Liberals and the Nationals say they can achieve that through a hiring freeze on back office roles, without redundancies and while protecting essential services. But analysis from the Australia Institute disputes that. It estimates that delivering those savings would mean around 31,700 fewer positions by 2036–37. That is an enormous number, and there is a very human side to it. In my role, I meet with public service workers across so many areas of government, and so often somewhere in that conversation one of them will say to me, 'Actually, Kat, I'm one of your constituents.'

Public servants are a core part of the community that I represent, so when we talk in this place about tens of thousands of jobs disappearing, I know there are people in my community listening and wondering whether we are talking about them. Losing a job can turn a family's life upside down. It can mean suddenly worrying about the mortgage or rent, updating a CV you never expected to need and wondering what comes next and how you are going to provide stability for the people you love. For someone who has spent years building a career in public service, there is more at stake than the pay cheque. There is the loss of colleagues, expertise and work that often gives them a real sense of purpose and meaning. So when I hear 31,000 jobs being discussed as an efficiency measure, I think about the people I meet every day – the person sitting across the table from me talking about women's health, family violence, energy or education. Those are the people behind this number. Because I work with public servants every day, I know the value of the work that they do. There is a tendency in politics to use terms like 'back office' as though they mean 'unnecessary'. They do not.

Through my work in women's health, I have seen public servants help turn years of advocacy by Victorian women into 20 dedicated women's health clinics in Victoria. Women told us they were living with endometriosis, pelvic pain, debilitating periods and symptoms of menopause without getting the care they need. They told us they had spent years navigating a health system that did not always listen to them. We made a commitment to do better, but a commitment made in this place does not magically become a clinic that a woman can walk into. People make that happen. Public servants worked alongside health services, clinicians and advocates to take what women told us and turn it into a model of care that could actually be delivered. It is the same with the early parenting centre we are developing in Northcote. It will be there for families at a time when getting the right support can make all the difference, whether they are just starting out with a new baby or are a little further down the track.

These services start with ideas and commitments, but it takes skilled people to make them real. Through my work across government, I see the value of that public sector expertise every day. There are people in our departments who have spent years, sometimes decades, understanding complex policy areas, working with communities and organisations and learning what it actually takes to turn a good idea into something that works. Good policy does not start from scratch every time there is a new challenge; it builds on what has been tried before, what has worked, what has not and what communities have told us along the way. That knowledge takes years to build, and once we lose it, it is not easily replaced. Yet the work does not disappear. Government still needs good advice. It still needs people who know how to design and deliver services. Strip too much of that capability out, and the government ends up paying private firms to provide that expertise back. The Victorian Auditor-General has warned about the risks of consistently outsourcing work traditionally undertaken by public servants, including the risk of deskilling the Victorian public service. Of course there is a role for

specialist expertise, but I would rather build expertise that stays with the Victorian people than create a government dependent on buying its own capability back.

This is where I come back to the sheer scale of what is being proposed, because once you have cut as deeply as a One Nation–Liberal coalition will, what comes next? Where does the rest of the money come from? Do you start closing hospitals? Do you close TAFE campuses? Do you cut nurses and other frontline workers? Do you start winding back the nurse-to-patient ratios we have fought so hard to strengthen? These are not small savings that can be found down the back of a couch. If you are promising savings on this scale, Victorians deserve to know what you are prepared to give up to find them. We are not starting from a place where our communities are asking for less. There is genuine need out there. In my community we are expanding the Austin Hospital emergency department so it can care for thousands more patients. We have opened a mental health and wellbeing local in Darebin because people need support closer to home. We have strengthened nurse-to-patient ratios because nurses fought for safer workloads and patients deserve safe care. We have spent years strengthening our response to family violence, because when a woman reaches out for help, the answer cannot be that there is nobody there to support her.

We know these questions are not theoretical, because we have seen what happens when governments pursue cuts. When the Liberals were last in office, more than $1 billion was cut from health, TAFE funding was slashed, campuses were closed and thousands of staff positions were lost. So when I hear promises of billions more in savings today, I want to know where they will end, because after you have hollowed out the public service, there are still billions of dollars left to find. Then the question becomes much more confronting. What services do Victorians lose so that the numbers add up? History matters when Victorians are being asked to accept that savings on this scale can be delivered without consequences.

But ultimately this is about more than the public service itself. It is about what we want government to be able to do for our community. That is why I am particularly concerned about women's health. Our women's health clinics exist because women told us the old system was not good enough. They provide dedicated care for endometriosis, pelvic pain, heavy periods and menopause, as well as sexual and reproductive health care, including abortion care. As the former Parliamentary Secretary for Women's Health, I have seen what it meant for women and girls to finally have access to health care that affirms their choices and treats them with dignity and respect and how devastating it is when they are dismissed and disempowered. It is why I have spent the last few years focused on expanding women's rights and access to health care. We have delivered the biggest expansion of dedicated women's health services in our state's history.

This brings me to something that chills me to the bone: One Nation's national policy explicitly seeks opportunities to roll back abortion laws. The Leader of the Opposition has said Victoria's abortion laws would not change under a Liberal–Nationals government, but it may not be a Liberal–Nationals government and protecting the law and protecting access are not the same thing. A legal right is only meaningful if the health care is there when a woman needs it. At best, the One Nation–Liberal coalition could simply close our women's health clinics and sexual and reproductive health hubs, and that would have a devastating impact on women's access to this critical health care. That is why funding matters, services matter, having people there to deliver that care matters – and having a Labor government matters. Labor has spent these precious years finally giving women's health the attention it deserves. A One Nation–Liberal coalition will spend the next four years undoing everything we have fought for and taking women's rights backwards. This is no joke; we have seen this happen across the world with the rise of the far right.

The same is true when it comes to climate action. Victoria is transforming our energy system because we know we need to act on climate change and build a cleaner, more sustainable future. We are on track to reach net zero by 2045. We are investing in renewable energy at scale, making homes more energy efficient and reducing household bills. In less than a decade we are set to power our state with 95 per cent renewables. One Nation have said they will burn up our net zero target while they burn

more coal. They will restart the climate wars. This should horrify any progressive and environmental voter and make them seriously consider what is at stake at this election. One Nation–Liberal cuts will be with us for generations.

In my final moments I would like to echo the disgust of other Labor members who have spoken today about what the cuts mean for the progress made on First Peoples' rights and self-determination. The Liberals and Nationals have committed to repealing Victoria's treaty in their first 100 days of government. Inevitably this will lead to cuts to and closure of vital Aboriginal community controlled services, undermining First Peoples' access to self-determination and culturally safe care. In the inner north we are immensely proud of our history of Aboriginal rights activism and the strong network of First Nations organisations and services that work every day to give support, hope, aspiration and opportunity to First Nations people. That is why I support this motion.

Josh BULL (Sunbury) (16:03): I am pleased to have the opportunity to rise and speak on this motion, having walked into the chamber to follow on from the fantastic member for Northcote to make some reflections on what the member spoke about in her contribution but also to realise that I have of course turned up without any notes. But I am very pleased to be able to report – in stark contrast to what we see from those opposite, which comes to the devastating cuts, the 30,000-plus jobs that will be lost, the more than $40 billion that is at stake being ripped out of schools and hospitals – and reflect on, as the member for Northcote has done, the significant investment and the opportunities, which have come from sustained and continued investment, that have arisen from this government.

What has been really clear in the journey of the motion throughout the course of this afternoon from listening to the contributions of members on this side of the house on important local projects, whether they be investments in community hospitals or investment in local roads – investments in the things that matter to Victorians – is a knowledge and understanding that it is the members on this side of the house that work hard to listen and work hard to understand the needs of local communities, whether that be through committees or through meeting constituents at a street stall, through doorknocking or at events. I know, Acting Speaker Lambert, from following your social media, just how many events you do, as do so many others on this side of the house. I am not sure the member for Melton is ever home, because he is a very busy member.

Steve McGhie interjected.

Josh BULL: Indeed, you cover a lot of ground, member for Melton. The point is that that is how you listen and you learn and you interact with local communities. The opportunity to do that and then bring that through the parliamentary processes; to speak to ministers and to be able to deliver for local communities, as the members for Northcote, Melton, Macedon, Werribee, Clarinda and Hastings and all my honourable friends on this side of the house do; and to see those opportunities and then put that in stark contrast to the sort of shabby outfit that we see from the other side is something that is very concerning.

More concerning than that is the report of the Australia Institute. When you go through the pages upon pages of that report – and I heard the very learned member for Essendon and his contribution; they certainly are going to be missed – and when you listen to the member for Essendon and some of the reflections around the budgetary process, some of the investments that get made and the work that has been done by this government to invest in the services that matter, and then compare and contrast that with what we will see in those job cuts, what we will see in the cuts to service delivery and, most concerning for me, being somebody that has lived in Sunbury for more than 40 years and seen the growth –

Mary-Anne Thomas interjected.

Josh BULL: That is very complimentary of you, member for Macedon, but I will not take up the interjection. My folks moved to Sunbury in the mid-1970s, and the town's population was, I think, about 12,000 people. We are now at 40,000 and projected to grow to 80,000 by the mid-2040s. To be

able to see that growth is to know that those projects – whether it be roads, whether it be schools or whether it be community health – are important work of the government. To read the report from the Australia Institute and get a sense, I think, of what those damaging and devastating cuts are going to mean for Victorians is something that I think every single person, every single member of the Victorian community, should be really concerned about. They will have a significant and long-lasting effect on local communities.

I speak to people like David Wild and Peter Donlon, who work at Omnia Community Health in Sunbury, and the Premier and I had the opportunity to be there just a few weeks ago. With a growing population and for important local services the damage that is going to be inflicted by a $40 billion stripping of the budget is something that I know people in growing communities and people right across the state are very concerned about. We on this side of the house will continue to do that important work around listening and investing. Making sure that we are doing that work is something that we remain focused on. We know and understand that this is important work.

I do want to take the opportunity to thank all of those that have been involved in delivering those projects. I know that some members have spoken about a really long list of opportunities that they have been able to work towards achieving within their own electorate. I want to thank the vast array of amazing community organisations in my electorate, whether that be Omnia Community Health or whether that be all of the work of the local schools – my old school, Sunbury College; Sunbury Downs; Salesian; Gladstone Park Secondary; Sunbury Primary; St Anne's; Sunbury West; Our Lady of Mount Carmel; Sunbury Heights, my old primary school; and all of the schools within the southern part of my electorate, including Tulla primary and Gladstone Park Primary School. All of these amazing schools and school communities do terrific work. Speaker, I am really pleased that you have come in for this part of the contribution. This is a really significant and important opportunity to acknowledge the work of our educators and thank them. That builds upon the recent closure of the EBA for teachers, and I extend that to our volunteers and all of those right across the electorate that have worked really hard to invest in and make for a better education and better opportunities for our young people.

I do want to of course build on that and make the acknowledgement that we have made the Sunbury line level crossing free. We have also opened the Metro Tunnel for more train services more often, making sure that we are investing in local communities, and that is something that is really important. But I do go back to those community organisations that have had such an important role to play locally on the ground and make an acknowledgement of the contribution of all of them for their work. The opportunity for our local community organisations to be able to do the work that they do and to be able to have what I think is a really important conversation about just how much of a value-add they give to local communities and to the economy – I think this is really important work.

We of course go back to what is at stake in November and what we have seen from the report of the Australia Institute. We remain very concerned about what that is going to mean for jobs and what that is going to mean for schools and hospitals and growing communities. That is something that I know members on this side of the house are very concerned about. More importantly, I know and members of the government know that this is something that we remain very concerned about when it comes to investment. Put that in stark contrast to what we are offering – and I touched on this yesterday in my contribution, Speaker, which I have no doubt you would have tuned in for as well – and that is around dental care and the importance of making for better dental health. That is something that I know we are deeply committed to on this side of the house.

I do notice at this time that the chamber is filling up. I think there is a very important contribution that is to be made very soon. I very much look forward to the contribution from the member and acknowledge of course the member's contribution to not just the Parliament but the local community and the people of Victoria. I want to finish my remarks by again saying the choice cannot be clearer in November. It is a choice between more than $40 billion of cuts and 30,000 jobs lost or of course investment in schools, investment in health and investment in the things that matter to Victorians. We remain focused on that, and we will keep doing that work every single day.

John LISTER (Werribee) (16:13): I will take the house through a few notes on this motion in the lead-up to our great colleagues on this side giving their valedictories. I want to cast everyone's minds back to 2014, the halcyon days of 2014. The music was fantastic. I recall the Hottest 100 in 2014. It was a great line-up, but what was not great was this figure: Victoria had the second-fastest population growth and its second-slowest job growth in 2014. It was as described by the *Age* at the time as 'Kennett-style unemployment' in Napthine's government. It was absolutely brutal. Contrast that to only a few months ago. In May 2026 more than half of all jobs created in Australia that month were in Victoria. An additional 22,000 Victorians were employed in May, the highest total for the month. We have grown faster than any other state and added 877,000 new jobs. Why is this important? I note that during those weird years of the former Liberal government we did have the second-fastest population growth, and for a community like Werribee, we did our fair share of the heavy lifting. But of course with people moving into our beautiful community, we need to make sure they have somewhere to work. One of the main employers in the outer western suburbs is our public service. It is not only just in those frontline services like the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and our child protection workers. Of course there are our amazing teachers, my colleagues back in the classroom –

The SPEAKER: Order! The time has come for me to interrupt business in accordance with the resolution of the house today for the member for Mill Park to make her valedictory statement. I remind visitors in the galleries that no photography or filming is allowed.

Members

Member for Mill Park

Valedictory statement

Lily D'AMBROSIO (Mill Park) (16:15): It has been an honour to have served local communities as the member for Mill Park since 2002. Major investments have been made in my community: upgrades to Plenty Road, Childs Road and Epping Road; the rail extension to South Morang; new buses, schools and sporting clubs; the multiple upgrades to the Northern Hospital, including a new emergency department shortly to be built; and women's health and mental health services. They have all been made by Labor governments because what matters to local community and working people sits at the core of the Labor Party. Meeting with and listening to people about what matters to them and ultimately fighting for them has been a tremendous privilege.

I sometimes think back and see that a girl from Fawkner born in the 1960s – now I am going to cry, and I should not – whose Italian migrant parents worked hard but faced life-changing health battles and resulting financial challenges, actually became a member of Parliament. It does get funnier. Trust me. When I was growing up, my family needed Labor governments to help us when we needed it, to protect our wages and keep us safe at work. We also needed a strong public health system when things were very dire and good government schools, both mainstream and special. They were not always there, because you see it really does matter who is in government, and Labor was rarely in government back then.

Now the funny bit. My first career choice as a very little girl was to be a cash register operator, because you see grocery shopping on a Friday night at the Tuckerbag in Bonwick Street was exciting – seeing the women's fingers working the cash register buttons, bells pinging, cash in the till and the paper bags filled with food for the week. Habitually it was also where my dad would buy his weekly stick of Viscount cigarettes. A 'stick' used to have 20 packets of cigarettes. I do not know if they sell them that way anymore. We have seen the return of paper bags at supermarkets because plastic is hurting our planet and killing wildlife. Fewer of us are smoking, and we are living longer and better lives for it. It is thanks to Labor governments that we banned single-use plastics and drove down smoking rates. As for the little girl who wanted to work the cash registers for a living, it really does come down to what you know. As further proof of that, my respect for hard work also came from my parents and the discussions had at the dinner table. These chats always drew a connection between my parents' work

at the factory, their union and who was in government, because it really did matter. I was never in doubt that the Labor Party was our party because they cared for people like my family.

I was 17 when I witnessed the election of my first state Labor government, led by John Cain. For most of the time since, Labor has been the people's choice. Victoria blossomed and came into its own. It grew in stature and pride because of its people and their belief that progressive Labor governments would deliver on what they valued: their aspirations and sense of community, the diversity of cultures, languages and faiths. The cleverness and hard work of our people have made Victoria a welcoming global state, the country's most progressive state. I believe that governments are there to ensure that no-one is left behind, especially those most vulnerable and during times of significant economic structural change. The essential role of government as a democratic institution is to help people, communities and our environment to thrive, to grow, to share our social capital and to protect against unbridled excesses of big vested interests for whom governments simply get in the way. This is really code for the few of them wanting more and giving the rest of us less.

The energy sector is a flagship example of vested interests clashing with the interests of working people and the natural environment, which is why action on climate and the transformation of our energy system has been so fraught in Victoria and Australia, with conservative parties choosing to do the bidding of vested interests over the interests of the people and our environment. It is no wonder that people genuinely struggle to sort the facts from the fiction when the boardrooms present themselves as defenders of ordinary people. That is why I am proud that in my 12 years as Australia's longest ever serving energy and climate minister, people and communities have always been at the heart of our actions. In an energy system that was the first and only in the country to be wholly privatised, we came to government in 2014 under the bounding and confident leadership of Daniel Andrews knowing the extent to which families were experiencing the harsh impacts of full-blown privatisation of this essential service. Gas and electricity disconnections had doubled, prices had hit record highs and Victorians had been left with inadequate consumer protections. Vested interests in the energy sector were more important to the Liberal government than ordinary working people, because they let it happen and did nothing about it.

We set about building new consumer protections and set new standards that the rest of the country followed, including the payment difficulty framework and the Victorian default offer. The retailers opposed the VDO and claimed that it would kill retail competition. It did not. Victorians did get lower prices, the retailers moved on and the number of retailers grew. The VDO fell by 5 per cent for households this July and is $444 lower than the default market offer in New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia – the lowest in the country – and our small businesses on the VDO are paying $1299 less than their counterparts in other states.

In 2014 just 10 per cent of our electricity came from renewables. In 2024–25 Victoria generated 45.1 per cent from renewables and today has 44 wind farms and 44 solar farms in operation and 80 renewable projects under construction – or with planning approval, Minister for Planning – and 10 per cent of Victoria's electricity comes from people's rooftop solar, thanks to our Solar Homes program. We legislated five-yearly renewables and emissions targets, with 95 per cent renewables by 2035 and net zero emissions by 2045, and storage and offshore wind targets. We were the first state to support big batteries, through the Victorian energy storage initiative in 2017. With Ballarat and Gannawarra we quickly became the home of big batteries. We now have 25 big batteries because they provide cheaper energy. Big batteries are now overtaking gas generation, typically providing 10 per cent of Victoria's power during the evening peak. In quarter 1 this year big batteries set the price more often than any other technology, suppressing wholesale prices. That is what ends up in people's pockets. The SEC, the first publicly owned energy utility in Victoria since privatisation, is accelerating the new energy build, including the Delburn wind farm in the Latrobe Valley and the Horsham renewable energy park, the first 100 per cent publicly owned renewables project in the country. Strong and effective leadership is what you get when you bring evidence, good politics and good policy together. It is what you get when you put people at the heart of everything you do – doing the analysis,

collecting the evidence and the science, understanding what this means for people and communities and not leaving anyone behind.

We also ended native timber harvesting. I know how fraught that was; I make no pretence about it. We banned the fracking of gas, with the strong support of environmental campaigners and farmers alike. Our planet is bearing the impacts of climate change, the loss of the natural environment and biodiversity and the harm to human health and way of life, and it is straining under the pressure of waste created from production processes. Our government was the first to establish and legislate a circular economy strategy to be smarter and more careful about the finite virgin materials we rely on and to first reuse, repurpose or recycle what we have already taken from the environment. There is a long way to go and much more needs to be done, but we led the country on this too.

We delivered the country's first treaty with First Nations people. We cannot be the mature and peaceful society we want to be without being honest about our past, the good and the bad; making amends; and moving forward together, valuing and respecting each other as equals.

I have had the privilege to develop and deliver the first of many policy reforms to navigate the profound transformation of our energy system, with people always at the heart of change. We have implemented nation-leading energy consumer protections, grown cheap renewable energy and reduced our greenhouse gas emissions. It is because of such reforms that we are delivering for Victorians the cheapest energy prices in the country and the replacement electricity we need to support our future needs as ageing coal generation closes. In August Victoria became the first state in Australia to commence an offshore wind energy auction. Offshore wind is crucial to Victoria's energy reliability and affordability and is great for Gippslanders – remember them; they are the ones that you shut energy on – growing the local economy and –

Danny O'Brien interjected.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Sorry, I cannot help it. It is my valedictory; I can say what I want. It is creating thousands of new jobs each year, and many hundreds ongoing.

Danny O'Brien interjected.

Lily D'AMBROSIO: Oh, you do not have to stay. This is what communities have been calling for: a just transition and not leaving people behind. Where Victoria goes and where Victoria has gone, the rest of the country has followed, from the first net zero legislation in the country, ambitious renewable energy laws, the Victorian default offer, Victorian Energy Compare, the biggest and most modern Victorian energy upgrades program, Solar Homes, home and neighbourhood batteries, electric vehicle rebates to bringing back the State Electricity Commission.

Since 2024 alone – it is only two years ago – Labor's policies have led to $13 billion of investment in approved renewable energy projects across the state, helping to grow Victoria's energy sector jobs to 68,000 by 2040. We have not only set the most ambitious emissions reduction and renewable energy targets anywhere in the nation, we have achieved every one of them. We have cut emissions by 28.5 per cent since 2014 and are decarbonising at the fastest rate. We were the first state to confront the realities of rising gas prices, caused by two things – one of which is decreasing reserves of gas in the Bass Strait, on which the eastern states have relied for decades to heat our homes, cook our food and support our industries. Victorian homes and businesses are more exposed than other states to price shocks because we have historically used more gas as it used to be very cheap; the opposite is true now. We also saw the start of global pricing apply to Australia's domestic gas, pushing up prices even more and further still when global conflicts arise.

We cannot do anything about global conflicts, but ignoring the problem would have simply left Victorians to face higher and higher gas bills. Today, thanks to our leadership, with the Victorian energy upgrades program, hot water rebates, improved minimum energy efficiency standards for rental properties and new building electrification regulations, Victorians can go more electric or all

electric at no additional up-front cost, and they will save on their energy bills from day one, for good. By doing this we are also conserving Victorian gas for businesses that cannot yet electrify. You see, though gas is more expensive than electricity to fuel our needs, Victorian gas is relatively cheaper than gas from elsewhere because it does not have to travel as far to get where it is needed. So in conserving Victorian gas, we are protecting Victorian businesses from even higher fuel bills, which is why the Australian Industry Group backed our plan. We make no apologies either for the fact that this policy is also reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The rest of the nation is now talking about and acting on electrification, and that is a great thing.

One thing I learned very early on as a minister is the power of vested interests, and the energy sector has plenty of them. Matt Kean and I have had conversations over time about this, and we are in furious agreement on this fact. A good government recognises this and makes the right decisions, rather than being spooked by dodgy research or scaremongering claims that the sky will fall in. A good government will always ask who is doing the scaring and why. Who benefits from it? Over 12 years as a minister, I have heard them all, believe me. The latest is from the gas pipeline operators. Our policies reducing consumption of expensive gas means that they make less profits because less gas goes through their pipelines. Our government will keep looking after the pockets of hardworking Victorians, because their bills matter every day.

Players in the broader energy sector vary. There are many great players and leaders, and I respect them and have worked well with them professionally to improve the system. They recognise that social licence is vital for an essential service. A good government uses evidence and science to develop good policy. Good politics, being on the side of people and not leaving people behind mean the right decisions get made. We have been a great government these last 12 years, and we have much to be proud of.

Everything in the energy sector is interconnected: retail, distribution, transmission and generation. A decision made in one area will have consequences elsewhere. Coal generators age and close down and, if there is not enough replacement in the system, prices go up. Too much reliance on expensive generation? Prices go up. Not enough capacity or delaying or cancelling new transmission? Cheap renewable generation will not get built, because it cannot connect, and prices go up. A well-planned transition takes care of all of the components, with the right technologies in the right order and at the right time. That is what lowers our emissions, grows our economy and gives us the cheapest energy prices, which our people and economy need.

Our state has a strong plan and reputation for getting new electricity projects and infrastructure built and reducing our greenhouse gas emissions – because, yes, you can do it all. We lead the country in it, which is why we continue to have consistently the lowest energy prices in the country and have reduced our emissions at the fastest rate. It is not by accident; it is by good design and clear intent. We need to keep going.

I want to acknowledge the premiers under whom I have served, Steve Bracks and John Brumby, whose leadership broke new ground on climate change, the natural environment and energy. I want to especially thank Daniel Andrews and Jacinta Allan, who gave me the latitude and trust to go even further in breaking new ground in these areas, setting new standards nationally both in ambition and achievement. I knew that I always had to have the evidence, the policy and the politics to win the arguments, and I confess that there were some arguments that I won by simply wearing people down with the evidence, the policy and the politics. But everyone knew where I stood, and I am glad of that. I never set out to be liked; I set out to be respected for the work and the outcomes. I am happy if you like me too, but you do not have to. I know that Premier Ben Carroll will continue to take Victoria in the right direction in energy, environment and climate action, because I do know personally that he cares about the future of these elements. The answers lie in facing the future with courage, not in going back.

To the many members of my ministerial staff over these special years, including Andrew Giles, Ian Porter, Tim Sonnreich, Emily Garnett, Nick Parry, Francesco Naismith and Shani Bulliff, and all advisers in all of their glorious diversity – they know what this means – I thank them for their inspiring dedication and tenacity, their intelligence, their Labor values and their unbounded commitment to the mission. To the wonderful people who staff my electorate office and keep the wheels turning and focused on people in the community, my office manager Eric, Uma, Eugenia, Kris and Kawdar: thank you.

I do want to give a shout-out to someone whom I have known for many years and have respected and admired. They are very shy, so I will simply refer to them by their initial, P. You know who you are. I am not going to tell you afterwards either.

To my second family, the Australian Labor Party and the Australian Services Union, who have always had my back and the backs of working people and community – I thank the unions that have embraced the need to act on climate change and the benefits and new job opportunities it can deliver to their members.

I thank the traditional owners for their friendship and partnerships in these areas. They have never given up hope and work hard every day for self-determination and just outcomes.

I thank the comrades in the environment movement and the social welfare organisations who know the value of working with a government that can get things done. You have helped make the difference.

To my family, Andrew, Eleanor, Madeleine and Joel: thank you for everything. I love you. You have given up so much for so long, and I will not ever forget it. I promise I will not try to wind back the clock in an effort to make up for lost time. None of us can ever really do that. We have each grown in our own ways, but we have done that together with each other's love and support. I look forward to what the future holds for us as a family.

I again thank the people of Mill Park and wish Elizabeth Nealy well in the upcoming election as Labor's candidate.

Finally, I hope that my life in public service shows all girls what is possible for them, no matter their faith, what they look like or the way they speak – and yes, I do have a Fawkner accent. Always back yourselves and each other. There is no place where you do not belong. Thank you.

Members applauded.

Motions

Liberal Party policy

Debate resumed.

Anthony CARBINES (Ivanhoe – Leader of the House, Minister for Artificial Intelligence and the Digital Economy, Minister for Major Events, Minister for Medical Research, Minister for Racing, Minister for Economic Development) (16:39): I move:

> That debate be now adjourned.

Motion agreed to and debate adjourned.

Ordered that debate be adjourned until later this day.

Members

Member for Bendigo West

Valedictory statement

The SPEAKER (16:39): Members, with your indulgence, I would like to address the house. A couple of weeks ago, when I announced my retirement, I had a very beautiful email from a constituent. You may recall that it was the Thursday night, and on the Tuesday of that week Dolly Parton had passed away. My constituent told me that when she told her husband that I was retiring, he burst into tears and said, 'Oh no, first Dolly, now Maree.' I have to say that was probably the most important moment of my life.

I was pretty excited to be elected in 2010 as the member for Bendigo West. By the way, I may have to interrupt myself at 5 pm for the guillotine, but do not be dismayed, we will continue. That first sitting week in February of 2011, I soon realised that there were only six of us who were excited: Anthony Carbines, Bronwyn Halfpenny, Natalie Hutchins, the late Jane Garrett, my good friend Sharon Knight, and I have forgotten someone – myself, of course. Everyone else had found themselves in opposition for the first time, and the mood around the old chook house was pretty sombre.

The former member for Wendouree Sharon Knight and I decided one of our tasks was to start cheering people up, and the first on our list was Joe Helper, the former member for Ripon. He was particularly miserable. Our campaign was called 'Get Joe Jumping', and we managed to get hot chips and dim sims on the menu and bought him a blow-up fish for his office so he would not be sad that he was not out fishing. Unfortunately, it did not really work, because he just remained so miserable for most of his last four years. But we had fun. Then we started the songs, all created in the Bordello, as the office we shared was known thanks to Marsha Thomson. We had a purple flashing light fridge, a CD player and a massage chair, so it was very much the party room. Our first tune was for Shaun Leane's 50th birthday, to the tune of – think about it – *Jolene*. Then there was *Working for the Dan*, with a cameo from Martin Foley dressed as Elvis, and our last was probably our best, and it was later on when we were leaving the chook house to make way for the annexe to be built. It was called *There Must Be 50 Ways to Leave the Chook House*. It was of course a huge hit. I made up my own song at a caucus conference once for Sharon Knight's 50th birthday, called *Oh, What a Night*. Carbs and Jane Garrett were the backing singers, and while the lyrics were great, the tune was very off. Needless to say, when we won government in 2014, things got a little more serious.

The first time I sat in this chair as Speaker and a few times thereafter I was very concerned and alarmed to see my smartwatch flashing out a warning that my heart rate was too high, and four or so years on it now tells me when it is time to stand or get up and move. I am not sure what to make of that.

Many people have been asking me why I have decided to retire from politics and from public life. My standard answer more recently has been because work is getting in the way of my bowls. However, that is only part of the reason. Since Steve died last year, there has been a long period of reflection. Grief must not define us, but it does walk beside you every single day. My health and my family must be a priority into the future. It is time to step back, time to make the most of what life has to offer, and both Lindsay, my late first husband, and Steve would be in total agreement. There are of course other reasons. Social media, for one, has changed the dynamic in politics more broadly and here in the house. Just one example is the propensity for members to speak directly to the cameras in the chamber, rather than through the Chair, and for the editing and misrepresentation of discourse in the chamber by some members on social media. This is a great blemish on the standing orders and one that will need to be rectified by the next presiding officers and the Standing Orders Committee.

On social media, I have a few things to say. This grouping of alternative universes driving algorithms and debate that churns out spiteful, hateful, derogatory and blatantly disrespectful and untrue dialogue and engagement with keyboard cowards is changing political discourse and is, in my view, a direct threat to our democracy and democratic institutions. Trial by social media is now a thing. When the

mainstream media are prepared through lazy journalism to publish social media posts from aggrieved members of the public that are defamatory and reproduce them word for word and suggest they are factual, then we clearly have a problem.

The world of social media has become so toxic and so full of misinformation and disinformation and AI-generated fakes that it is impacting on professional and personal reputations in a way we have never seen before. Still in its infancy, however, is a new force: those people who are deliberately and purposely detoxing and disengaging from social media, putting away their phones and devices and re-engaging with the real world. I hope it will become a growing movement, and it is a movement I will be very keen to join.

I have also noticed that since I announced my retirement people around this place have started being really nice to me. To those I have kicked out of the chamber over the years: sorry, not sorry. To those I have looked at too long and too hard: sorry, not sorry. It is a tough gig being Speaker. As I was told at the outset, if both sides of the chamber are grumpy with you, then you are doing your job, so I guess that must be the case. The standing orders of this house belong to you, the members. The Speaker's job is to enforce those standing orders. These rules cannot be deviated from. Changes to the standing orders can only be done with the consent and approval of the house. Many times I have been asked why particular rulings are made. *Rulings from the Chair* allows some latitude, but each Speaker casts a different view on presiding over the chamber. Each Speaker brings their own interpretations and purpose. I am a bit of a stickler for rules, so I have quite enjoyed my time in the chair.

As only the fourth woman Speaker in 170 years – and, I was told this morning, the longest serving woman Speaker – I do hope there will be more women in this role in the future. I am also the first woman elected twice to the role – I must be a masochist – and the first woman Speaker to survive a full term since Speaker Jenny Lindell. I have had the privilege to preside over five opposition leaders, three premiers, two Nationals leaders – I have lost count of how many deputy leaders – two leaders of the house, two managers of opposition business, two governors and countless ministerial and opposition reshuffles leading to seat arrangements that have all become a bit of a blur, so thank goodness for the cheat sheet.

It was also a very historic moment to be a Presiding Officer when Queen Elizabeth died. The death of a monarch for the first time in 71 years was sad, but it was also a bit of a dilemma which resulted in quite a bit of scrambling and reading and rereading of the constitution by the clerks and the legal team.

I have taken thousands of points of order, including around 1500 from the Manager of Opposition Business, which have for the most part not been points of order at all. I sincerely thank former Speaker Smith for his rulings on points of order, which have been most helpful, and I never thought I would say that. I confess to sometimes waking myself in the night shouting 'Order!', but I do hope this will soon be no longer a problem. And I am reliably informed – thank you, Tom – that I have removed members from the chamber 752 times, not counting today, member for Lowan. Tom assures me this is a record.

All that aside, though, it truly has been the greatest honour of my life to have been the Speaker in the 60th Parliament and at the end of the 59th Parliament. I have been fortunate to meet dignitaries from across the world and to engage with community groups, multicultural communities, multifaith communities, First Nations leaders and members from many community organisations and from many parliaments. I have been proud to deliver the first carers and parents room, Charlotte's Room, here in the Parliament. Thank you to Liam, Sigrid and Patrick for making this possible, and your mothers too of course. We have overseen the completion of the east wing; new committee rooms at 55 St Andrews Place; significant security upgrades, which were desperately needed; disability access upgrades, many of these thanks to Emma Vulin, the member for Pakenham; the opening up of our dining rooms and our Parliament to more people than ever; greater support for our electorate offices and officers; and the permanent lighting installation for the facade of this building.

The debates I have presided over have been both thrilling and boring; funny and bitter; bipartisan, not often, and partisan; sometimes angry and loud, not looking at anyone in particular; very sad; occasionally happy and cordial; and sometimes enlightening, although not often. For the most part, though, it has been what parliamentary debate should be: respectful, and without the name-calling, it is passionate and robust. I hope that as Speaker I have returned some dignity, grace and respect to the office, and I hope that I have served you well. I also hope that the inaugural Speaker's bowling competition, which was indeed an unqualified success and the unique start of a tradition, will continue under the next Speaker.

This old building is full of history, ghosts and the smell of stale cigar smoke, but it remains solid and steadfast in its purpose. Every sitting day you and I are watched over by the four angels on the ceiling and the 102 lines that surround us, and if you have not counted them yet, then you have been paying too much attention to the debate. This place has been a bastion of democracy for 170 years and the place of good counsel. We are all beholden to make sure it stays that way.

A former Premier said to me not that long ago that I have the best electorate in the state, and I truly do. Its landscapes, from the Moolort Plains to Leanganook or Mount Alexander; its built environment; its people; its communities – all are exceptional and magnificent. For the past 16 years I have had the great honour and privilege to serve the people of Bendigo West as their representative. This was never a role I took on lightly, and every day I have given my steadfast efforts and hard work to be the best representative I could be. It truly has been quite the journey. There are so many community groups, individuals, businesses large and small, sporting groups, clubs, volunteer organisations and peak bodies that have engaged with me over those 16 years, and I am so very grateful to have been able to support them, engage with them and deliver for them.

Everywhere across Bendigo West there is evidence of the investment that has been made, especially over the last 12 years, from the new schools at Castlemaine Secondary College and Kalianna special school – one of my favourite projects – to the investments in every single school; our new hospital and rehabilitation centre; our new courthouse; the GovHub; the new TAFE centres of excellence; the Bendigo Art Gallery redevelopment and expansion; road safety improvements and rail upgrades; new CFA stations in Kangaroo Flat, Golden Square and Walmer; the Castlemaine Goods Shed redevelopment; the Castlemaine art gallery and museum upgrade; sporting facilities; men's sheds; investments in our tourism and in our creative industries; and so much more.

Together we have also dealt with the ravages of bushfires – in Harcourt and Walmer just this year; floods across Castlemaine, Newstead, Newbridge, Baringhup and Campbells Creek; and natural storm disasters that have increased with intensity and frequency with climate change. Throughout it all these communities have stood strong and united, and it has been my great privilege to stand beside them during these times of crisis to witness their resilience, their strength and their support for one another. They are truly inspirational.

Many people have asked about what my legacy would be, and while it is easy to point to the built environment and the investments made, which is a very long list, I believe and I hope my legacy will be that I was kind and compassionate, and that I listened and advocated with fervency for every single person or community that engaged with me. Thank you, Bendigo West, for your unwavering support. It has been an absolute privilege, and I hope to stay involved in some way into the future as just another local.

My family means everything to me. They have sacrificed a lot in order for me to do my job. Many times I have had to say no to looking after the grandchildren or missed important occasions. To my four children Keeley, Therese, Rachael and Wes, along with their partners Eliza, Ryan, Brad and Jemma, together with my 12 beautiful, smart, funny and delightful grandchildren Ted, Bill, Elspeth, Jim and Henrietta, Ollie, Piper and Reuben, Ava, Lucy and Myra and Charlie and the next baby who will be born any day now – number 13 – you are all my greatest love, my world, and I am looking forward to seeing you all more often. To Hayden and Angus, it has been so tough for you losing your

dad. I know that you are still grieving, but I also know you are building your new lives, and I send my love. There are defining moments in our lives. My children understand death and grief way more than they should, and I am so proud of the way they have been resilient, brave and strong. They have gone on to become the most wonderful adults and parents, and I am truly blessed.

To my colleagues and the friends I have made in this place, someone told me once, 'You don't make friends in this place, you only make colleagues.' But I have friends. Thank you for everything – for your support after Steve died, for your generosity and for all the chats along the way about everything from clothes brands and shoes to mental health support and physical ailments, as we are all getting older, with a special shout-out, no reference intended, to the member for Geelong, my sounding board, buddy and confidante. I will miss our morning coffees and catch-ups, but I will not miss hearing you tell me how much investment Geelong has had or is getting. To Sharon Knight, the former member for Wendouree, thank you for the texts from your journeys across Australia. They have kept me entertained. I acknowledge in fond memory my friend the late Jane Garrett. It has been quite the journey, and I promise the stories I have heard will mostly stay secret.

To my staff in the electorate office: Martyn Stradbrook has been my work husband, my friend, also my confidant and sometimes my handyman for 16 years. His knowledge and experience in the EO and through four campaigns has guided us through some very challenging times and some very successful times. I hope, Marty, that retirement is as good for you as it was the first time before you came back. Your support and friendship, comrade, has meant so much to me. To you and Rose, I trust this second retirement will be the one that you enjoy the most. To Pam Fitton, Lela Bell, Lynda Newton, Sam Kane, Mandy Olszewski and Kaye Petersen, thank you for everything. You have been at the coalface in the electorate through the global pandemic, fires, floods and personal trauma but also through the many good times. I could not be more grateful for your unwavering friendship, dedication and support. Thank you for being there for the people of Bendigo West, especially when they needed us the most.

Thank you to my Labor Party family in Bendigo and Castlemaine, including my friend and colleague the member for Bendigo East and former Premier Jacinta Allan. We have achieved a lot together across Bendigo and the region, delivered record investment and won four elections together. This is something we can be very proud of. With our excellent candidate for Bendigo West, Brenton Baldwin, and our excellent candidate for Bendigo East, Tim Rickwood, we will now go on together to win a fifth. Thank you to the Bendigo Trades Hall and my union friends. You have always been there supporting me, and I am truly thankful. To EMILY's List, I have been a proud member for many years. The motto 'When women support women, women win' has never been truer than it is in this political environment. Thank you for your support.

To my dear friends Helena, Daisy, Pam and Zana and my cousins Marg and Glenda. Marg, you have always been at my side. From the day I was asked to run for office your unwavering support to me and to the Labor Party and the labour movement has been unmatched. You are all so special to me. Thank you for being there for me when I needed you most and for being here today.

To my friends at the Maldon Bowling Club, I know that tomorrow you will probably endorse me as your next president, something I will be proud to take on. I am fortunate to call you all my friends. The club has saved me many times from falling in a heap, even if you did not realise it. I look forward to the pennant season starting next week and improving my bowling skills. To those who might be in a position to assist in the future, we desperately need a new green. The commitment is a small $250,000 that will benefit not just the club and the players from across the region but the whole community. I am open to discussions.

In this liminal space of my life I say thank you, all. It has been my honour to serve.

I need to interrupt business now, at 5 pm, so if you just bear with me, I do have more to say. I may continue my speech when the matter is next before the house.

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

Anthony CARBINES: I move:

That the sitting be continued.

Motion agreed to.

The SPEAKER: As Speaker, members, I add that, as we reach the end of the 60th Parliament, I would like to sincerely thank all of you for your contributions and efforts over the last four years. I would especially like to acknowledge two groups of members. Firstly, those 13 members elected to the 60th Parliament for the first time. Thank you for your willingness to put yourself forward as a voice for your local community. Standing for election to any Parliament is a daunting proposition. Your willingness to make such a sacrifice has been appreciated by us all, and we have been thrilled to count you among us. Secondly, to the 19 members choosing not to recontest at the 2026 election, I want to pay tribute to you for your immense work to make Victoria a better, more prosperous place for anyone that chooses to call it home. Our four longest serving members are all retiring at this election, representing a combined period of service of 109 years. It is an immense contribution and represents a significant passing of the torch. Your institutional knowledge will be greatly missed. To all of you moving on to the next phase of your lives and on behalf of this house, I say thank you.

I want to acknowledge all of our Legislative Assembly staff from the clerk's office under the incredible and steadfast leadership of Bridget Noonan to the table office, the tours and customer service unit, the education team and everyone that works to support the 88 people represented here in the chamber. Thank you for everything you do to make our lives easier, more informed and better prepared. As an institution, we simply could not function without you. Bridget, Vaughn, Paul, Joel and the team, thank you for everything. Speakers cannot do their job without you and your sage and discerning advice. Members probably know by now who truly wields the power in this place.

I give a particular shout-out to the staff that assist us in the chamber, be it at the table, the doors, in the Hansard boxes and the galleries. Our most sincere gratitude to you all. To the electorate, ministerial and personal staff of the members of the 60th Parliament, your efforts, commitment and dedication could not be thought of more highly. Members are only as effective as the teams that stand with them, and as a former electorate officer myself, I know that working in Parliament is not just a job, it is a vocation. You are often the eyes and ears for us on the ground when we are here at Spring Street. Thank you for strengthening our work and our communities every day.

To the Department of Parliamentary Services under the steadfast leadership of Secretary Trish Burrows, I would like to acknowledge just a few of the things that you do for us every day. The caterers keep us fed and caffeinated. They take care of our guests, ensure that we do not go hungry and always meet us with a smile. A special shout-out to Jacquie, Laurent and Jean Louis – merci beaucoup. And Peter, your smile each morning is worth a million hugs. The IT team are always there to answer our sometimes infuriating questions. They keep our tech running and, in turn, our carefully curated online lives. The security team works every moment of the day to keep us safe and secure, ensuring that we can share our work with the public and bring them into the heart of Victorian democracy. And the property team give us a well-oiled home in our communities and always patiently work with us to guarantee that we get the space we need where we live. I know that a few members have faced catastrophes over these past four years in their electorate offices and the property team have gone above and beyond to rehouse them. Many thanks to you all.

To John and the buildings and grounds team, who really take care of every aspect of the wellbeing of this beautiful historic building, thank you for your custodianship of this place. To the cleaners, who are always there and keep this place immaculate, often forgotten about, you ensure every day that this

Parliament puts its best foot forward – here before the sun comes up and working until we all go home. Thank you for showing the best side of this place to the world.

To the Hansard team under the guidance of James Scott, the records that you keep are not just for us. They are not only 10-second social media clips and slabs of text, they are the record that will stand the test of time. You are part of an ancient legacy in all legislatures that provides transparency and accountability. Your role is vital and your work is so appreciated, not only by us, but by the wider community at home and abroad. We know it is the final sitting day as, in keeping with tradition, our Hansard team are looking resplendent in their bow ties.

To the parliamentary library team led by Carolyn Macvean, we are privileged in this place to enjoy an area so richly populated with knowledge curated over 175 years. But in a place so bursting with information, those staff have created a remarkably calm and quiet space that allows all of us to have the chance to take a moment to unwind. Without our magnificent library, this Parliament would not be whole. At a time when libraries face a growing list of challenges, ours feels renewed, strengthened and ready for what lies ahead.

To the Deputy Speaker: Matt, thank you for stepping up when it was needed and for your gracious support to me and the office of Speaker. And thank you to our panel of Acting Speakers; I am grateful for your support.

Finally, to Tom Bennett in the Speaker's office. Thank you, Tom, for your dedication to the role you have, for traversing all sides of politics with good grace and a professional demeanour. You have been a great support to me over the past few years and I know to many other members, and I sincerely thank you on behalf of all the members for making sure the office of the Speaker has been held in high regard and esteem. I am sure it is the best birthday present ever to be here on the last day of sitting of the 60th Parliament. Happy birthday, Tom.

Members, over the course of this coming election campaign, I ask you all to be kind to one another and look after yourselves. Elections are periods of vigorous debate and thorough scrutiny, but they need not be unnecessarily cruel. They are the start of an exciting journey for some and an end for others. In the pool of emotion that surrounds this time, I ask that you all recognise that each of you are experiencing the same feelings, the same long days and the same challenging moments. Please take care in the coming months, check in with each other regularly, take time for your friends and family and always remember that kindness and compassion are the very best of leadership qualities. My best wishes to you all for whatever the next chapter might bring. Thank you.

Members applauded.

Motions

Liberal Party policy

Debate resumed on motion of Sonya Kilkenny:

> That this house notes that the Liberals have committed to cutting $40 billion from the budget, requiring at least 30,000 public sector jobs to be cut, devastating the frontline services Victorians rely on, meaning:
>
> (a) longer hospital wait times;
>
> (b) fewer nurses and hospital beds;
>
> (c) less police; and
>
> (d) cuts to local infrastructure.

Juliana ADDISON (Wendouree) (17:13): I want to thank the Attorney-General for bringing this motion to the house on what is a very, very significant issue that needs to be debated here so we can really look at what cuts of more than 30,000 public servant positions across our state mean for Victoria. I am proud to contribute on this motion because I want to put on the record my grave concerns about

these cuts and what they could mean, particularly for regional Victoria and my hometown, the city I live in, Ballarat. The member for Kew believes that:

> Rightsizing back-office public service roles is a difficult, but necessary measure … to … repair Victoria's finances …

and protect essential services. My question to the member for Kew is: what is an essential service in my community? Is it the family violence support at the Orange Door? Is it our 20-minute peak train services from Ballarat to Melbourne? Is it our creative industries, local schools, the Ballarat Base Hospital, sports and rec? Is it police and PSOs? I agree with the Attorney-General and the comments she made in her contribution that you cannot cut your way to community safety – and when you are cutting more than 31,000 jobs, you will be impacting on community safety. Is it essential to have bus routes in Ballarat that allow people to move around my community, or our innovative Drug Court? And what about our TAFE, that is transforming lives? Should we have less essential services when it comes to consumer affairs and the amazing consumer affairs workforce based at our GovHub? What about Aboriginal health, or the State Revenue Office that plays such an important role supporting the finances of our state? Or should we just cut housing services and support for renters because they are not essential? What about child protection, is that essential? What about our support for ag – with the bird flu at the moment, should we have less ag workers? Should we have no Regional Development Victoria? What about justice, shall we cut our justice department? Or what about our CFAs?

I know that ripping the guts out of our public service has serious and long-term impacts for communities like mine. Many people know, and as a former history teacher before I came to this place, that history does matter. The member for Essendon reminded us about Augustus in ancient Rome earlier – and gee, I will miss those contributions from the member for Essendon – but I am not going back that far. I am going back to 1992 to do a bit of a compare and contrast, because the Kennett government cuts to Ballarat and the Grampians region had the most drastic and deep impacts on my community. The Kennett Liberal–National government cuts reshaped regional Victoria, reducing services and cutting jobs and investment across my community in Ballarat as well as across the Grampians region, with many impacts still felt today. Their slash and burn had little respect for regional communities, and it may be a long time ago but I remember it well. It was the first election I voted in – I voted at Alfredton Primary School, and I start every election day at Alfredton Primary School, around the corner from where I grew up. It was also the same election that Kim Wells got elected, so I really want to give a shout-out to Kim, who is finishing up today after a very long time. But I want to say, little did I know on that day in 1992 when I was 18 years old, doing year 12, voting in my first election, that my community would go on to be referred to by Premier Kennett as the toenails of Victoria. What a disgraceful thing to say about Ballarat and my community. I did not see the Nationals standing up for the regions, and I cannot see it happening again.

So what did it mean when we had a slash-and-burn approach to regional Victoria, when we cut jobs? It meant reduced local services and government presence. It meant loss of public sector jobs. It meant reduced access to training and education opportunities, long-term impacts on regional transport connectivity and the privatisation of essential public assets and services. Thousands of public sector positions were removed during the Kennett era from across Victoria through government downsizing and agency restructuring. The Victorian public sector lost approximately 75,000 jobs during the Kennett era. Regional centres such as Ballarat, which relied heavily on government employment, were affected by reductions in public service jobs and government offices.

The Liberals cut; it is in their DNA. We, however, invest in communities and in regional Victoria. And what have we done, what is our record, since I was elected to this place as the member for Wendouree? We have established the Ballarat GovHub, a Victorian government office hub based in the heart of Ballarat, in our CBD. It opened in April 2021 as a part of the Victorian Labor government's strategy to create more public sector jobs in regional Victoria and strengthens Ballarat's CBD. We invested $47.8 million to build our magnificent GovHub. It was opened by the former Minister for Regional Development, the member for Macedon, in April 2021, and it has the capacity to employ up

to 1000 Victorian government employees. All of those 1000 jobs are now at risk if we see the election of a Liberal–One Nation government. We have relocated approximately 600 public sector jobs from metropolitan Melbourne to Ballarat. Speaking to the workers who have relocated – they have moved; they have picked up their lives in Melbourne to follow the job, to come to Ballarat – I want to say thank you for being a part of our community, and I hope you get to stay a part of our community and that your jobs are not cut and your families do not have to relocate again. But very sadly, that is what is at risk, with 31,700 public service jobs on the cutting block. The construction of our GovHub created 500 jobs. By talking to Kane Nicholson, who did that job, we knew that nearly everybody who worked on that project lived within 80 kilometres of Ballarat. We sourced local materials, and it was a huge boost to the local economy – up to $100 million.

But it is not only our jobs at GovHub that are at risk. It is our health services – our amazing $655 million redeveloped, expanded base hospital, making it the largest health infrastructure spend in the history of Ballarat; our new ED, our new perinatal hub, our expanded ICU, our state-of-the-art theatres, our new helipad and 100 additional beds. This is going to make a huge difference to our growing community. We will have 18,000 additional emergency presentations annually, 14,500 additional inpatient episodes and 4000 more surgeries a year. This is going to make a huge change for my community. It will cut waiting lists, and it will mean people will get more and better care close to home. I could not be happier. We have also supported 14 construction jobs.

But what did the Kennett government do? The Kennett government substantially reduced public sector spending, including to hospitals across regional Victoria. Many regional communities experienced service reductions, hospital restructuring and fewer locally available services as a part of the broader health reforms. I call it not a reform but an absolute devastation of regional health services. These changes reduced healthcare access in regional areas and also increased pressures on Ballarat. What would the Ballarat Base Hospital look like under a Wilson–Pickering One Nation coalition? Cuts, closures and job losses. I think I have seen this film before, and I did not like the ending. I had to get Taylor Swift in before the end of this Parliament.

In education under the Kennett government – and I am going to run out of time – 350 schools were closed and 7000 teaching jobs cut. That is what happens. We have rebuilt Mount Rowan Secondary College, we have rebuilt Woodmans Hill and we have turned North Tech into the most beautiful senior campus for our specialist schools. We invest in education; we do not close schools like they did over there.

A shout-out to Mr McGowan, who said he loved growing up in Ballarat opposite Queen Street primary school and how disappointed he was that Queen Street primary school was closed down. Well, guess what, Jeff Kennett closed down Queen Street primary school on 31 December 1993, and it had been open since 1 January 1878. Do not come to my community and say how bad it is that schools get closed under your government.

Paul MERCURIO (Hastings) (17:24): I am happy to rise to speak on this motion. I stand here and I feel like I have to admit that I am not a very good politician. In fact I have not really studied politics. I have not really followed it, whereas many people have. Sometimes I am not really sure about politics at all. When people say to me, 'Why did you want to be a politician?', I say, 'Well, I don't. I just want to be a bloke that helps people.' The very first thing I did when I was preselected was to have a meeting at a skate park to promote the funding. A member for Eastern Metropolitan, the Honourable Shaun Leane, who gave a great speech last night, was in attendance. I said to him that I was feeling a bit out of place and I really was not sure about politics and things, and he said, 'Don't worry about it, Paul. Just tell people Labor build stuff.' I would like to leave that there, because I am hoping, if I remember, that I will come back to the fact that Labor builds stuff.

In my inaugural speech I made the statement that I stand here because hope lives rent-free in my heart. I am reflecting on the $40 billion of cuts, which is almost half the budget, and I think hope will not live rent-free in my heart if $40 billion of cuts come about. I will have to actually start charging. In

fact if we end up with a Liberal–One Nation coalition, I think hope will probably flee in panic and despair at the possibility of that. Anyone thinking that that is a great idea, I do not understand why you do not reflect quite deeply and with great consideration about what is going on with the market movements and the state. If you think that a Liberal–One Nation coalition is going to be positive or beneficial in any way to Victoria, I would ask you to really think about it more deeply.

There have been a lot of great debates and a lot of amazing things said in this chamber about what the 30,000 worker cuts could do. The member for Preston actually spoke at length about what cuts would do to ongoing medical research. That is absolutely vitally important. But I want to take it a little step further. It does have something to do with something I have been working on for the last few years. I want to tell a story about little Zara, who has cerebral palsy. A couple of years ago her mother came to our office. When Michelle was pregnant with Zara she made sure that she had her umbilical cord blood stem cells saved, because she felt there was a risk of her having diabetes. It actually turned out that Zara was born with cerebral palsy. There is a process where you can take the blood stem cells and do all sorts of amazing things to them and then inject them back into the child. When it is the child's own blood, it is called an autologous blood transfusion.

People can go to America to get this done and spend thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars. But Michelle wanted to get that treatment here, and we worked very hard with Monash Health and with other organisations. The then Minister for Health, the member for Macedon, worked really well with us, and we were able to get Zara to have this treatment as a special one-off, experimental treatment. Quite simply, it worked. Over the year after, she has had a 35 per cent increase in her ability to do things. I know it seems a little bit crass, but her mum said to me one day, 'She can wipe her bum.' She can put her school bag on. She can get dressed and get ready for school. These are things that she could not do prior to this treatment.

It is brilliant that that has happened. But I have been trying to get $1.5 million to set up a platform so that the other five kids in Australia that have their autologous blood stem cells saved can undergo this treatment. If we have cuts, it is not just cuts to experimental treatments and things that are ongoing at the moment. There is a whole range of things that we need to make happen so that we can help people with their lives, so we can give them the opportunity for a better quality of life. We need that to happen, but it will not happen if we have cuts. I just want people to think about that for a moment, because it is shocking to think, okay, 30,000 public servants are going to go. We have five kids at the moment whose lives we can make better. It is just a perspective I wanted to give people today in the chamber.

It will come as no surprise if I talk about Ehlers-Danlos syndrome and connective tissue disorders – that is the same. I have been working tirelessly, I would say this whole term, to bring attention to the plight of what we believe is at least over 14,000 people in our communities in Victoria that suffer terribly from this disease, and we do not understand enough about it. There is no research being done on it. There are no papers being written. I am working to change that. But again, that relies on funding. If, God help us, the Liberal–One Nation coalition get in and they produce these cuts, those 14,500 people that are suffering in silence right now will continue to suffer in silence. As I said, hope lives rent-free in my heart. Well, it flees at the thought of that. So there is a lot more to it than just what happens in our communities. There is a lot of forward thinking, and I wanted to make that point.

When I think of $40 billion in cuts or 30,000 people losing their jobs, I think it is hard for people to understand what that means, because it might mean they know a few people at some place that lose their job. Today I was reflecting on the idea that I have 45,000 people in my community. Imagine if 30,000 of them lost their job. I would like people to think of it in that way, because if there were 30,000 people that lost their job in my electorate, everyone would feel the consequences of that. There would be 30,000 people that would not be working in the electorate; they would not have an income or they might be on JobSeeker, which is $400 a week, which is absolutely disgusting. They would not be spending money, and therefore the other 15,000 people that live in the community who might have shops, businesses or whatever would not have any customers. They would be going broke. The amount of mental stress and anxiety that would be going on would be enormous in the community.

If people could really understand and look at it in that way, they could understand the consequences. We might be talking about 30,000 or 32,000 people around Victoria, but the consequences are the same. There are people that will lose their jobs. There are people that will stop spending in the community. There are people that will go broke because they are not being supported in the community. There will be people with health issues. I spoke about free dental yesterday. That will not happen, and people that desperately need checks of their teeth and oral care will continue to go to hospital and be sick. We will not have things like breakfast clubs and we will not have vouchers for sports and things like that with $40 billion in cuts, which is almost half the budget. I would ask people to seriously consider what it means and not push it off and go 'Well, it's not going to happen to me' or 'I don't know anyone that is going to be affected', because we all will be. It will be, in a lot of ways, a tsunami in Victoria for the workers.

I want to go back quickly in the last minute that I have and talk about the member in the other place who talked about building stuff. We build a lot of stuff. We on this side are people who build a lot of stuff. On that side, they will not; they will cut. They will destroy. I commend the motion to the house.

Belinda WILSON (Narre Warren North) (17:33): I move:

> That debate be now adjourned.

Motion agreed to and debate adjourned.

Ordered that debate be adjourned until later this day.

Business of the house

Adjournment

Anthony CARBINES (Ivanhoe – Leader of the House, Minister for Artificial Intelligence and the Digital Economy, Minister for Major Events, Minister for Medical Research, Minister for Racing, Minister for Economic Development) (17:34): I move:

> That the house, at its rising, adjourns until a day and hour to be fixed by the Speaker, who will notify members accordingly.

Motion agreed to.

Bills

Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Amendment Bill 2026

Council's amendments

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (17:34): I have received a message from the Legislative Council agreeing to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Amendment Bill 2026 with amendments.

Ordered that amendments be taken into consideration later this day.

Business of the house

Notices of motion

Anthony CARBINES (Ivanhoe – Leader of the House, Minister for Artificial Intelligence and the Digital Economy, Minister for Major Events, Minister for Medical Research, Minister for Racing, Minister for Economic Development) (17:35): I move:

> That the consideration of government business, notice of motion 2, be postponed until later this day.

Motion agreed to.

Motions

Respectful Relationships

Melissa HORNE (Williamstown – Minister for Ports and Freight, Minister for Jobs, Minister for Industry and Advanced Manufacturing, Minister for Defence Industry) (17:36): I move:

> That this house:
>
> (a) condemns the Leader of the Opposition for her silence as federal coalition figures, echoing Senator Hanson, attacked the evidence-based Respectful Relationships program as 'anti-boy ideology';
>
> (b) affirms that teaching children respect prevents family violence; and
>
> (c) calls on the Leader of the Opposition to state publicly where she stands.

I move this motion today because there are some things in this place that should sit above the ordinary business of politics, and one is the safety of women and girls. The protection of our children is another. Every so often a moment arrives that tests whether members of this house are willing to stand up for both or whether they will look away because it is easier. A fortnight ago such a moment arrived, and the Leader of the Opposition looked away.

Let me begin, though, not in this chamber but on a footy field in my electorate. A couple of weekends ago I watched two teams of young girls, the under-14 girls from Altona and the under-16s from Williamstown, win their grand finals – girls who a generation ago would have had nowhere to play at all. They are now competing, now belonging and now being told in the clearest possible terms that they matter. It was a celebration of everything community sport can be at its best: a place where young women are respected, where they are safe and where they thrive.

But I want to be honest about the other side of community sport too, because it was in the news just this month. Our community sporting fields are seeing a surge in abusive behaviour from the sidelines: parents and coaches screaming abuse at children, at officials and at each other. It has become so serious that clubs around the country are now looking for ways to name it, to shame it and to stamp it out. When we ask where that behaviour comes from, we are asking exactly the question at the heart of this motion, because the person abusing a child from a sideline was once a child themselves, and somewhere at that point, no-one taught them better or someone taught them worse. That is what this debate is really about: whether we teach our children respect or whether we leave it to chance, to the sideline or to the screen.

Let me set out plainly what this motion is about, because I want no-one in this chamber and no-one following this debate to be in any doubt. A fortnight ago senior federal coalition figures launched a sustained public attack on a program taught in Victoria's schools. It was not a fringe program and not an experiment but a program that has been part of Victorian education for years, taught from the very first years of school right through to year 12. It is a program built on evidence and a program with one purpose at its heart, which is to teach our children respect. The Respectful Relationships program teaches children how to treat one another well. It teaches them about equality. It teaches them about consent. It teaches them to recognise disrespect and to understand that violence is never acceptable. It exists because we made a decision in this state – a hard-won decision paid for in the lives of too many women – that we would try to stop violence before it begins rather than simply clean it up afterwards.

The federal Nationals leader Senator Matt Canavan stood up and called that program 'anti-boy ideology'. He said it had 'no place in our schools', and the Leader of the Opposition here in Victoria, the member for Kew, said nothing. The federal opposition leader Angus Taylor spent an entire day refusing to say clearly whether he even believed consent should be taught in schools. He talked about teachers running 'agendas'. He called for so-called balance in the curriculum, as though teaching a child that they should never hit, should not coerce, should not abuse are positions that require a counterweight, and the Leader of the Opposition here in Victoria said nothing. Behind both of them stands Senator Pauline Hanson, who has promised to drive so-called woke ideology out of Australia's schools. That is the movement; that is the direction. That is the company the Leader of the Opposition's

federal colleagues are now keeping, and still the member for Kew has said nothing. That silence is what this motion condemns – not a difference of policy, not a robust disagreement about curriculum, which is the ordinary stuff of democratic debate and entirely legitimate. This motion condemns a failure of leadership, because when the people in your own political movement attack the very programs that keep women and girls safe, staying silent is not neutral. Staying silent is an absolute choice.

Parents are entitled to know what their children are taught. Curriculum content is a legitimate subject for public debate. Schools should teach kids how to think, not tell them what to think. But that is not what has happened. That is not the debate the Leader of the Opposition's colleagues chose to have. Calling a violence prevention program 'anti-boy ideology' that has no place in our schools is not a contribution to a balanced curriculum, it is an attempt to abolish a program altogether. Refusing three times to say whether consent should be taught is not a defence of parental rights, it is a signal. There is a line now between debating how we teach respect and denying that we should teach it at all, and the federal coalition walked straight across it. The question for this house is whether the Victorian opposition will walk back.

Let me talk about what the actual program is. The Respectful Relationships program was one of the direct outcomes of the Royal Commission into Family Violence. It was grounded in evidence about how violence begins, how attitudes form and how early we need to intervene if we want to change the trajectory of a child's life. It teaches age-appropriate lessons. For the youngest kids it means learning about emotions, about friendship and about treating others kindly. As children grow it means learning about respect in relationships, about equality between girls and boys and about consent and where to turn if something goes wrong. This is not radical; this is not extreme. Ask any parent in my electorate whether they want their kids to be taught to treat others with respect, and you will get the same answer every single time: 'Yes, of course. That is what decent people want for their kids.' So when Senator Canavan calls that an anti-boy ideology, he is attacking the idea that boys should be taught to respect girls. He is attacking the idea that our sons should grow up understanding consent. He is attacking a program whose entire reason for existing is to prevent the violence that kills a woman in this country, on average, every single week. The federal education minister put it better than I could. He said, 'Teaching boys to respect girls isn't woke. It's just common decency.' And he is right.

So let me talk about the world that our boys are actually growing up in. They are growing up online, in spaces engineered to hold their attention at any cost. In those spaces boys as young as primary school age are being served a steady diet of misogyny – content that tells them that women are lesser, content that tells them that dominance is strength, content amplified by algorithms that have learned that outrage and grievance keep young men scrolling. That is not a moral panic.

Teachers are telling us this. Teachers are reporting that children as young as six are repeating misogynistic language they have absorbed online. Teachers, and particularly women teachers, are reporting rising aggression and sexism in their classrooms, directed at them and at female students. Some teachers are even leaving the profession over it. That is the tide our boys are swimming against. Here is what those who cry anti-boy refuse to understand. Abandoning a boy to that tide is not respecting him, it is failing him. The manosphere does not love our sons, it preys on them. It finds them when they are lonely or uncertain or struggling and it offers them contempt dressed up as confidence. It tells a boy that his worth depends on the women he can dominate. That is an ideology with no place in our schools.

When I hear of a program that teaches boys with the message that it is anti-boy, I say the opposite is true. The people leaving our boys to the algorithms are the ones failing them. This program is one of the few things standing between a lonely boy and a machine that wants to radicalise him. To attack it is not to defend boys; it is to surrender them. It is not only the screen that shapes them. It is us. It is every adult in a child's life who models what respect looks like or fails to. It is a coach who teaches a team to win with grace and to lose with dignity. It is the parent on the sideline who claps for both sides or the one who screams abuse at a child in a striped shirt. Children learn respect or its absence from the grown-ups around them. That is why community sport matters so much in this conversation and

why the surge in sideline abuse should worry all of us. Our clubs, our coaches and our volunteers are among the most powerful of teachers of respect that we have. They show boys week in and week out what it means to be a good man. Respectful Relationships education is exactly the same lesson taught in the classroom. The two belong hand in hand. You cannot cheer for one while tearing down the other.

I want to dwell on what this means for our girls, because it is really easy to forget how recent their place in these sporting clubs has been. Not long ago a girl who wanted to play footy had nowhere to go once she reached her teens. There was no team for her. There was no jumper with her name on it. The message, spoken or not, was that this was not her game. It changed, and it has changed because community clubs decided to make room. Those two grand finals that I watched a couple of weekends ago did not happen by chance. They happened because volunteers, coaches and parents built something that told a generation of girls, 'You belong here. You're an athlete. You're welcome and you're safe.' It is a fragile thing, and it has to be protected because a girl learns just as much from the sidelines as a boy does. When she hears a grown man screaming abuse at a kid, when she sees disrespect treated as part of the game, she learns something about how much her place is really worth. When she is respected, when the adults around her model dignity and fairness, she learns the opposite. She learns that she belongs fully, and that lesson does not stay on the field. It follows her into the classroom, into the workplace and into every single room that she will walk into. Protecting these spaces and keeping them respectful and keeping them safe is not separate from the fight we have today. It is the same fight. It is the same question of whether we will build a culture where women and girls are respected or whether we will look the other way while that culture is torn down on the sidelines in the social media feed or in the Parliament.

I do not come to this debate as a bystander. I come to it having served in this state as the Minister for Prevention of Family Violence. I have sat with survivors. I have seen what violence does, not as a statistic but in the faces of the people that it leaves behind, and I have seen what works. Let me tell this house what Victoria has done. This is what taking this crisis seriously actually looks like: it looks like money, and it looks like systems and laws and years of sustained work. It does not look like a press conference attacking a school program to score a point in a culture war. It was Labor that called the nation's first Royal Commission into Family Violence – not a review, not an inquiry, but a royal commission with all the weight and seriousness that carries, because we believed that this crisis demanded nothing less. When the commission handed down its 227 recommendations, Labor delivered every single one of them – all 227. Since then the government has invested more than $4 billion to build a family violence system that is now regarded as the national benchmark. Other states look to Victoria to see how it should be done.

Let me tell you what $4 billion builds. It built the Orange Door network. For the first time Victorians in every part of this state have a single front door to safety – one place to go, one point of contact. No more being bounced between services at the worst moment of your life. This is what we built. It built new refuges – safer, more accessible crisis accommodation for women and children fleeing violence, designed around dignity rather than making do. It built the multi-agency risk assessment and management framework, and through it we have trained more than 400,000 workers across this state to identify signs of family violence risk early. Four hundred thousand people in health, in education, in community services and in police are now equipped to see what too often went unseen. It built the family violence information-sharing scheme, backed by a central information point that is the only one of its kind in Australia. It means our services can see risks sooner and keep perpetrators in view rather than losing them between the gaps. It built Respect Victoria, a dedicated agency whose entire purpose is prevention, to stop this violence before it begins rather than only responding once harm is done. We invested in programs that hold men who use violence to account, because prevention is not about supporting victims, it is about changing the behaviour of those who cause harm.

We committed to at least 10 per cent of all new family violence funding going to Aboriginal-controlled organisations, because Aboriginal women experience this violence at rates that should shame this nation, and because solutions must be led by the community. We have strengthened the law as well.

Alongside a suite of women's safety reforms, this government is delivering landmark legislation to make coercive control of an intimate partner a standalone criminal offence. We understand – because the evidence and the experience of survivors tells us – that controlling, isolating and terrorising behaviour that strips a woman of her freedom is so often a warning sign that comes before physical violence and before the worst outcome of them all.

That is the record, and here is the thread that ties it all together, the thread those opposite would prefer we did not follow, because every part of the system – the refuges, the training, the information sharing, the laws – is about responding to violence that has already taken root. Respectful Relationships education is different. It is the part that reaches back to the very beginning. It is the part that tries to make sure that the boy in the classroom today never becomes the man that the police report tomorrow. You cannot claim to care about ending family violence and attack one program designed to prevent it at the source. You cannot support the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff and campaign against the fence at the top. You cannot, as a leader, watch your own colleagues take an axe to that fence and say nothing at all.

Which brings me to the Leader of the Opposition in Victoria. The member for Kew has been silent, and that is the failure, because leadership is not only about the positions you take, it is about when you are willing to stand up when standing up is inconvenient because people attacking women's safety are not your opponents but your own side. When Senator Canavan called Respectful Relationships education an 'anti-boy ideology' the Leader of the Opposition in this state had a choice. She could have stood up and said, 'Not here. Not in Victoria. Not about a program that keeps our daughters and our sons safe.' She could have drawn a line. She could have shown the women of this state that when it counts she will defend them, even against her own colleagues. But she said nothing. And silence in a leader is never just silence; it is a message. It tells every young woman watching that her safety is negotiable. It tells every survivor that the program built from their pain can be trashed without consequence. It tells the federal figures leading these attacks they will face no resistance here. And it tells the growing number of Victorians drawn to the politics of Pauline Hanson that the Victorian Liberal Party will not stand in their way.

We are told that One Nation is rising, and in this environment the temptation for a Liberal leader is obvious: say nothing, offend no-one, let the culture warriors run and hope to catch the drift of their support, do not condemn Senator Canavan because his supporters might be your voters, and do not defend the program because defending it might cost you. That is the calculation that is behind this silence, and it is a calculation that puts political advantage ahead of the safety of women and girls. This is not an abstract concern. Let us be honest about the arithmetic of this next Parliament. On the polling that we are seeing, the path for government for those opposite runs through One Nation. If the Liberals are to govern this state, they in all likelihood need One Nation to do it. So the question of who leads One Nation in Victoria, and what that person stands for is not a curiosity. It is a question about who the Leader of the Opposition is prepared to work with, who to depend on and who to trust with the safety of Victorian women.

So let us have a look. The leader of One Nation in this state promotes the very online accounts that form the shallow end of the manosphere, accounts that trade in a particular brand of masculinity content: resilience, discipline, self-mastery – posts engineered to sound harmless. One reads:

> There is a calm some men have that didn't come from peace. It came from being tested so often they stopped flinching at every storm.

On its own that is just a poster on a gym wall. But that is precisely the point. These accounts are anodyne by design. The soft language is the doorway – it is the entry level – and the same accounts and the algorithms that push them escalate. They move from resilience to resentment, from discipline to grievance, from self-improvement to anti-women content that teachers are now reporting in the mouths of children as young as six years of age. That is the pipeline that this program exists to counter. And the man who leads One Nation in Victoria, the man the Liberals may well see as holding the keys

to government, is standing at the entrance to that pipeline, holding the door open. So I ask the Leader of the Opposition directly: is this the man that you will work with? Is this the man you will trust? Is this the partnership you will enter into to win power while the program that protects our children from exactly this content is attacked by your own colleagues and defended by your silence?

The women of Victoria are entitled to know where she stands – not in vague generalities, not in a statement about wanting 'great young men', which is what her federal leader offered when he was asked three times how boys should be taught to respect women, and could not bring himself to say the obvious. The women of this state deserve a clear answer. Do you support the Respectful Relationships program, yes or no? Do you condemn the description of it as an anti-boy ideology, yes or no? Will you stand up for the members of your own movement who are attacking programs that keep women and girls safe, yes or no? These are not difficult questions. They are only difficult if you have decided that the answer might cost you votes. If that is the calculation, then the Leader of the Opposition has already told the women of this state every single thing they need to know.

I want to close by returning to where I began, to that footy field in my electorate and the kids that were on it. I have watched what happens when we build spaces where girls are respected: they thrive, they belong, they take up space without apology and they carry the confidence off the field and into the rest of their lives. I have thought about the boys in those same communities and what they are being taught by us, their coaches and the screens in their pockets. I have thought about which messages will reach them first, because it will be one or the other. Either we will reach them with respect, or the algorithm will reach them with contempt. There is no neutral ground. There is no 'Let's wait and see.' The content is already there. There is only one question: whether we can meet it with something better. Respectful Relationships education is that something better. It is not an agenda. It is not an ideology. It is not a threat to boys. It is a gift to them. It is how we raise a generation of young men to know that strength is not domination, respect is not weakness and the measure of a man is how he treats those with less power than he has. To attack that is to fail our children. To stay silent while others attack it is to fail them just as surely.

The house has a choice today that the Leader of the Opposition would not make a fortnight ago, and I extend it to every single member across the chamber, including those opposite who know privately that Senator Canavan was wrong. You do not have to defend this government to defend this program; you only have to be willing to say out loud that teaching children respect is not negotiable. It prevents violence. It is saying that we will not allow the safety of women and girls to become collateral in someone else's culture wars and that when the leaders of this state are tested we expect them to stand up and not look away. Silence is a choice, and today this house can choose differently, because the standard that we walk past is the standard that we accept. I do not accept the standard that Senator Matt Canavan and Angus Taylor put in place the other day. I commend this motion to the house.

Vicki WARD (Eltham – Minister for Public Transport, Minister for Creative Industries) (18:02): I also rise regarding this motion, and I follow on from the very excellent contribution by the member for Williamstown. It will not be any surprise to know that I agree with the member for Williamstown wholeheartedly. I thank her for her work in the prevention of family violence portfolio.

We know that the culture wars started with John Howard, and the culture wars were put there to divide people. They were there to sow fear, to spread misinformation, to cause division and to try and cynically garner votes through that. This is the most distressing, challenging, wrong and deeply cynical form of politics. This is not politics for the community good, this is not politics to strengthen communities and this is not politics to make a stronger society. This is politics purely for self-advancement, and it is politics in its most base form. What we see with the commentary of recent times by the national leader of the Liberal Party and the national leader of the Nationals is something that really does not bring people together, it really does not help instil respect and it does not help identify and address the challenges that societies around the world are experiencing with the manosphere. It is something that is put there basically to be a dead cat on the table, to deflect, to send people in the wrong direction, to divide people. What is most deeply distressing about it is that it is an attempt to

play to the One Nation vote. That, I think, is the thing that is incredibly, deeply distressing about the politics of this – that there are people who are willing to sacrifice others, that are willing to sacrifice social stability and that are willing to sacrifice people's personal safety solely for an attempt at a political game of trying to stem the tide of One Nation voters in Liberal or National Party seats.

There is a long tail to the Howard years that has influenced, in my view, the worst society in this country. And the long tail we are starting to experience now we are hearing from the mouths of the national leaders of the Liberal Party and National Party. It is extraordinary that there are people in this place, including those opposite, who have remained silent on those comments made by the national leaders of the Liberal and National parties. Those attacks on teachers, those attacks on the work of teachers and those attacks on the principles of teachers and what teachers are trying to bring to their school communities were pretty astounding. But what is also astounding is that a program that is successfully helping children and young people understand and work through respect, understand what it means and understand how to treat each other respectfully can be demonised in this way. To remain silent on that is a very poor reflection on those who are happy to let that standard walk by.

I went out a couple of years ago, when I was the Minister for Prevention of Family Violence, to Watsonia Heights Primary School with the member for Bundoora. We sat down with some students who were student leaders in wellbeing, and they talked to us about the Respectful Relationships program. They talked to us about what it meant to them. They talked to us about the fact that they could see the kids around them being kinder, that kids were paying attention to how they spoke to each other and that they were talking to each other when they were being disrespectful, when they were being rude and when they were being hurtful. They felt that they had the words and the support to be able to stick up for other kids. They felt that Respectful Relationships made their school kinder. How do you demonise kindness? I really do not know. The only reason you demonise kindness, that you demonise a program like Respectful Relationships, is because you want to use it for base political gain to demonise certain communities and to go after the so-called woke. This is just such lazy politics. It is absolutely lazy politics.

We know teachers work very, very hard to teach and support their students. They care deeply – I know, I have lived with and loved a teacher for nearly 30 years. He sees Respectful Relationships in practice. My kids have experienced it at their own schools. This is a program that helps, and this is a program that has prevention of family and sexual violence at its very core. To object to that, to find a problem with that, I find quite concerning. Suggesting that teachers who teach about respect and consent are pushing their own agenda is ignorant, especially in the current teaching context where we are hearing from teachers that the manosphere and its toxic messaging are seeping into classrooms and that female teachers are hearing sexual moaning noises from male students while they are trying to teach – while they are teaching Respectful Relationships and how to behave in a respectful way. Blaming Respectful Relationships for that behaviour instead of the toxic online influencers who are at the core of this problem is quite astonishing, as is the silence of those who do not call out that behaviour, who do not call out that commentary that demonises those teachers who are supportive and teaching Respectful Relationships.

The federal government is doing excellent work in bringing reforms to address these concerns around big tech and the algorithm and pushing toxic messaging in front of boys and young men. They are doing that work, and the federal opposition should be supporting that rather than going after teachers, rather than going after those who are supporting the Respectful Relationships program.

Respectful Relationships is about helping people treat each other better. It is no more complex than that. There is nothing to demonise here. There is nothing to be cynical about, and it is really, really, really sad that there are those who do not care and who think it is a joke – the commentary and criticism that we have seen of Respectful Relationships. One Nation thinks that this is a bit of a joke and that it should stop, and federally the National and Liberal parties think it is a bit of a joke and that it should stop, and there is not one conservative voice in this state who has said that they are wrong. What that

tells us is that there are conservative parties in this state who will do anything to court that One Nation vote – that vote that is steeped in division.

One Nation talks about wanting to teach patriotism in our schools. They do not need to. Our kids love our country. They love our state, they love where they live and they love being Australian, and what they strongly identify with is a fair go. They absolutely believe that treating people with respect and kindly, treating them for who they are with respect and kindness, is absolutely a fundamental part of the Australian character. Kids do not believe in dividing cultures and communities. Kids believe in multiculturalism. They believe in a respectful community that is united, that respects difference and that does not demonise difference. They do not get what this division is about.

I would really encourage those opposite and all conservative parties in this state to get behind Respectful Relationships and to stop with the culture wars, to stop using cynical politics in order to try and garner votes through rage bait that they try and put on social media with their Trumpian style politics, their social media feeds and their videos that scream out their desire to be seen as Trump lite. I call on those opposite to be a proper, mature political party, to stand up for Respectful Relationships, to stand up for respect in this state, to stand up for inclusion, to stand up for equality and to stand up for people to be seen for who they are, to be respected for who they are and to be treated well for who they are – not to be demonised, not to be othered, not to be told they are not worthy of support and not to be told that they should not be seen or heard. Women, girls, multicultural communities – everybody in this state deserves respect.

Belinda WILSON (Narre Warren North) (18:13): I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

Motion agreed to and debate adjourned.

Ordered that debate be adjourned until later this day.

Bills

Inquiries Amendment (Special Prosecutor) Bill 2026

Council's agreement

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (18:13): I have received a message from the Legislative Council agreeing to the Inquiries Amendment (Special Prosecutor) Bill 2026 without amendment.

Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Amendment Bill 2026

Council's amendments

Message from Council relating to following amendments considered:

1. Clause 4, line 11, before "In" insert "(1)".
2. Clause 4, page 4, after line 20 insert –

   '(2) After section 3(4) of the Principal Act **insert** –

   "(5) The Minister must ensure that a copy of a code of conduct referred to in paragraph (c)(iii) of the definition of ***serious disciplinary matter*** in subsection (1) is published on an appropriate government Internet site.".'.
3. Insert the following New Clauses to follow clause 6 –

   '**6A Appointment of Commissioner**

   After section 20(3) of the Principal Act **insert** –

   "(4) Before making a recommendation under this section, the Minister must –

   (a) ensure that the role was publicly advertised; and

   (b) be satisfied that the person recommended for appointment has been assessed as suitable for appointment by a panel established under subsection (5).

(5) If it is necessary to appoint a person to the office of Commissioner, the Minister must establish a panel to consider the suitability of persons for appointment.

(6) The regulations may prescribe any matters necessary or convenient for the establishment and operation of panels, including –

(a) the composition of panels; and

(b) the procedure of panels; and

(c) the methodology to be used by panels assessing persons for appointment; and

(d) the provision of assistance by the Minister's Department to panels, including secretariat services and clerical assistance.".

6B Deputy Commissioner

For section 23(3) of the Principal Act **substitute** –

"(3) Before making a recommendation under this section, the Minister must –

(a) ensure that the role was publicly advertised; and

(b) obtain the concurrence of the Commissioner.".'.

4. Insert the following New Clauses to follow clause 7 –

'**7A Examinations generally to be held in private**

(1) In section 32 of the Principal Act –

(a) in subsection (1), after "any other Act" **insert** ", other than the power to decide to hold an examination in public";

(b) in subsection (2) **omit** "117(1),".

(2) Section 117(1)(a) of the Principal Act is **repealed**.

(3) After section 117(3) of the Principal Act **insert** –

"(3AA) Despite anything to the contrary in this Act, the IBAC is to be constituted for the purpose of making a decision to hold an examination in public by –

(a) the Commissioner and at least one Deputy Commissioner; or

(b) the Commissioner, if there are no Deputy Commissioners.

(3AAB) A Deputy Commissioner referred to in subsection (3AA) must be an Australian lawyer unless there are no Deputy Commissioners who are Australian lawyers.".

7B Special reports

For section 162(2) and (3) of the Principal Act **substitute** –

"(2) If the IBAC intends to include in a report under this section adverse findings about a public body –

(a) the IBAC must give the relevant principal officer of the public body an opportunity to respond to the adverse material within 20 business days or the extended period determined by the IBAC under subsection (3A); and

(b) if the relevant principal officer responds within the period referred to in paragraph (a), the IBAC must fairly set out each element of the response in its report.

(3) If the IBAC intends to include in a report under this section a comment or opinion which is adverse to any person –

(a) the IBAC must give the person an opportunity to respond to the adverse material within 20 business days or the extended period determined by the IBAC under subsection (3A); and

(b) if the person responds within the period referred to in paragraph (a), the IBAC must fairly set out each element of the response in its report.

(3A) If a relevant principal officer or a person makes a written request to the IBAC within 14 business days after the day on which the IBAC first gives the relevant principal officer or person the opportunity to respond to adverse material under subsection (2) or (3), the IBAC may extend the period for the relevant principal officer or person to respond to the adverse material for a period determined by the IBAC.".'.

5. Insert the following New Clause before clause 8 –

'**7D Annual plan**

(1) In section 168(1)(a) of the Principal Act, after "that financial year" **insert** "and including a request for funding for that financial year".

(2) For section 168(4) of the Principal Act **substitute** –

"(4) In the annual plan for a financial year, the IBAC must –

(a) indicate the nature of any changes suggested by the Parliamentary Committee under subsection (2)(b) that the IBAC has not adopted; and

(b) include an explanation for any difference between the funding requested in the draft annual plan and the actual funding provided to the IBAC in the annual appropriation Acts for that financial year.".'.

6. Clause 8, lines 10 to 35 and page 8, lines 1 to 18, omit all words and expressions on these lines and insert –

"(b) conduct all or part of which occurred before the commencement day if the conduct –

(i) is the conduct of, or in relation to, a person or body (whether or not still in existence) who or which would have been a public officer or public body within the meaning of this Act as amended by the amending Act had the amending Act been in force at the time the conduct occurred; and

(ii) would have been corrupt conduct within the meaning of this Act as amended by the amending Act had the amending Act been in force at the time the conduct occurred.

(2) The IBAC may determine to investigate any complaint or notification to the IBAC that the IBAC has before the commencement day –

(a) dismissed under section 58(a); or

(b) referred to a person or body (other than the Ombudsman) under section 73; or

(c) referred to the Ombudsman under section 73 and the Ombudsman has dismissed it or has determined not to investigate it.

(3) Nothing in subsection (1) or (2) requires the IBAC –

(a) to reopen –

(i) a complaint or notification to the IBAC that it had dismissed or referred to another body before the commencement day; or

(ii) an investigation, whether of a complaint or notification or an own motion investigation, that it had completed before the commencement day; or

(b) to investigate a further complaint or notification to the IBAC about conduct that is the same as, or substantially similar to, conduct that was the subject of –

(i) a complaint or notification to the IBAC that it had dismissed or referred to another body before the commencement day; or

(ii) an investigation, whether of a complaint or notification or an own motion investigation, that it had completed before the commencement day.".

Ben CARROLL (Niddrie – Premier) (18:13): I move:

That the amendments be agreed to.

I will make some brief remarks. My government stands for integrity, transparency and accountability. That is why we have made making these amendments to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Amendment Bill 2026 our highest priority. It is also why we asked members in this place to return for an additional sitting week of the Parliament. I do want to acknowledge the cooperation across both chambers in finalising the details of these IBAC reforms, which are central to the way we work. It is fitting that in this house we have come to this agreement on these important reforms in the same week that we honoured the legacy of the late Dr Tim Read, who was steadfast in his belief that Victoria's integrity bodies needed to be strengthened. I thank all leaders and members of the crossbench and all members of Parliament that have contributed to this very important legislation.

On the amendments specifically, the government moved an amendment to remove the extraordinary circumstances test for IBAC to hold public examinations. The government moved an amendment to introduce statutory timelines and measures to facilitate timely reporting of IBAC investigations. The government also moved amendments to amend the bill's transitional provisions to clarify the government's intended operation of these provisions. The government supported several amendments from the Greens party in relation to the publication of the ministerial code of conduct online and the recruitment of the positions of Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner. This amendment codifies an existing practice of our Labor government. The introduction of budgetary transparency is an important measure for both IBAC and the government of the day. I commend the bill to the house.

James NEWBURY (Brighton) (18:15): I rise to speak on the amendments to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Amendment Bill 2026 and note that we are considering six amendments. As the Premier said, there was a lot of collaboration across both chambers in relation to amendments to the initial bill. The initial bill, we might remember, the government said was right and did not need to be improved. I start by saying, in relation to the six amendments, that the government has picked up three of the coalition's amendments, and those are, frankly, the substantial amendments to the package that we are considering today. The most notable of them is a level of retrospectivity that will allow IBAC to look at matters that have been previously referred to it that we argued could not be investigated because of the retrospectivity blocking the first draft of the bill included. We said no, it is not okay. We absolutely must see the worst corruption scandal in our state's history fully examined in every way needed. That is why we called for proper retrospectivity, and the government and the Premier said no. It is only because the Parliament has made it clear that the government got it wrong that we have that amendment before us now.

The other two amendments that the government has picked up from the coalition include the 'examinations generally to be held in private' provision, which has seen an overwhelming majority of examinations held in private, an amendment made by former Premier Daniel Andrews. I do not think it takes much to understand why the former Premier, who was subject to investigation, wanted that particular mechanism put in place. That rightly is being amended today. The third amendment of ours being picked up relates directly to a private members bill that we moved in this place, which, sadly, every member of the government opposed, which would have seen a faster tabling of IBAC reports, which should be the case. What we saw with the Operation Richmond investigation was a stain, sadly, and we moved a private members bill because we felt those special reports should be tabled swiftly. That third amendment has been picked up by the government, and I do note that.

The other three that I will mention briefly, which I believe the Greens will speak to, relate to amendments they put forward. The first is publication of the ministerial code of conduct, which is already public, and codifying it. Of course we will not oppose that. It is published. Is the IBAC bill the right place for that codification? Perhaps not, but we will not oppose that. The second amendment they are proposing is a new mechanism for the appointment of a Commissioner. Though we will not oppose it, there is, I think, genuine concern that in a deal the government has done with the Greens a new mechanism of Commissioner appointment has been drafted on the fly to get the government's bill through the Parliament. It is a concern. We will not oppose it, but we are putting on record that the government drafted that amendment today after a deal done last night. We are talking about the appointment of a Commissioner to IBAC. This is no small thing. Finally, there is the funding of IBAC, a new mechanism of funding, especially in terms of reporting through parliamentary committees. So the bill has six amendments.

The final point I will make relates to the amendment we do not have before us but which was part of a package of amendments moved both here and in the other place, and that relates to public interest immunity. The government has not accepted the need to include a public interest immunity amendment in their package of reforms. Why would they? Because integrity will always be optional under this government. Former Premiers Daniel Andrews and the member for Bendigo East still have

their power of cover-up. They still have the right, when IBAC comes knocking on the door, to not answer questions because that privilege still exists.

It should be seen by this Parliament as a mistake – frankly, a craven decision by this government – to not allow IBAC to have the information it may request. If we are elected, we do not feel that this is right and should stand in its current form. I note in the other place, just an hour ago, the government committed to reviewing the issue through a panel. I do not want to be too pessimistic, but I suspect their timeframe for reviewing the privilege power will be after the royal commission ends. I suspect the review would end after the royal commission ends.

We will not be opposing this package of reforms. Of course we will not. I said it at the start and the whole way through. Because the government has picked up on many of our amendments, we certainly will not be opposing it. But we will make the point that when it comes to public interest immunity what the government have done is simply allow themselves the protection that they have had, the protection that they want – the protection they want to leave with former premiers. It is something that we strongly believe in, and should we be fortunate enough to be elected, we will fix.

Ellen SANDELL (Melbourne) (18:22): I am a little sad that Tim Read could not be here to give this speech. Instead, I will be stepping into his very big shoes, and it is an honour to do so, to finish the work that he started and support these very important, overdue and necessary reforms to Victoria's anti-corruption watchdog, IBAC. There are not many days in here that feel truly momentous, but I really do feel like this is a really momentous moment. To have achieved some significant reform to our anti-corruption watchdog on the last sitting day of the term is something that I think is going to hold all governments in future to the high standard that the Victorian people deserve and that the Victorian people expect. I think it is a real credit to this Parliament and all the people in this Parliament who supported this bill and these amendments that we have been able to make this historic reform on the last day of the Parliament, one that I think will stand the test of time and ensure that government is for Victorians and puts people first into the future.

It is often said that change in this place happens very, very slowly and then all at once. I wanted to share a proverb that my chief of staff shared with me. He used to work for the New Zealand Greens. There is a proverb in te reo Māori, but I am not going to say it in te reo Māori because I am worried that I will get the pronunciation incorrect. It is hard to translate these things into English, but essentially it means that we take the time shaping the keel of the waka – the boat – to speed its journey. It recognises all the hard work that goes in over years and years and years, often into reform, and then all of a sudden it gets done. Nobody sees, necessarily, the years and years of work that happened – the shaping of the keel beforehand. It seems like the change just happens in the moment, but we know that is not true. We know that this reform has been years in the making.

We know that it was years of work by the Integrity and Oversight Committee. Of course Tim Read chaired the landmark inquiry that formed the recommendations, a lot of which have been lifted up and put into this bill and these amendments today. We also know that the Greens have introduced reforms to IBAC many, many times in this chamber. I find it somewhat interesting that the Liberal Party picked up some of those and introduced their own bills but that only happened in the last year or so. The Greens were introducing these bills and these amendments for many, many years, and they were opposed by not just the Labor government but also the Liberal opposition. It is important to put some of that context and history on the record. But we never gave up, and when the time was right the bill became law.

When stakeholders or community groups come to me with a change that they would like I often say it is part of the Greens' job and civil society's job to put good ideas on the shelf – to develop an idea, to work to flesh it out, to build support for it. Then often that idea will sit on the shelf. It will sit on the shelf for a long time. But you never know when the day will come around that there might be a scandal or a crisis or a problem that up-ends things, and then governments often need to solve that problem and they look around for ready-made solutions. They look at what is on the shelf as a ready-made

solution, and they take it off and they implement it. Often it is how the Greens get change and how civil society gets change – putting the ideas on the shelf in the first place, ready to be taken off when the moment is right.

We know for this one the moment was when the government faced significant allegations of corruption on the Big Build. It was the Greens who consistently raised IBAC reform as part of the solution – as Tim Read eloquently put it, a standing royal commission at half the price. The Greens took a longer view than just one scandal. We knew that the Big Build was not the first scandal that the Victorian government faced, the first corruption allegations. We also unfortunately know it is unlikely to be the last. We do not just need a royal commission into one matter; we need an anti-corruption watchdog that has the powers that it needs and that it has asked for for years. Finally, with this bill, it will.

I want to share, before I go into the amendments in a bit more detail, another anecdote about Tim Read. I remember a few months ago the Greens were having some discussions about our election platform and what we wanted to be a priority: climate change, housing, cost of living. At the end of those discussions I remember Tim Read just sat back and took it all in, and he said, 'You know what, let's just be prepared. Integrity might end up being the biggest issue of this election.' And boy he was right about that. I am very glad that he was here to see these reforms pass the lower house and know that they were about to become law.

Turning to the amendments that are before us, when the IBAC bill originally passed this house it included follow-the-money powers and, crucially, expanding the jurisdiction of IBAC to expand what kind of corruption it could look into. Previously, as we know, IBAC could only look into indictable offences, a much higher bar than the federal National Anti-Corruption Commission or the Independent Commission Against Corruption in New South Wales. It was this limited jurisdiction that allowed leaders of parties on both sides to refer issues that they were facing to IBAC, whether it was lobster with the mobster or the Big Build, knowing full well that IBAC did not have the power and jurisdiction to look into them and that nothing would ever come of it. No longer will that be able to happen. IBAC will now be able to finally look into breaches of the ministerial code of conduct, offences that might ordinarily result in someone losing their job, misuse of public office – offences that would constitute corruption but perhaps not reach that high bar of an indictable offence. These were very good reforms that were put forward. But there were still a few loopholes, which have been closed with these amendments, and they have now been fixed due to the Greens working with the opposition and with the government.

There were a few amendments that the Greens put up that the Liberals also put up which would have had the numbers to pass the Parliament, so the Labor government had no choice but to adopt them. They have taken a few of them and made them house amendments in the government's name. They are to allow IBAC to hold public hearings when it is in the public interest, not just in exceptional circumstances, and strengthening the process for IBAC to decide to hold public examinations. We know sunlight is the best disinfectant when it comes to corruption in public office, and as Tim Read said himself, lift the rock and the worms come out.

These amendments will also confirm that IBAC can use its strengthened powers to investigate all relevant past conduct, closing the loophole in the legislation that made it unclear whether this would be allowed, ensuring there is complete clarity over this matter of retrospectivity. Last night we were here quite late in negotiations, but we appreciate working with the government, who have now adopted a number of Greens amendments. The first one provides funding transparency for IBAC so that IBAC can share publicly in its annual report its annual budget submission to government to provide a report on whether its annual budget is sufficient to do the work that it has been tasked to do. We know that governments have systemically underfunded our integrity agencies, whether it is IBAC, the Ombudsman or the Victorian Auditor-General's Office, and the public will be able to now see when that has happened. The second is to strengthen requirements for the appointment of the IBAC Commissioner and deputy commissioners, including establishing an appointment panel and requiring public advertising of vacant positions. This is to ensure the government of the day cannot just appoint

their mates to avoid a jobs-for-mates scandal, or that they cannot just appoint someone they know is not qualified or who will go soft on the government of the day. And the last is to ensure the ministerial code of conduct is made public. If breaches of the code of conduct can now be investigated by IBAC in its expanded jurisdiction, then the public deserves to know, always, what is in this code of conduct and the standards that we are setting for ministers rather than this only being made public if the government of the day feels like it.

I want to thank a few people, especially my Greens colleagues, and especially Sarah Mansfield in the other place, who have continued Tim's work right to the end, negotiating with the government, working closely with integrity experts and the opposition well into the evening last night to make sure that this bill is as strong as it can be. Victoria will now have much stronger anti-corruption laws due to those actions. There is of course more work to be done, and we are pleased that we have been able to also secure a commitment from the government to an expert review panel, which will include experts from the Centre for Public Integrity and will start its work imminently, by the end of October, and a commitment from the government to make changes that reflect the outstanding recommendations of the IOC, including options for models of how IBAC can access cabinet-in-confidence information.

We recognise the benefits to our democracy of robust cabinet processes. The public service needs to be able to give frank and fearless advice, and cabinet needs to be able to frankly and openly discuss options on the table when making important decisions that affect Victorians. We understand this, but our experience has been that executive privilege, which is related to this provision – that is, cabinet documents requested by the Parliament – has been grossly overused and misused. The National Anti-Corruption Commission has a model that allows it to view cabinet documents with appropriate safeguards. We want to get this right, and that is why I want to thank the opposition for working with us, working through –

Members interjecting.

Ellen SANDELL: Is that a first? Maybe it is a first. I do think it was. I do want to thank the member for Brighton, who brought this to us.

Members interjecting.

Ellen SANDELL: Do I do this so rarely? Maybe I do do this so rarely. I want to thank the member for Brighton for bringing this issue up. We in the Greens feel like it is a very important issue, but after some long discussions and getting legal and expert advice we simply ran out of time to be able to fix that cabinet-in-confidence document of public interest immunity and do that properly, respecting all the safeguards that need to come with it. We are very heartened to have that commitment from the government to an expert review panel to ensure that that will be looked into. The next Parliament will hopefully fix that loophole and that outstanding recommendation from the IOC.

I would also like to thank the stakeholders who have engaged with the Greens over many years on our campaign to reform IBAC, in particular all those at the Centre for Public Integrity who have been a great source of expert advice and have done a power of work that has assisted in getting these reforms to happen. Another person I have to thank is a staff member in my office who used to work for Tim Read, Timothy Burn. Timothy deserves just as much credit for these IBAC reforms as anyone. He has pored over legislation, spent hours and hours working with stakeholders and experts and studiously continued to keep the issue of IBAC reform on the agenda over many years. He has worked many, many hours to get his head around very complex integrity law to support and brief the Greens MPs, and he topped it all off with a very long day of negotiations yesterday. Timothy, you should be very, very proud of your role in making these reforms happen. Tim Read would be very, very proud of you.

It is a great privilege to have been part of a Parliament that has passed these laws, including these Greens amendments. And to anyone watching at home, never, ever let anyone tell you that change cannot happen. It might be slow. There will be infuriating moments. There will be moments you think

it is never going to happen, but then a moment comes along when the idea is the right idea at the right time and things happen very quickly. As I said, in Parliament change happens slowly, slowly, slowly and then all at once. I know Tim will be up there somewhere watching down on us, waiting for Hansard to do their quick magic to get the transcript of this debate up to him. And he would be very content that we have finally delivered what he started out when he first entered this place.

Motion agreed to.

The SPEAKER: A message will now be sent to the Legislative Council informing them of the house's decision.

Announcements

Felicitations

Ben CARROLL (Niddrie – Premier) (18:36): *(By leave)* Before we wrap up, I just want to say a few thankyous, and I will begin with you, Speaker. Thank you to the clerks: Bridget, Vaughn and Paul. Thank you for all the assistance you have provided in running this chamber. Thank you for your patience, particularly on long days.

I also acknowledge every member of this Parliament, in particular on our side, for all of the work that they have done over these past four years. I think we all often disagree – often it is strongly – but we know everyone does come here with the right mindset and to do what they want to do by their community and to make the state better. We know we all give up a lot of time with the people we love most.

To our staff and to all the Victorian public service, the finest public service in Australia: there is an enormous amount of work that goes on behind everything we do in this chamber, and it is a credit to the people working in the departments and right throughout the state.

Most of all, I did want to acknowledge all of our families that do wait for us at home. I think of the late nights, the changed plans and every time the job does come first. I am looking forward to spending some time with my wife and daughter, and then it will be straight onto the campaign. Ten free dental clinics, 1500 more police, 121 new schools, 12 new hospitals, crime down, bail refusals up – a new direction but more work to do. I wish every member every success as we head towards November.

Thank you, Speaker. It has been a privilege to be finishing off on something as important as integrity. I concur with the member for Melbourne: Dr Tim Read will be looking down and saying this is a fine moment for the Parliament.

Jess WILSON (Kew – Leader of the Opposition) (18:38): *(By leave)* I add my thanks to the many people in the Parliament who really make it possible for us to come in here every day. First, to our brilliant Clerk Bridget Noonan, thank you for everything you do. And to Vaughn, Paul and Joel, thank you for your incredible diligence and your in-depth expertise on our many questions, which I am sure that you get, including whether our constituency question is going to be in line. Thank you very much for everything that you do.

To our wonderful attendants who keep the chamber going day in, day out; to the team in the table office; and to the Hansard staff who do the meticulous work, thank you for your commitment to our Parliament and to democracy here in Victoria.

I thank our security staff, Adam and the team and the protective services officers. Often they are the first people we see when we walk into the building and the last people we see when we walk out, and they keep us safe. I know that a lot of effort has gone into the procedures and – through your work, Speaker – how this Parliament works with security over recent years.

I thank the vestibule team and everyone at the front door for signing in the visitors and making sure that there is access to this Parliament for all Victorians, because at the end of the day this is not our

place, it is Victorians' place to come and visit. Thank you to the tour guides, the library staff, the facilities management team, the gardeners and the IT staff for fixing our problems every single day – the Luddites that we all are in asking the simplest of questions – and of course the catering staff, who keep us caffeinated at every opportunity. I thank the Department of Parliamentary Services and Trish Burrows for the work that they do.

Of course, thank you to all of our electorate staff and all of our staff. As you said, Speaker, they are at home, they are answering the phone and they are doing the work on the ground when we come into this place. We owe them all a debt of gratitude.

Speaker, to you I say thank you on behalf of the Liberals and Nationals for the work you have done in this place. I know that we have not always behaved – I accept that – but we come in here and we understand that you have a role to play. On a personal note, I thank you for all that you did for me and little Patrick and for the mums in this place. It is not easy navigating the world when you are a new mum and trying to come back to work, and with Charlotte's Room you made a big difference to me and my family, so on a personal note, thank you very much.

Finally, to all members, as the Premier said, this has been a week when we said goodbye to one of our own in Tim Read, and to see the IBAC legislation pass the Parliament today I know is an incredible part of his legacy. We all do come into this place because we are trying to make our community and our state a better place. We might not agree on everything, but I think we all walk out of this chamber after question time sometimes and go and get a coffee together or we send each other a text message about our family or our football team over the weekend, and at the end of the day we all want to leave this place in a better position than when we came in here the first time. I wish everyone all the best over the next few months. We are going into a campaign.

Members interjecting.

Jess WILSON: I will say it this way: I wish everyone all the best, though maybe not all the best for the result at the end of the day. Campaigns are tough. It will be tough on every single one of us. It will be tough on our families. I think if we go into that with respect for one another, we will do this place the justice it deserves but also make sure we do the best by Victoria.

Business of the house

Postponement

Anthony CARBINES (Ivanhoe – Leader of the House, Minister for Artificial Intelligence and the Digital Economy, Minister for Major Events, Minister for Medical Research, Minister for Racing, Minister for Economic Development) (18:41): I move:

> That the consideration of remaining business be postponed.

Motion agreed to.

Adjournment

The SPEAKER: The question is:

> That the 60th Parliament and the house now adjourn.

Lorne fuel supply

Richard RIORDAN (Polwarth) (18:46): (1859) I take great delight in making one of the final contributions for the 60th season. The adjournment I have this evening is for the Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment, and the action I seek is for the minister's immediate intervention into the terrible dispute that is occurring as we speak in the wonderful coastal Great Ocean Road hamlet of Lorne. The action I seek is that the tourism minister immediately intervene in the dispute between the local proprietor and Viva Energy, who is refusing to upgrade the fuel storage services at the only service station in Lorne, representing the only service station on the south side of the Erskine River.

Viva will not organise the replacement of the tanks or the repair of the tanks to ensure adequate fuel storage in Lorne. This is a huge problem. We saw only earlier this year floods and fires in the Otways. If the fuel supply is not available in Lorne, this will leave a huge problem not only for emergency service vehicles but also for people coming down. Only a few hours ago the Lorne service station ran out of fuel on the Thursday before a long weekend. There is simply not the storage capacity in the town unless the urgent repairs that can still be done before Christmas are done.

Without fuel on the Great Ocean Road, we are putting our emergency services at risk, we are putting our local communities at risk, we are putting tourism – the valuable tourist dollar on the Great Ocean Road – at risk if people who travel down to the Great Ocean Road cannot get fuel to get home again. It is a simple fix. For a company like Viva Energy, it is a drop in the ocean to fix this up. They are just being difficult, playing hard, and they are putting a whole coastal community and an entire regional tourism industry at risk. The proprietors – the current lessees – John and Kylie Blazely have been running that service station successfully for a very long time. They employ eight people, and this business cannot afford to be closed. It cannot afford to run out of fuel. It is a tourism issue as much as anything. I plead with the Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment to do what she can do in the dying days of this government to put pressure on Viva Energy to ensure that adequate fuel supplies will be available to the Lorne locals, the Great Ocean Road, the tourism industry and, most importantly, emergency services over the coming fire danger period.

Bellarine electorate bus services

Alison MARCHANT (Bellarine) (18:49): (1860) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Public Transport, and the action I seek is for the minister to provide an update on the outcomes of the Bellarine bus review, which is going to benefit local residents and visitors across the Bellarine. As the Bellarine continues to grow, I have had so many people talk to me about the upgrades and the need for better public transport across our region. Earlier this year we did conduct the review, and the Bellarine was absolutely magnificent in answering questions and providing submissions to the department. It gave local residents the opportunity to share their ideas about where the gaps are and what they would like to see in a better public transport system on the Bellarine. In that time, though, we committed in the last budget to do a cross-Bellarine bus service. That will go from Drysdale to Ocean Grove. That is a much-needed service, particularly for our young people who are either coming back and to and from school or after-school activities, work and socialising with their friends. I am really looking forward to sharing more about that soon. That is just the first step, and I would like to be able to share with residents the feedback we received under the review, and I look forward to hearing from the minister.

Regional development

Annabelle CLEELAND (Euroa) (18:50): (1861) My adjournment this evening is for the Premier, and the action I seek is for the Labor government to adopt a fair share guarantee of at least 25 per cent of new infrastructure investment for regional Victoria. This should not be controversial. Regional Victorians are a quarter of this state's population. We are asking for a quarter of that investment – no special treatment, no handout, just a fair share guarantee. Right now we are not getting it. The Parliamentary Budget Office shows less than 12 per cent of infrastructure spending reaches the regions under this Labor government – a quarter of the people and we get less than an eighth of the investment. Do the maths at any kitchen table and you know something is terribly wrong in Victoria right now.

In my electorate that gap has a face. It is a mum in Benalla who can no longer have a baby in our own community. It is a patient waiting months, sometimes years, to see a physio or a speech therapist. That is why the Nationals will invest $40 million in a rural health workforce incentive scheme, with up to $10,000 to get doctors, nurses, midwives and allied health workers into country jobs that are hard to fill. It is also the farmer driving on a road that has been patched, patched and patched again. A shovel of coal mix in a pothole is not a roads plan. We have committed $5 billion to fixing and rebuilding

Victoria's roads, and we will bring back the country roads and bridges program – $288 million going straight to rural and regional councils.

It is also a family in Kilmore, one of the fastest growing towns in the state, still putting their kids on a bus every morning because there is no public secondary school. This government moved a zone boundary on a map and called it a solution, only to do a backflip this week. That is not investment; it is abandonment of regional education. We will deliver the school a site, a plan and a pathway to construction. It is also the CFA volunteer who leaves the dinner table at 2 am to protect their neighbours, then works out of facilities with gear that is no longer fit for purpose. After the fires we have been through this year, our volunteers deserve investment that matches what we ask of them. It is a family in Seymour or Benalla who are frightened in their own community because Labor has closed the nearest police stations or they are short-staffed or under-resourced. That is why the Nationals will recruit 3000 more police, so regional towns get police on the beat and not a phone number and a long wait.

These are not separate problems. They are the same problem. The regions are asked to do more with less under a Labor government. We grow the state's food, power its economy and raise our families here. We should not have to leave our communities to get the basic needs. Premier, commit to a fair share guarantee. If you will not tell regional Victorians why they are worth less under a Labor government, only the Nationals will stop the waste, end the corruption and give regional Victoria the fair share that it deserves.

Sacred Heart Mission

Nina TAYLOR (Albert Park) (18:53): (1862) My adjournment matter is directed to the Minister for Housing, Building and Precincts. The action I seek is for the minister to join me in my electorate of Albert Park to visit Sacred Heart Mission in St Kilda and see firsthand the important work undertaken by its staff, volunteers and community partners. Sacred Heart Mission is a wonderful organisation that has for many years provided practical support, food, housing assistance and other essential services to people experiencing homelessness, disadvantage and social exclusion.

Our Carroll Labor government is a strong supporter of the work that happens at Sacred Heart. It invested $45 million – a portion of the total $1.1 billion investment across the homelessness sector over four years in the 2024–25 budget – to fund the expansion of their Journey to Social Inclusion program. The program has been designed to target chronic homelessness and is estimated to save roughly $80 million in costs associated with crisis accommodation, mental health services and hospital visits over 10 years. A visit to Sacred Heart would provide the minister with an opportunity to listen directly to the people who use these services, meet the dedicated staff and volunteers who deliver them and gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by Victorians experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity.

Sacred Heart Mission plays an important role in supporting some of the most vulnerable members of our community. Its work is a reminder that addressing homelessness and housing insecurity requires not only government investment and policy but also strong partnerships with community organisations that are working on the front line every day. I therefore ask the minister – who is, I should say, the Minister for Homelessness as well – to accept this invitation to visit Sacred Heart Mission in St Kilda and meet with those who are working tirelessly to support people in need.

Warrnambool College

Roma BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (18:55): (1863) I have an important matter to bring to the minister's attention for the end of the 60th Parliament that I need addressing. My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Education, and the action I seek is for the minister to immediately halt the closure and demolition of the Warrnambool College swimming pool and to give the community the time and respect they are asking for to develop a solution.

The Victorian Labor government's treatment of South-West Coast is disgraceful. For the Victorian Labor government to make this decision behind closed doors and then for the community to be informed of the decision with no warning and no consultation and to be given no opportunity to find a solution is despicable. The anger is overwhelming. In just 36 hours over 2000 people signed a paper petition – many more wanted to, including people who travelled to Warrnambool to use the pool but were away or could not get to sign the forms – and 500 people gathered on Sunday morning to rally with only 48 hours notice. Yet this government acts as though our community's voice does not matter. Yesterday members of the swimming pool community met with the government and asked for a copy of the report that informed this decision. That request was denied. The community has paid for this report through its taxes. The secrecy is an added insult to an already appalling decision. It is fair to ask: what is the government hiding that they will not release this report?

Around 1400 children a week use this pool, and virtually all the schools in the district depend on it for swimming lessons. If it closes, those schools will have nowhere with the capacity to take their students. The council's pool is already full and in need of urgent works. We live on the coast. Swimming lessons teach skills that can save a child's life. The pool supports lifesaver training, and people with disabilities and residents use the swimming pool for health and rehabilitation. This is a community facility, and the Victorian Labor government is treating it as though it can be erased without consequence. Since 2017 the Victorian Labor government has mandated in its own curriculum swimming and water safety education from foundation to year 10. This very same government's sheer stupidity in requiring schools to teach the skills and closing the pool at the same time makes absolutely no sense – in fact it beggars belief.

The community is not asking for the impossible. It is asking for the report, a chance to be heard and time to find a solution. Instead it has been met with secrecy, arrogance and a bulldozer. If elected in November, a Liberal government will halt this closure and give the community the time they deserve. 2250 people have already put their name to this fight. Warrnambool will not be ignored.

Pascoe Vale electorate schools

Anthony CIANFLONE (Pascoe Vale) (18:58): (1864) My matter is for the Minister for Education, and the action I seek is for the minister to provide an update on the ongoing investments the Victorian Labor government has made to support all schools across Pascoe Vale, Coburg and Brunswick West since 2022 and to consider and support ongoing opportunities for new learning infrastructure, facilities and resources across my community.

I am particularly proud of the investments we have made since 2022 to improve learning facilities for students during school hours but also to open up school grounds for outside hours use – namely, for basketball via a $20 million upgrade for Newlands Primary School, including a new landmark basketball stadium being utilised by the Coburg Basketball Association and Darebin Basketball Association; an $18 million upgrade for Pascoe Vale Primary School, including a new world-class indoor gym that is being utilised daily outside hours by Pascoe Vale's Panthers Basketball Club; our $6 million commitment towards building a new Bachar Houli Aspire academy of sport in Coburg, which will be home to a new indoor sports and basketball stadium, which the local basketball community will benefit from; and supporting and recognising the work of local basketball programs, including those of Mike Torres via his High School Basketball Network and Players First Basketball academy.

Basketball very much remains one of the fastest growing and burgeoning sports across Victoria and my community of Merri-bek and is one of the best examples of how we can work to upgrade and better share school facilities outside hours while supporting learning, health, wellbeing and active recreation outcomes. Basketball contributes approximately $800 million to the Victorian economy. For every $1 invested, it generates $7 in broader economic and social value.

The Coburg Basketball Association remains one of the biggest across the state, with over 5000 active members, 13 domestic clubs, 530 teams in weekly domestic competitions, 120 referees, 41 representative

teams and 37 junior teams as well. Coburg basketball plays 260 weekly domestic games in 22 courts across 18 venues, many of which are in local schools. However, Coburg basketball's long-time headquarters, the Coburg Basketball Stadium on Outlook Road in North Coburg, is very much aged, overcapacity and affected by various challenges, including general condition constraints, accessibility and compliance issues. That is why I support the Coburg Basketball Association's vision to partner with Coburg High School to deliver stage 2 of the school's master plan via a much-needed and long-overdue new indoor sports basketball stadium being constructed on the school's grounds. It is a vision for four full-sized, compliant indoor basketball courts, change rooms, amenities, storage, car parking, a dedicated foyer, reception, admin facilities, canteen and kiosk facilities, flexible spectator and viewing spaces, a weights room and PE staff offices during school hours.

These new facilities will greatly benefit Coburg High's growing need. They are in the heart of the central Coburg activity centre. Merri-bek council's analysis found Coburg High to be the preferred site for such new facilities. Enrolments at Coburg High have grown from 265 in 2015 to over 1300 students in 2026. The school is eligible for funding for a two-court stadium based on enrolment size according to the Victorian School Building Authority facility area schedule. However, given the demand, potential further investment from the state, federal and local governments would be welcome to grow Coburg High's capacity and the Coburg Basketball Association's capacity too. It would also complement the work we are doing at McDonald Reserve with the Brunswick Hockey Club and other sporting clubs. I welcome the minister's response.

Foster and kinship carers

Nicole WERNER (Warrandyte) (19:01): (1865) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Children, and the action I seek is for her to increase the supports provided to foster and kinship carers. If you talk to almost any carer, frontline worker or child with an experience of the out-of-home care system, they all agree on one thing: that Victoria's child protection system is broken. We have seen children die after being referred dozens of times to a system that closes their cases without helping them. We have seen children being criminalised, exposed to drugs or groomed in state residential care units that were meant to keep them safe. We see a system that has become such a pipeline to youth crime that a recent report showed every child in youth justice for offending under 14 was already known to child protection.

Foster, kinship and permanent carers have told me that they are undersupported, underappreciated and burning out, and I am here to fight for them. Carers endure enormous financial, emotional and physical cost, all while feeling the system is against them. Their allowances do not come close to covering what a child needs, which is why I have argued in the Parliament many times that we must lift them. In the six years to 2024–25 Victoria lost a net 1500 accredited foster carers, the sharpest fall of any state, leaving just 1550 active foster households. Under Labor, carers of 10, 20, 30 years are walking away from the system because they are treated so poorly. If we want to actually put children's best interests first, that means supporting the families that open their homes and hearts to them.

Today I want to say clearly to every foster, kinship and permanent carer: a Liberal and Nationals government will treat you with respect. We will ensure carers feel heard, appreciated and have a real voice in the system and in decisions affecting children in their care. Upon coming to government we will immediately create a new carer and volunteer workforce strategy for child protection, which will place foster, kinship and permanent carers' voices at the heart of future planning. We will also increase the practical support available to carers by expanding their care support help desk and will bring real transparency and clarity to the allowance system, which has been applied unfairly and inconsistently.

We will also lead a wholesale reform of the system, starting by commissioning an independent review of the child protection system to identify what reform must look like. The review will span prevention, early intervention, out-of-home care and care allowances and support transition from care and more, ensuring carers' voices are heard and confronting why past recommendations have been ignored rather than implemented. This review will not just look back, it will look forward, examining better models

of care used successfully in other jurisdictions, such as professional foster care, and will commit to trialling those models that the evidence supports. We must do better for our most vulnerable children.

Monbulk electorate volunteers

Daniela DE MARTINO (Monbulk) (19:04): (1866) Deputy Speaker, before I commence my adjournment matter, I just want to say thank you for all the work you have done – I thanked the Speaker before – throughout the past four years. It is not easy being in that chair. I only do it once a week, and you do it more times than I do. Thank you very much for the work you have done.

My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Carers and Volunteers, and the action I seek is for the minister to visit my electorate of Monbulk and meet some of the extraordinary and dedicated volunteers who give so much of their time and energy to support our beautiful community across the hills and foothills of the Dandenong Ranges. On 11 September I was honoured to host the Monbulk District Volunteer Awards here at Parliament House, recognising 16 outstanding individuals whose dedication has made a real difference to the lives of others. While their contributions vary, they all share a commitment to helping others and strengthening our Monbulk community and beyond. Their efforts often occur behind the scenes and without expectation of recognition, yet they have had an immeasurable impact on the wellbeing and resilience of the people of our community. These recipients represent the very best, contributing countless hours to emergency services, sporting clubs, RSLs, community groups, charitable causes and Scouts.

The 16 Monbulk District Volunteer Awards recipients are: James Barrigan, Ferntree Gully Tennis Club; Daryl Bristowe, SES and RSL; Peta Candy, Gembrook Cricket Club; Geoff Eady, Ferntree Gully Arts Society Inc; Melinda Head, 1st Monbulk Scout Group; Glenn Hickingbotham, Monbulk CFA; Chris Job, Kallista Village Inc; Josh Koster, Ferntree Gully CFA; Peter Maloney, Hills Arts Alliance; Chris May, Clematis CFA; Garry McGough, Gembrook RSL; Rom Miles, 1st Kallista Scout Group; Glen Molden, Menzies Creek CFA; Jenni Nash, Open Door Community Care Inc; Adam Preece, Mountain Tigers Basketball Club; and Philip Spencer of Macclesfield CFA. I would like to note that many of them also volunteer for other organisations. That is the kind of people they are. This year's recipients are a powerful reminder that volunteers are at the heart of our community, and I sincerely thank each and every one of them for the extraordinary contributions they have made to the people of Monbulk district. I look forward to the minister's response.

Felicitations

Will FOWLES (Ringwood) (19:06): (1867) I rise with a heart that is both heavy and full. The action I seek this evening is for the Premier to write a note of thanks to all the departing electorate office staff irrespective of where their members sit in this chamber. It is also an opportunity of course, as we have heard from both the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, to express some gratitude to all of those members leaving this place. It was lovely to watch just a moment ago the collegiate way in which people farewelled one another. I will add to that my farewell in these terms:

> We'll meet again
> Don't know where, don't know when
> But I know we'll meet again some sunny day
> Keep smiling through
> Just like you always do
> 'Til the blue skies drive the dark clouds far away
>
> So will you please say hello to the folks that I know
> Tell them I won't be long
> They'll be happy to know that as you saw me go
> I was singing this song
>
> We'll meet again
> Don't know where, don't know when
> But I know we'll meet again some sunny day

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: It would be bah humbug of me to suggest that singing and clapping are both disorderly, but we will move on.

Wallan wallan regional park

Kathleen MATTHEWS-WARD (Broadmeadows) (19:08): (1868) I will not sing, I promise, but I will get the last word in this Parliament, which is kind of nice. My adjournment is for the Minister for Environment, and the action I seek is for her to walk along the beautiful Merri Creek with me to discuss the wallan wallan regional parklands. I thank fellow members of Parliament for their strong advocacy on this issue: the member for Northcote, the member for Preston, the member for Pascoe Vale, the member for Yan Yean, the member for Greenvale and the member for Kalkallo, who yesterday tabled a petition in this Parliament. That petition has over 3000 signatures.

I thank the many people who signed and the people who have written to us about this issue, including locals Damian Cuffe, Michael Frank, Patrick Ramsay, Rhydian Cowley, Basirah Basri, Zachary Aarons, Siobhan Neyland and others. Both the Merri Creek and Moonee Ponds Creek have been a beloved part of my story for over 50 years, and I have spoken about the importance of them to me, my family and my community many times in this house. I was so proud to announce the 2778-hectare marram baba regional parklands on the Merri Creek with our wonderful Minister D'Ambrosio, traditional owner Emma Mildenhall, local councils, Friends of Merri Creek and Merri Creek Management Committee. It is one of the largest conservation parks in Melbourne, spanning an area more than 70 times the area of Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens, linking open space and ensuring we can enjoy this special place and its cultural significance for years to come.

We know the importance of wildlife corridors and the opportunities that particularly exist along our creek corridors to protect habitats. Wildlife do not recognise precinct boundaries. As the growth corridors develop, animals will still need to move between habitat, water and food. Where those movements are not planned for, they too often end up on our roads. Every animal strike is a loss for our wildlife, a danger for motorists and a cost for our community. Well-designed corridors planned for from the start, rather than retrofitted, are a practical way to reduce all three. The average cost of a kangaroo collision is $9000, according to a recent RACV report, and with 31,000 collisions in the last five years that is an approximate cost of $300 million.

We currently have an opportunity to secure the wallan wallan regional parkland through the planning scheme, and while the current planning scheme allows wildlife corridors to be included in a subdivision or development plan, they are not compulsory. Even when they are inserted as a condition of permit, there are few consequences if a developer ignores them, and these conditions could be strengthened. The wallan wallan regional parkland would not only provide an important habitat and wildlife corridor in the north but give us a magnificent public asset and give new and existing residents essential access to nature's benefits for mental, physical and social health.

Recently, northern Labor MPs hosted members of the wallan wallan Regional Parkland Alliance, including Ben Davis; Professor Nick Williams, Friends of Merri Creek president; Claire Weekley, vice-president; and David Gifford. I thank them and the volunteers for their leadership and stewardship of our beautiful Merri Creek and their advocacy on this issue.

Responses

Anthony CARBINES (Ivanhoe – Leader of the House, Minister for Artificial Intelligence and the Digital Economy, Minister for Major Events, Minister for Medical Research, Minister for Racing, Minister for Economic Development) (19:11): The member for Polwarth, who I note is no longer with us, has raised a matter for the Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment seeking her to intervene at Viva Energy's Lorne service station, which requires infrastructure upgrades. The member for Bellarine, the home of the commitment for the Bellarine link, has asked for matters to be referred to the Minister for Public Transport for an update and action on the Bellarine bus review. The member for Euroa has raised a matter for the Premier, and the action she has sought is that the Premier adopt a

fair share guarantee for Victoria. I enjoyed the Seymour Cup with the member for Euroa. The member for Albert Park has raised a matter for the Minister for Housing, Building and Precincts seeking action that she visit and see the glorious work of Sacred Heart Mission. I thank her for her work as cabinet secretary. The member for South-West Coast raised a matter for the Minister for Education and Deputy Premier seeking action to halt the closure of the Warrnambool College swimming pool. I note for the record that her sister, who babysat me as a youngster and crossed Geelong and Anglesea nursing with my aunt, is now a grandmother, making us all feel that little bit older. But I give her a shout-out too.

The indefatigable member for Pascoe Vale has raised a matter for the Minister for Education and Deputy Premier seeking action to provide an update on all those schools in his electorate that have had significant investments and upgrades, which is pretty much all of them. The member for Warrandyte has raised a matter for the Minister for Children in the other place with regard to action to support foster parents, foster carers, kinship carers and out-of-home care services. The member for Monbulk has raised a matter for the Minister for Carers and Volunteers, seeking that the minister visit the volunteers in her electorate. I thank her for her work as the caucus secretary – she very much excelled herself last evening in her hosting duties. The member for Ringwood, who is also concluding his time in this place voluntarily, has raised a matter for the Premier, and the action that he has sought is that the Premier write to thank all of those amazing electorate office staff who will be concluding their work at the end of the 60th Parliament. My friend the member for Broadmeadows, former staffer but not former friend – still a friend – raised a matter for the Minister for Environment seeking action on a Merri Creek visit on the wallan wallan regional parkland. I commend all those matters to ministers for action.

I also take the opportunity briefly to say to you, Deputy Speaker, our grateful thanks for your role and your friendship and also your role as a presiding officer here in the 60th Parliament. I am sure that will not be lost on the good burghers of Ashwood. I also give my grateful thanks to my constituents in the Ivanhoe electorate and the work that we continue to do together. Lastly, I thank the clerks and the Serjeant-at-Arms for their work. I commend all those matters to you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Briefly, if you can indulge me, on 25 November this Parliament will turn 170 years old. Approximately 1600 members have been elected to both these houses in that time. I just want to reiterate the words of many other members who have spoken to say that in that time not a day of our democracy would have functioned without our clerks, our Parliament staff and everyone who has assisted us in our electorate offices. This is a significant achievement for the people of Victoria that will continue after the house recommences.

Stay classy, Victoria. The house is adjourned.

House adjourned 7:15 pm.