



Hansard

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

60th Parliament

Tuesday 30 July 2024

Office-holders of the Legislative Assembly
60th Parliament

Speaker

Maree Edwards

Deputy Speaker

Matt Fregon

Acting Speakers

Juliana Addison, Jordan Crugnale, Daniela De Martino, Paul Edbrooke,
Wayne Farnham, Paul Hamer, Lauren Kathage, Nathan Lambert, Alison Marchant,
Paul Mercurio, John Mullahy, Kim O’Keeffe, Meng Heang Tak, Jackson Taylor and Iwan Walters

Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Premier

Jacinta Allan

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Deputy Premier

Ben Carroll

Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and Leader of the Opposition

John Pesutto

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

David Southwick

Leader of the Nationals

Peter Walsh

Deputy Leader of the Nationals

Emma Kealy

Leader of the House

Mary-Anne Thomas

Manager of Opposition Business

James Newbury

Members of the Legislative Assembly
60th Parliament

Member	District	Party	Member	District	Party
Addison, Juliana	Wendouree	ALP	Lambert, Nathan	Preston	ALP
Allan, Jacinta	Bendigo East	ALP	Maas, Gary	Narre Warren South	ALP
Andrews, Daniel ¹	Mulgrave	ALP	McCurdy, Tim	Ovens Valley	Nat
Battin, Brad	Berwick	Lib	McGhie, Steve	Melton	ALP
Benham, Jade	Mildura	Nat	McLeish, Cindy	Eildon	Lib
Britnell, Roma	South-West Coast	Lib	Marchant, Alison	Bellarine	ALP
Brooks, Colin	Bundoora	ALP	Matthews-Ward, Kathleen	Broadmeadows	ALP
Bull, Josh	Sunbury	ALP	Mercurio, Paul	Hastings	ALP
Bull, Tim	Gippsland East	Nat	Mullahy, John	Glen Waverley	ALP
Cameron, Martin	Morwell	Nat	Newbury, James	Brighton	Lib
Carbines, Anthony	Ivanhoe	ALP	O'Brien, Danny	Gippsland South	Nat
Carroll, Ben	Niddrie	ALP	O'Brien, Michael	Malvern	Lib
Cheeseman, Darren ²	South Barwon	Ind	O'Keeffe, Kim	Shepparton	Nat
Cianflone, Anthony	Pascoe Vale	ALP	Pallas, Tim	Werribee	ALP
Cleeland, Annabelle	Euroa	Nat	Pearson, Danny	Essendon	ALP
Connolly, Sarah	Laverton	ALP	Pesutto, John	Hawthorn	Lib
Couzens, Christine	Geelong	ALP	Read, Tim	Brunswick	Greens
Crewther, Chris	Mornington	Lib	Richards, Pauline	Cranbourne	ALP
Crugnale, Jordan	Bass	ALP	Richardson, Tim	Mordialloc	ALP
D'Ambrosio, Liliana	Mill Park	ALP	Riordan, Richard	Polwarth	Lib
De Martino, Daniela	Monbulk	ALP	Rowswell, Brad	Sandringham	Lib
de Vietri, Gabrielle	Richmond	Greens	Sandell, Ellen	Melbourne	Greens
Dimopoulos, Steve	Oakleigh	ALP	Settle, Michaela	Eureka	ALP
Edbrooke, Paul	Frankston	ALP	Smith, Ryan ⁵	Warrandyte	Lib
Edwards, Maree	Bendigo West	ALP	Southwick, David	Caulfield	Lib
Famham, 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	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	Prahran	Greens	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 ⁶	Warrandyte	Lib
Hutchins, Natalie	Sydenham	ALP	Wight, Dylan	Tarneit	ALP
Kathage, Lauren	Yan Yean	ALP	Williams, Gabrielle	Dandenong	ALP
Kealy, Emma	Lowan	Nat	Wilson, Belinda	Narre Warren North	ALP
Kilkenny, Sonya	Carrum	ALP	Wilson, Jess	Kew	Lib

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 7 July 2023

⁶ Sworn in 3 October 2023

Party abbreviations

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

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The SPEAKER (Maree Edwards) took the chair at 12:04 pm, read the prayer and made an acknowledgement of country.

Condolences

Jude Perera

Inga Peulich

The SPEAKER (12:05): I advise the house of the death of Jude Perera, member of the Legislative Assembly for the district of Cranbourne from 2002 to 2018, and the death of Inga Peulich, member of the Legislative Assembly for the district of Bentleigh from 1992 to 2002 and member of the Legislative Council for the region of South-Eastern Metropolitan from 2006 to 2018. I ask members to rise in their places as a mark of respect to the memory of the deceased.

Members stood in their places.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, members. I will convey a message of sympathy from the house to the relatives of the late Jude Perera and Inga Peulich.

Hon. Barry Pullen

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (12:06): I move:

That this house expresses its sincere sorrow at the death of the Honourable Barry Pullen and places on record its acknowledgement of the valuable services rendered by him to the Parliament and the people of Victoria as member of the Legislative Council for the province of Melbourne from 1982 to 1999, Minister for Conservation and Environment in 1992, Minister for Education and Training from 1991 to 1992, Minister for Education from 1990 to 1991, Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs and Minister for the Arts in 1989 and Minister for Housing and Construction from 1988 to 1990.

A big thinker, a gentle socialist, a Rasputin lookalike, a man who was doggedly decent – these are just some of the words that have been used to describe Barry Pullen over the course of his parliamentary career. And Barry was all of these things – smart, kind and determinedly decent. To me, first and foremost though, Barry was a man who lived his Labor values. As a community activist and as a councillor, as a member of Parliament and as a cabinet minister, Barry Pullen believed deeply in the values of fairness, compassion and connection, and that every person who reaches their full potential helps us reach our own. Barry knew this because he had lived it.

Barry was born in Brunswick just two months after the declaration of World War II in 1939, the son of a working-class family that relied on public housing. It was a tough upbringing. So tight was money that Barry left school before he could matriculate, doing a number of semiskilled jobs to rake in just enough to support his family. It was during this time that Barry came to know the struggle of so many migrant Australians – highly educated, articulate but forced to take up those manual jobs, such was the prevailing sense of suspicion at the time.

It was from them, Barry reflected, that he first learned the power of collectivism, and it was because of them, Barry said, that he was encouraged to return to his studies. Working part-time and studying part-time, Barry completed his degree in civil engineering. From there he spent two decades in the Commonwealth and Victorian public services working on some of our state's and our nation's most important projects. But it was the end of the street that awakened Barry's political activism, when in 1969 an ordinary-looking letter from the then Liberal government landed in the letterboxes of residents at Brooks Crescent, North Fitzroy. Their street was a slum, it pronounced, and the housing commission would soon be demolishing every home in the area. It was a decision that relied on an uninformed notion – a notion that these home owners were too poor, too migrant, too working class to fight back. But the commission had underestimated these residents. Certainly it had underestimated Barry Pullen, and under his leadership the Fitzroy Residents Association was born and a battle ensued.

As is so often the case, the union movement came to join the fight for the cause of justice, establishing a ban on demolishing residents' homes. After four long years the commission conceded and Brooks Crescent was allowed to remain whole. For Barry it was yet another reminder of the power of collectivism, the power of people united against injustice and inequality, and it was a lesson Barry carried with him throughout his parliamentary and ministerial career.

He was first elected as a member of the Legislative Council for Melbourne in 1982. He then went on to serve as our state's first Minister for Housing and Construction. During this time his mum was still in the same public home that Barry had grown up in as a kid. His mum had become one of his own tenants. Over the course of his time in this place he added the ministerial portfolios of education and training, conservation and environment, and more to his long list of public service, and in each of these roles Barry carried with him the same steely determination to, as he put it, listen to the plight of people.

So much of Barry's work lives on today: the introduction of the transformed VCE, which I was studying at the time; his focus on learning a second language in our schools; his work to protect our native green spaces; and of course his fierce advocacy for housing reform, including the establishment of a shared ownership scheme. But Barry's contribution extended far beyond his time in this place. Following his retirement in 1999 Barry devoted himself to a number of local organisations, including the Brotherhood of St Laurence, Good Shepherd and the Victorian Council of Social Service. He also continued his activism, and there was a bit to be active about at the time. He was a relentless agitator for the reopening of Fitzroy High, one of the many schools that were closed under the then Kennett government and a school that Labor has proudly not just reopened but also expanded. Until his death Barry also remained so deeply connected to his community. I am told on the news of his passing many of the old-timers at some of Fitzroy's perhaps less gentrified pubs paused and raised their pints in honour of Barry.

Earlier this month we paid tribute in a slightly more formal setting, though a no less fitting location, being the Fitzroy town hall. Hundreds of people came together to honour Barry's life and contributions and to honour his commitment to our cause and his belief in our promise, because over the course of his 84 years Barry never wavered. He had seen firsthand how easy it is to spread fear and ignorance and division, how easy it is to sow hate instead of hope, but Barry also knew that Labor's cause, albeit never easy, was meaningful – that with heart and grit we can change things and make things better and fairer for people who really need it. As a party and as a government we thank Barry for his lifetime contribution and recommit ourselves to his fight.

If we can take some solace from his passing, Barry now rests with the love of his life, his wife and co-activist Margaret, and to his family, and on behalf of a grateful state I would like to extend my condolences to his daughters Naomi, Joanna and Emma, his beloved grandchildren and everyone who loved him. Vale, Barry Pullen.

John PESUTTO (Hawthorn – Leader of the Opposition) (12:13): I am pleased to join with the Premier in support of this condolence motion. The passing of the Honourable Barry Thomas Pullen this year at the age of 84 marks the loss of a respected former member of Parliament and minister. Barry Pullen was a passionate campaigner for urban and multicultural communities and a strong example of the power of grassroots community advocacy. He was a dedicated minister and someone who made a significant contribution to our state and our community's enduring fabric.

Barry was born in 1939 in Melbourne to parents Thomas Pullen, a fibrous plasterer, and Ellen Roderick. He went on to study at the University of Melbourne as well as RMIT and eventually became a civil engineer. His professional life before entering politics was incredibly varied, starting as a survey assistant and eventually rising to the role of Victorian director of the Commonwealth Department of Environment, Housing and Community Development and then later to the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works commission.

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He was a fierce supporter of inner Melbourne and especially the suburb of Fitzroy. After moving there in 1965, Barry and his wife Margaret fell in love with the local multicultural communities, made up then predominantly of Greek and Italian communities. Both Barry and Margaret were founding members of the Fitzroy Residents Association and were deeply involved in the fight against the then housing commission's demolition plans in order to erect high-rise public housing towers. It is therefore no surprise that his first public office was as a Fitzroy city councillor in the years 1972 to 1976.

Barry's path to Parliament was through deep and sustained involvement in community advocacy instead of the traditional Labor pathway through union sponsorship. In 1982 Barry was elected to the state Parliament of Victoria representing Labor in the Council for the seat of Melbourne. He served the Victorian people in Parliament for 17 years, from 1982 to 1999. His ministerial career spanned several portfolios across four years in the Cain and Kirner Labor governments, including housing and construction, conservation and environment, education, education and training, agriculture and rural affairs and the arts. Upon his elevation to the ministry in 1988 the then *Herald* noted that:

In ALP ranks, the grey-bearded civil engineer and Melbourne MLC is known as a hard worker with a passion for detail. He also has a sense of humor.

These are all traits, of course, valuable in any new minister. In the same article Barry told the *Herald* that he believed that his ministry needed to run more like a business, a sentiment which I am sure was shared by his Liberal parliamentary colleagues at the time and which the opposition shares today. Barry spoke fondly about his time as a minister, especially for housing and construction, mentioning that it was funny that many people who he had worked with as an engineer, including those who were very much senior to him, now reported to him.

One of his most significant legacies as a minister was overseeing the implementation of the then Victorian certificate of education, which is well known to Victorian high school students today. Outside of his ministerial duties Barry received considerable community praise following a shock knife attack by a mentally ill person in 1992. Then Magistrate Barrow commended Barry for his bravery during the incident and for coming to the aid of an electorate officer despite being wounded in the attack.

Barry announced his retirement from politics in 1999, telling the media that:

By standing aside the ALP has the opportunity to bring on some fresh and talented people ...

After leaving Parliament and for the next 20 years Barry devoted his time to volunteering, including for the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, the Brotherhood of St Laurence and the Victorian Council of Social Service. He was a proud father to three daughters, Naomi, Joanna and Emma, and a beloved grandfather.

On behalf on this side of the house I convey our deep appreciation to the Honourable Barry Thomas Pullen for his service to the Victorian Parliament and the community he loved. We extend our sincere condolences to his entire family and his friends. May he rest in peace.

Katie HALL (Footscray) (12:18): When Barry Pullen and Caroline Hogg retired from politics in 1999 they were described by former Premier Joan Kirner as 'two of the best'. Indeed Barry Pullen lived a life of service, advocacy and activism. The most powerful activism is grounded in community and a sense of place. When the Hamer government started purchasing blocks in his area, a young Barry was galvanised to protect the interests of his neighbours, who were mostly migrants or pensioners. He organised his community, taking his fight to the Supreme Court. On the back of this organising, Barry helped found the Fitzroy Residents Association with his life partner Margaret.

He was a Fitzroy city councillor from 1972 to 1976 and became an engineer by trade employed by the then Department of Environment, Housing and Community Development. Barry worked his way up from a survey assistant to a draftsman, a technical officer and a lead engineer and eventually became the department's director. In 1982 he was elected to the Victorian Parliament representing the seat of

Melbourne. In 1988 he became a minister in the very department that gave him his start as a young public servant. He served as the Minister for Housing and Construction from 1988 to 1990. He succeeded in his purpose and vision. A lifelong commitment to public housing saw Barry champion the cause from community activism through to heading policy committees and departments all the way to executive leadership of the housing portfolio. There are few who can demonstrate not only so much passion for their community and their values but also so much success in transforming this passion into meaningful action. He was appointed the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs and Minister for the Arts in 1989, and in 1990 he succeeded Joan Kirner as the Minister for Education, becoming Minister for Education and Training in 1991.

In 1992 Barry became the Minister for Conservation and Environment, and it was during his tenure as Minister for Conservation and Environment that Barry, alongside his electorate staff, was attacked by a knife-wielding constituent one morning whilst meeting with a group of local residents. It was noted at the time that Barry did not take notice of his injury. Instead he rushed out to follow the attacker to ensure that no-one else was harmed. Despite taking place over a few minutes, those few minutes encapsulated Barry's dedication to those around him. From meeting with constituents in one moment to tackling and chasing a man with a knife the next, Barry's concern was always for others and how to do right by them. His time in politics was bookended by a commitment to those around him.

Once he retired from public office it was inconceivable to Barry that he would subsequently retire from advocacy and activism. He was instrumental in advocating for the reopening of Fitzroy High after it had been closed by the Kennett government. His intimate knowledge of the community and how to galvanise it around the important issues is something that will be greatly missed. His legacy continues not just in his community but throughout the Parliament and Victoria. As Minister for Housing and Construction he hired and mentored a young Richard Wynne, a social worker who worked in public housing who would then go on to be a Minister for Housing himself. Barry's genuine compassion and care for those in public housing was shared deeply by his eventual successor, fostering a culture of empathy and a genuine desire to do good.

These connections and the stories that emerge of mentor and mentee make Parliament the place it is. More than a building, this is a community. It is because of people like Barry Pullen that this community is one I am proud to be a part of. The opportunity to carry on a legacy of kindness and compassion is one that we should all be grateful and thankful to have. He is remembered not only by his daughters Joanna, Naomi and Emma but by the countless lives he touched through his impressive career both as an MP and as a community leader. From a life lived in dedication to the people of Melbourne and Victoria, Barry's knowledge, wisdom and kindness are a tremendous loss to our community. Vale, Barry Pullen.

Peter WALSH (Murray Plains) (12:23): I rise to support the Premier in her condolence motion to the house. Barry Pullen, if you read the research for this, was a person who was steeped in his community and in support for his community through his whole working life, including his time in politics. As is always the case when you read the inaugural speech of a member of Parliament, Barry commented on the fact that he was coming to the Parliament when there was a Labor government, and he commended his colleagues who had spent decades on the opposition benches through the Bolte, the Hamer and the Thompson years. He was fortunate to come into Parliament and be part of government, and in later years he got the opportunity to serve as a minister in that government as well. He spoke about the fact that before preparing that speech to Parliament he thought about what the things were that led him to come into Parliament, and that was about his community involvement, including in local government, and the fact that to consider the larger issues he had come across in his community involvement you actually needed to go to the big house on the hill, effectively, to be involved in policy decisions to achieve better outcomes.

As has already been said by other people who have contributed, the issue of the housing commission and the redevelopment of Brooks Crescent in Fitzroy was one of the issues that drove him to be involved and want to go into the bigger house on the hill. The other issue that he spoke about in that

speech was the building of the Eastern Freeway through Fitzroy and Collingwood and the fact that at the time that was extremely controversial. He noted that there were up to 600 police deployed there because of the demonstrations against that particular freeway.

As we do these condolence motions, the old is new and the new is old sometimes because we see contemporary issues that are very much the same issues that Barry dealt with as an activist on behalf of his community. I think the article that Brian Howe, a former Deputy Prime Minister, and Richard Wynne, a former minister in this place, wrote about Barry is very, very fitting. Can I just comment that I had the opportunity and the honour of hosting Brian Howe at a shearing shed at Toolleen when he was Deputy Prime Minister. Brian is a tall man. The shearing shed beams were low and he hit his head very severely, and everyone was very worried that they had done a significant injury to the Deputy Prime Minister at the time. But being the rough-and-tumble guy he is, he just rubbed his head and we got on with it. Everyone else was very worried about Brian's health after he did that. The words that they wrote in the article – I suggest those that have not read it go and research it – are a very good precis of the history of Barry and his activism in the local campaigns in the area before politics, while in politics and post politics, as the Leader of the Opposition said. They said that for four decades Barry and his wife were involved in any issues in that particular part of Melbourne.

As has already been said, he came to the Labor Party through community involvement and community activism more so than through the union movement, as some other Labor members of Parliament do. He was committed to his community as a councillor and to the redevelopment I spoke about. He was always interested in the collective and making things better for the people of his particular community. As has also been said, post politics for the next 20 years he devoted his time to the Good Shepherd sisters, the Brotherhood of St Laurence and the Victorian Council of Social Service rather than actually taking on paid employment in consultancy or board membership. He gave back to the community that he came from. That article from Brian Howe and Richard Wynne is something that I commend for people to read.

In his time in government, as I said, in the latter years he got to serve in a number of ministries: as Minister for the Arts, Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs, Minister for Housing and Construction, Minister for Education, Minister for Education and Training and Minister for Conservation and Environment. I also note that in his 17 years in Parliament he stayed on in opposition for the seven years of the Kennett government as a shadow minister. For someone that had been a minister and been there for a number of years I do not imagine it was always easy for him as a shadow minister in the heady days of the Kennett government, but he was Shadow Minister for Environment, Shadow Minister for Conservation and Environment and Shadow Minister for Natural Resources and contributed over that time to his community and to his party.

I note that when he and Caroline Hogg stepped aside and decided not to contest the 1999 election to allow renewal in the Labor Party, the now Premier was one of the candidates that was preselected to enter this Parliament. I congratulate the Premier on her time in the Parliament, because she went on, after being preselected, to win the seat of Bendigo East.

We speak in these condolence motions regularly about people that entered Parliament for the reason of service to their community. I think Barry Pullen is an outstanding example for the reasons he came into Parliament and the service he gave to his community. So to his family in the gallery and to his extended family, our condolences, and we wish for them to celebrate a life that was so well lived.

Steve DIMOPOULOS (Oakleigh – Minister for Environment, Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events, Minister for Outdoor Recreation) (12:29): Barry Thomas Pullen was the son of a plasterer who grew up in the Brunswick and Coburg housing commission areas, as has been stated. Forced to leave school early to earn his board, he worked at a variety of semiskilled jobs. It was a time of postwar migration, and his workmates included many highly cultured and well-educated new Australians. They taught him how to play chess and encouraged him to study further, which he did, as the Premier referred to. Barry spent over two decades in the public service as a civil engineer and

administrator. He was a man who slogged away carefully and for the most part quietly, first at the grassroots level at the Fitzroy Residents Association, as has been mentioned, then as a local councillor and party member and finally as a backbencher in the upper house for six years before being elected Minister for Housing and Construction in 1988.

He was a proud Labor man who considered himself incredibly fortunate to enter this place. Barry started his career in the community he loved and knew that the issues he was facing could only be resolved at the highest levels, the houses of Parliament. During his time in the public service he often had to carry out programs developed by governments and understood how important the link is between effective machinery to carry out those actions and the development of effective policy at the government level. He understood how the system worked like nobody else. He had the invaluable knowledge of all tiers of government, which made him so successful in the delivery of policy. Following his elevation to the ministry in 1988, Barry bravely took on some of the most difficult portfolios, as have been mentioned: housing and construction, agriculture and rural affairs, the arts, education and conservation and environment. He lived in a single-storey Victorian brick house in Fitzroy, apparently entangled in the sort of overgrown lush garden you would expect from a would-be conservation minister.

Whilst his enduring passion lay in housing rights, Barry was a keen environmentalist and budding conservationist. In 1992 he was appointed as Victoria's Minister for Conservation and Environment. He took a particular interest in our stunning Yarra Bend Park, calling it:

... the lungs of central Melbourne and its enhancement and extension should be a priority for any civilised government.

As conservation and environment minister he advocated for an increase in open space in Melbourne, saying that:

... Melburnians must be extremely vigilant in protecting parks from erosion.

Barry understood the importance of our natural environment from the beginning of his political career, and during his time in the upper house he served as deputy chairman of the joint parliamentary committee on natural resources and the environment. During these early days he was also involved in developing the state conservation strategy and the timber strategy. Barry Pullen was a pioneer in the work that I am continuing today and the Allan Labor government is continuing today.

Barry's interest in conservation was no doubt influenced by his friend Joan. Joining the Legislative Assembly at the same time as Barry, Joan Kirner was a true conservationist from the start. At the time Joan was Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands – all good people have been minister for the environment at some point –

Jacinta Allan interjected.

Steve DIMOPOULOS: and those who have not, a Premier – while Heather Mitchell was president of the Victorian Farmers Federation. Together they created a network of groups from different walks of life which worked together to achieve land restoration with departmental assistance. That was 1986. It proved to be a very practical grassroots movement and, by 1990, 70 groups had formed. Landcare was born in Barry Pullen's government through the efforts of Joan Kirner and the whole government. It then spread to other states, whereupon a national Landcare program was developed. This was during the entire time that Barry was in government. During Barry's tenure as Minister for Conservation and Environment Bob Hawke declared the 1990s the decade of Landcare. By early 2000 there were 4000 Landcare groups in Australia. The Landcare model has been adopted in New Zealand and is being introduced in the United States, Iceland, Canada and parts of Asia.

In fact in that short time he was environment and conservation minister – I just want to read a few of the things he did as a bit of a reference – he released the Victorian *Decade of Landcare Plan*; he supported initiatives in the Royal Botanic Gardens, including a new multimillion-dollar watering

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system; he helped plant pine seedlings as part of the millionth hectare of softwood plantations in Australia; he sought to prohibit misleading environmental claims through amendments to the Fair Trading Act; he sought to amend the National Parks Act 1975 via the National Parks (Wilderness) Bill 1992 to protect high-quality wilderness areas, including 20 new wilderness areas; he fought for a better recycling and waste management system in Victoria via the Environment Protection (Resource Recovery) Bill 1992; and he introduced initiatives to help ecologically sustainable development in Victoria. I could go on. There were many, many environmental achievements in this short time, which just reminds everybody I think, and his family, of the legacy – that for Barry and for our government, for Labor Party governments, the environment movement is a Labor movement, because we started that grassroots movement.

Barry believed that his Labor government would bring about a greater degree of social justice, and he was interested in the overlap of social issues and economics. You could not find a truer Labor man. His values lay in his community and for those who were the most disadvantaged of us. His passion to help is what brought him here; in fact it is what brings us all here.

Following his exit from politics Barry continued advocating for his beloved Fitzroy community, as we heard, for the rest of his life, and indulging in his love of the outdoors: camping, hiking, bushwalking and other activities with his family. Barry was known by all as a hard worker with a passion for detail and a sense of humour. In true legacy the Pullen family has requested that in lieu of flowers tributes may be made in the form of contributions to Aboriginal Housing Victoria.

As the current Minister for Environment and on behalf of the portfolio and all the people interested in his work as environment minister and as a member of the Labor government, I want to commend the giant that he was in this movement. My sympathies to his family. This government continues the good work that he and that government started. Vale, Barry Pullen.

Nina TAYLOR (Albert Park) (12:35): We pay our deepest respects and celebrate the life of a remarkable man, the Honourable Barry Pullen. His journey, marked by a profound commitment to public service and his community, has left an indelible mark on the state of Victoria and on all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Barry was born on 1 November 1939 in Melbourne to Thomas Pullen, a fibrous plasterer, and Ellen Roderick. He grew up in a modest home where the values of hard work, dedication and community service were instilled in him from an early age. Barry's educational journey began at Moreland State School and continued through Moreland Central School and Coburg High School. His pursuit of knowledge led him to the University of Melbourne and RMIT, where he studied to become a civil engineer.

Before entering the political arena Barry was a founding member of the Fitzroy Residents Association, and he served as a Fitzroy city councillor from 1972 to 1976. His work with the FRA was pivotal in addressing urban and social issues from preserving local heritage to improving housing conditions. This early advocacy laid the foundation for his distinguished career in public service. Barry spent over two decades in the public sector before being elected to the Victorian Parliament in 1982. His roles ranged from a survey assistant and draftsman to a civil engineer and the Victorian director of the Department of Environment, Housing and Community Development. These experiences equipped him with a deep understanding of the issues facing our state, which he carried into his political career.

As a member of the Victorian Parliament from 1982 to 1999 Barry represented the Legislative Council seat of Melbourne. He was a dedicated minister in the Cain and Kirner Labor governments and held a number of ministerial portfolios. Today I shall focus on his tenure as Minister for Education. He spearheaded crucial reforms, including the introduction of the Victorian certificate of education, aimed at enhancing the quality and equity of education in Victoria. His commitment to curriculum reforms, equity in school funding, teacher professional development and the integration of technology in education set a new standard for our education system. Barry's legacy in education is further

exemplified by his unwavering support for the Fitzroy High School blockade – as has been quite rightly discussed – in 1992, standing alongside parents and residents to fight for the school's reopening.

His dedication to community causes did not wane after his parliamentary career. Barry continued to serve through his involvement with the Good Shepherd sisters, the Brotherhood of St Laurence and the Victorian Council of Social Service, where his insights and experience were deeply valued.

Beyond his professional achievements Barry was a devoted family man. He was married to the late Margaret Pullen, and together they raised three wonderful daughters Naomi, Joanna and Emma. Barry's family was his anchor, providing him with the strength and support to pursue his relentless work in public service. He was also a proud grandfather to his beloved grandchildren Tashi, Milo and Dust, who brought him immense joy and pride.

Master of ceremonies Mark Madden, Barry's former media adviser, aptly described him as 'a true servant of the people of Victoria'. He said, 'He was a person of impact, he made a difference.' Indeed Barry's life was a testament to his belief in the power of service, advocacy and community.

Barry Pullen passed away on 26 June 2024 at the age of 84. In lieu of flowers the Pullen family requested that tributes be made to Aboriginal Housing Victoria, continuing Barry's lifelong commitment to social justice and support for the most vulnerable in our community. Today we remember Barry not just as a politician or a public servant but as a compassionate human being whose life was dedicated to making a difference. His legacy of advocacy, his contributions to education and his unwavering support for his community will forever be cherished. We are grateful to Barry for his enduring commitment to Victoria and for the countless lives he touched. He will be missed, but his legacy will continue to inspire us all. Vale, Barry Pullen.

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

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (12:41): I move:

That, as a further mark of respect to the memory of the late Honourable Barry Pullen, the house now adjourns until 2 pm today.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned 12:41 pm.

The SPEAKER took the chair at 2:02 pm.

Questions without notice and ministers statements

Construction, Forestry and Maritime Employees Union

John PESUTTO (Hawthorn – Leader of the Opposition) (14:02): My question is to the Premier. When did the Premier first become aware that CFMEU officials on taxpayer-funded worksites were acting outside the law?

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (14:02): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. In answer to this question a couple of weeks ago, I outlined the very strong action that the government is taking to stamp out this rotten culture at its roots – strong action that I note has been followed by a number of other state jurisdictions. I was –

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, the question was when the Premier became aware, not what the Premier may or may not have done.

The SPEAKER: The Premier had just commenced her answer.

Jacinta ALLAN: I make this point because I want to be very clear that the Leader of the Opposition referred to allegations of criminal behaviour. In terms of addressing allegations of criminal behaviour

and in terms of the actions that we have already taken as a government to refer allegations of criminal behaviour to Victoria Police, in May of last year – and I have already addressed this matter publicly, some weeks ago – a reference was made to allegations that there was the potential for criminal behaviour on some worksites. That was made to me.

Members interjecting.

Jacinta ALLAN: I said May of last year; I gave you your answer.

John Pesutto: On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, my question did not refer to criminality. My question referred to CFMEU officials acting outside the law. That is not just criminal, that is civil as well.

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

Jacinta ALLAN: I could not have been more relevant to the question. If the Leader of the Opposition does not want me to provide this information to the house, that is really a matter in his hands. As I was referring to, a reference was made in a meeting that I was in with the director-general of the then Major Transport Infrastructure Authority that there were references to alleged potential criminal behaviour on worksites. I asked for that matter to be immediately investigated by the agency and the department, which it was. Those allegations were referred to Victoria Police by the agency. I also, in June of last year, following the advice from those agencies, wrote to the Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police referring those allegations to his attention as the appropriate independent agency to investigate allegations of this type.

John PESUTTO (Hawthorn – Leader of the Opposition) (14:06): The Premier has overseen cost blowouts in excess of \$40 billion on government projects due to corruption, criminality and mismanagement, principally because of the toxic culture driven by the CFMEU. Will the Premier establish a royal commission to investigate the corruption, criminality and mismanagement of projects due to the CFMEU?

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (14:06): There was a royal commission in this country, a royal commission called by the former federal Liberal government, which did not call John Setka. But do you know who did call John Setka during this time? The Liberal state government's industrial relations minister, appointing him to the state government's building industry consultative committee. The call was made by the Liberal Party in government to appoint John Setka to its committee.

John Pesutto: On a point of order on relevance, Speaker, can you direct the Premier back to the question?

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

Jacinta ALLAN: In addressing questions of royal commissions, as I said, the former Liberal state government appointed John Setka to the building industry consultative committee, and it was this government that removed him in 2019.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, the Premier is debating the question.

The SPEAKER: The Premier has concluded her answer.

Ministers statements: early childhood education

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (14:08): As every parent in this chamber would know, one of the most chaotic parts of the morning of every school day is getting out of the house and getting the kids to school – making sure they are out of bed and they have had their breakfast, cleaned their teeth, packed their bags and got their shoes on. I am not just living my experience, I am living the experience of parents right across the state every single day to get the kids to school on time. That task is made even tougher if you have got kids at school and kids at kinder. That dreaded double drop-off is a real challenge for parents right across the state. It is stressful, it is frustrating and it is just one more

headache, frankly, and we need to look at ways we can support parents to avoid those sorts of headaches, which is why we are making it easier by building more kinders on school sites or right next door to schools. It means a single drop-off, one gate, one park, and you know that you have got your kids to school or kinder safely at the start of the day. It saves time, it saves money and it saves stress as well.

That is why just last week I was really pleased to announce another eight kindergartens that will be built on new school sites to start from term 1, 2026. Not only are we building new kinders on school sites; it also means a thousand extra kinder places for families across the state in communities like Cranbourne North, Armstrong Creek, Reservoir, Clyde, South Morang, Gordon, Lysterfield and in our community of Kennington as well. This is on top of the 60 that we have already undertaken – 20 opening next year, another 21 in 2026 – and this is on top of free kinder for parents right across the state, helping young Victorians get the best learning, helping families with cost-of-living pressures and helping families with those getting-out-of-the-house pressures as well.

Construction, Forestry and Maritime Employees Union

John PESUTTO (Hawthorn – Leader of the Opposition) (14:10): My question is to the Premier. Does Mr Greg Wilson, the chair of the review the Premier has announced, have the power to hold public hearings as part of his review into the CFMEU?

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (14:10): Greg Wilson has been appointed to conduct an independent review, and I am pleased to see that the Leader of the Opposition is referencing the strong action we have taken as a government, because the independent review is one part of a series of actions that we are taking.

John Pesutto: On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, the question was very narrowly drafted in relation to whether Mr Wilson's review will hold public hearings. Can you direct the Premier back to the question?

Danny Pearson: On the point of order, Speaker, this is the second time those opposite have interrupted the Premier when she is less than 30 seconds into her answer.

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

Jacinta ALLAN: This review is in addition to the leadership that the federal Labor government is taking, because as most of us in this house should be aware, it is the federal government who wields the industrial relations powers in this state, which is why I asked for the federal government to review enterprise bargaining agreements in this state. The New South Wales government followed our lead, and that is what the federal government is doing. Greg Wilson leading the independent review is going to be an important additional mechanism to support that work, because we know that we have more to do to strengthen the –

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, standing orders do require the Premier to be direct in answering the question – standing order 58. The Premier has not even addressed the question as to whether or not there will be public hearings. I would ask you to ask the Premier to go to that question.

The SPEAKER: I cannot tell the Premier how to answer a question. The Premier was being relevant to the question.

Jacinta ALLAN: The work that Mr Wilson will be doing will be to look at what we need to do to strengthen the arrangements between state government agencies and departments that engage with construction companies and construction unions but also to provide pathways for whistleblowers and complainants to have their matters raised in a confidential way. In terms of the arrangements for the independent inquiry, the independent inquiry has been established under the Victorian Inquiries Act, which was a piece of legislation that we supported that was brought into this place under former Premier Denis Napthine, and that Inquiries Act provides Mr Wilson with the powers he needs to

conduct his inquiry independent of the government – the powers to undertake the task that he needs to undertake.

John PESUTTO (Hawthorn – Leader of the Opposition) (14:13): Does Mr Wilson have the power to compel answers from ministers as part of his review into the CFMEU?

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (14:13): This is the thing about an independent review that been established under the Inquiries Act: it is independent. It is independent of the government. It has been established under the Inquiries Act, which is a piece of legislation that was introduced when the Leader of the Opposition was working for the former Liberal government.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, not just in this question but today the Premier is refusing to in any way go to the substance of the questions that are being asked, either directly or otherwise. On this particular question I would ask you to bring the Premier back to actually answering the question. The standing orders do provide the capacity for direct answers.

The SPEAKER: The Premier was being relevant to the question that was asked.

Jacinta ALLAN: Mr Wilson will undertake his duties consistent with the independent powers that he has under that Inquiries Act. I am not going to take the path that the Leader of the Opposition is suggesting – that we should interfere with his work, that we should direct him in his work. That is clearly the approach the Leader of the Opposition wants us to take.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, *Rulings from the Chair* is very, very clear that a minister must relate their remarks to the question asked, and I would put to you that the Premier is quite directly and obviously obfuscating and refusing to answer the question. I would ask you to rule that the Premier come back to the actual questions asked rather than trying to talk about the topics more generally.

The SPEAKER: The Premier was being relevant to the question that was asked. I cannot direct the Premier to answer the question the way that you might like her to answer the question, but she was being relevant. The Premier has concluded her answer.

James Newbury: Further to the point of order, Speaker, if the ministry can simply just on every –
Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Manager of Opposition Business can raise a point of order.

James Newbury: Speaker, clarifying further the point you have just made, it is clear that there is an issue with the ministry refusing to do anything other than talk about the topics that are raised rather than going to the questions. Previous rulings, as is clear in *Rulings from the Chair*, show that answers do have to go to the substance of the question, and that is clearly not the case.

The SPEAKER: Manager of Opposition Business, I have ruled on the point of order. The Premier has concluded her answer.

Ministers statements: healthcare workforce

Mary-Anne THOMAS (Macedon – Leader of the House, Minister for Health, Minister for Health Infrastructure, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:16): I rise to update the house on how the Allan Labor government is supporting Victoria's current and next generation of nurses and midwives to get the education that they need to grow and pursue their careers right here in Victoria. The Allan Labor government knows how hard our nurses and midwives work, and we respect their skills and knowledge. That is why we have always had their back, growing the workforce by 36 per cent since we came to government and supporting a once-in-a-generation pay rise that improves gender wage equity and truly recognises the work of this female-dominated workforce. And it is why we have invested \$270 million in our Making It Free to Study Nursing and Midwifery program. I am pleased

to advise the house that applications for the third round of this program are now open to students of nursing and midwifery at universities right across our state.

Of course we have already made opportunities available for nurses and midwives who are already working in our system, with scholarships for postgrad nurses to complete studies in specialty areas like intensive care, paediatrics and cancer care; scholarships to enable enrolled nurses to upskill to become registered nurses; and scholarships to support the training and employment of 100 new nurse practitioners.

And our investments are working. I am pleased to inform the house that this year alone another 3600 nurses have joined our public health system. Only an Allan Labor government can be trusted to support the education and training and support the development of our nurses and midwives, and only an Allan Labor government truly respects our nurses and our midwives to deliver the world-class care that Victorians expect.

Construction, Forestry and Maritime Employees Union

John PESUTTO (Hawthorn – Leader of the Opposition) (14:18): My question is to the Premier. When asked if the Premier knew the extent of CFMEU thuggery, corruption and criminality, journalist Nick McKenzie said that there is no doubt about it. Other than the instances in 2022 that the Premier has publicly confirmed, have further allegations of misconduct by CFMEU officials been raised with the Premier?

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (14:19): Again, I have addressed this matter on a number of occasions already in the last couple of weeks. But for the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition, in terms of allegations of criminal behaviour, I answered that question earlier. In terms of the one occasion when that was raised with me, I have outlined the action I took, which included writing to the Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police. In terms of broader allegations around broader poor behaviour on worksites, when these matters were raised with me from time to time –

John Pesutto: Hang on. They were raised with you?

Jacinta ALLAN: This is nothing new.

John Pesutto: That is new, Premier

Jacinta ALLAN: No, it's not. You might have been away.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

John Pesutto interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I ask you to apologise.

John Pesutto: I am sorry, Speaker.

Jacinta ALLAN: Have you apologised to Walshy for not calling him either? 'Hello, Walshy, where are you?'

The SPEAKER: Premier, through the Chair.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for Caulfield! Leader of the Opposition!

Jacinta ALLAN: Let us be clear what is going on here. The Leader of the Opposition is embarrassed because we have just caught him out for sleeping on the job.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: I will not tolerate this level of disrespect in the chamber.

John Pesutto: On a point of order, Speaker, the Premier has just revealed to the house for the first time and to the Victorian people for the first time that she was told about other matters. I ask the Premier now to address the question, and, Speaker, with respect, I ask that you direct the Premier now to address the question.

Jacinta ALLAN: On the point of order, Speaker, I want to be absolutely clear for the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition, who has clearly not been paying attention to anything that has been going on here in Victoria in the last few weeks – he has clearly not been paying attention – that I have answered this question repeatedly. Where allegations were put to me about behaviour on worksites, I referred those allegations to the relevant agencies. I want to be crystal clear that I am not going to stand here and have the Leader of the Opposition use his embarrassment as a –

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: The Premier was speaking on the point of order. Premier, your point of order needs to be relevant to the point of order.

Jacinta ALLAN: Speaker, in making this point of order, I am refuting it in the strongest possible terms, and I would suggest that the members of the gallery could furnish the Leader of the Opposition with any number of transcripts that go to this point.

The SPEAKER: The Premier was responding to the Leader of the Opposition's point of order. The Leader of the Opposition did not actually have a point of order, and therefore I refer the Premier back to answering the question.

Jacinta ALLAN: As I have said on a number of occasions in the last few weeks – and I appreciate the Leader of the Opposition has not been paying attention to what has been said in the past, because he would know that I have already publicly addressed this on a number of occasions – where matters were raised with me from time to time those matters were referred to the relevant agencies for their action and response. From time to time –

A member interjected.

Jacinta ALLAN: I would ask that you withdraw that allegation against the Minister for Planning right now – that you called her a liar. I would ask you to withdraw that.

The SPEAKER: The Premier knows that a request for withdrawal needs to come from the person that it was directed at.

Jacinta ALLAN: On occasions those matters have been referred, when it was in place, to the ABCC or its replacement the Fair Work Commission, because it is those agencies that wield the industrial relations powers in this state. These matters of fact may be an inconvenience for the Leader of the Opposition. He may want to be covering up his embarrassment at being caught out at being grossly incorrect, but this is a matter I have addressed on a number of occasions in the past few weeks.

Michael O'Brien interjected.

Jacinta ALLAN: Speaker, could I ask for a withdrawal, please, before the member's point of order? I ask the member for Malvern to withdraw what he just said across the chamber to me.

The SPEAKER: The Premier is seeking a withdrawal.

Michael O'Brien interjected.

The SPEAKER: The member for Malvern is asked to withdraw without any comment. I ask the member for Malvern to withdraw.

Michael O'Brien: For what?

The SPEAKER: For comments made across the chamber.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! If the member for Malvern does not want to withdraw, I ask the member for Malvern to leave the chamber.

Michael O'Brien: On a point of order, Speaker –

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point order, member for Malvern. You have been asked to withdraw. There is no commentary.

Michael O'Brien interjected.

The SPEAKER: The member for Malvern will leave the chamber for half an hour.

Member for Malvern withdrew from chamber.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: I ask the Manager of Opposition Business, if he wishes to get my attention, that it not be through yelling at me.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, in the last sitting week I sought a withdrawal under standing order 119, and you ruled that only where you heard what was said would you demand that the member withdraw. It was clear that the comment that may or may not have been said by the member for Malvern was not heard by anybody, and I would ask you why a different approach was taken today than in the last sitting week.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Manager of Opposition Business not to question my rulings.

Ben Carroll: On a point or order, Speaker, the member for Malvern made two imputations. First and foremost he called the planning minister a liar. In *Rulings from the Chair*, from Speaker Maddigan:

An accusation that a member has lied, or is lying, is an imputation of improper motive, and a contravention of the standing orders.

And then also we have seen very clearly he referred to the Premier as being corrupt. That is why he was asked to withdraw.

The SPEAKER: I have ruled on this matter.

John Pesutto: On a different point of order, Speaker, can we clarify for this side of the house that it is now the practice of this house that any member on this side can require a retraction or apology for imputations cast towards another member? Is that now the practice? Where is the Minister for Planning? Is that the practice now?

The SPEAKER: The Premier asked for a withdrawal for herself.

Brad Rowswell: On a separate point of order, Speaker, firstly, the Deputy Premier knows – should know – that an accusation against a member of this place can only be raised by substantive motion. The Deputy Premier's point of order was not a substantive motion. And the member for Malvern has confirmed to me that he did not refer to the Premier as being corrupt.

The SPEAKER: I have ruled on this point of order.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! The house will come to order. The Deputy Premier knows how to raise a substantive motion against someone, so I refer him to that. But I did not rule on the Deputy Premier's point of order. Is there a supplementary question?

John Pesutto: Before I get to my supplementary question, Speaker, might it be possible for the Manager of Opposition Business and me to see you after question time about these matters?

The SPEAKER: Absolutely. Always my door is open.

John PESUTTO (Hawthorn – Leader of the Opposition) (14:28): For the first time and in terms that all Victorians could hear –

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: The member for Laverton can leave the chamber for an hour. Members will be removed without warning.

Member for Laverton withdrew from chamber.

John PESUTTO: For the first time and in terms that all Victorians could hear for themselves, the Premier of Victoria just revealed moments ago that she was told on other occasions about misconduct by the CFMEU. It is now incumbent on the Premier to come clean about what she knew and when she knew it, so what were the other issues that the Premier was told about and that she has concealed from the Victorian people up until now?

Members interjecting.

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

Member for Lara withdrew from chamber.

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (14:29): In answering the Leader of the Opposition's question, the Leader of the Opposition is deeply wrong. He is deeply incorrect in terms of his framing of my answer earlier as being the first time I have commented on these matters. He is simply incorrect, and no amount of poor man's Oscar-type performances are going to cover up the fact that the Leader of the Opposition is deeply wrong on this matter.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, the Premier is debating the question. The question simply asked the Premier, who referred to previous instances she became aware of, to reveal them to the rest of Victoria.

The SPEAKER: A point of order is not an opportunity to repeat the question. I think the Premier was answering the question.

Jacinta ALLAN: In answering questions, I am absolutely entitled to correct where information that is wrong has been put in that question, and that is exactly what I was doing. The Leader of the Opposition may be embarrassed about his blunder today in this place and be using all sorts of bluster to cover it up, but I will continue to focus on the action our government is taking.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, the Premier is clearly debating the question to cover up for the earlier mistake.

The SPEAKER: The Premier has concluded her answer.

Ministers statements: Scout facilities

Natalie SULEYMAN (St Albans – Minister for Veterans, Minister for Small Business, Minister for Youth) (14:31): I rise to update the house on how the Allan Labor government is delivering more exciting opportunities and activities for Victoria's young people. Victoria is the Education State, and we are proud to provide opportunities for young people to learn and grow. It is all about building their life skills. As the Scout law says, be respectful, do what is right and believe in yourself. That is why, together with Scouts Victoria, we are investing in Scouts facilities, and since 2018 we have completed 22 Scout hall projects.

I have seen firsthand the impacts that Scouts has. The Allan Labor government has funded almost \$6.5 million since 2018 into better Scout buildings. The members for Kororoit, Frankston and Thomastown know all too well the value of local Scout halls. They are places for communities to come together, participate and enjoy. But that is not all. We have got another seven Scout hall projects underway, and I cannot wait to get to Gilwell Park with the member for Monbulk to celebrate the completion of the new ninja warrior course.

We know that when you invest in facilities and provide lifelong learning opportunities and important skills, young people succeed. Whether it is learning how to tie a knot or building confidence, resilience or new friendships, it is even more important today for kids to get active away from screens. Scouts has a proud legacy, supporting young people for over 100 years. I would like to thank Scouts Victoria and their hardworking volunteers for all that they do. The Allan Labor government will continue to invest in our young Victorians so they can do their very best.

Housing

Gabrielle DE VIETRI (Richmond) (14:33): My question is for the Premier. New documents have confirmed that the Victorian Labor government is keeping thousands of public homes empty right now here in Victoria. A list 89 pages long obtained –

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! Could the member for Richmond start again, please.

Gabrielle DE VIETRI: My question is for the Premier. New documents that have been obtained under FOI confirm that the Victorian Labor government is keeping thousands of public homes empty right now in Victoria, with a list 89 pages long of vacant properties while 125,000 people wait for a public home. In my electorate in just one building I counted 27 apartments, many of them newly renovated, sitting for months and months and some over a year empty. That is 14 per cent of those apartments that no-one is living in, and the Productivity Commission reported a 6.3 per cent public housing vacancy statewide. Will the Premier explain to the 125,000 people waiting for a place to live why her government is keeping public homes empty in the middle of a housing crisis?

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (14:34): I thank the member for Richmond for her question. When it comes to supporting the construction of more public, social and affordable homes in this state, we are doing everything we can to build more homes. I would love it if just once the member for Richmond stood up in this place and talked about how she would join with us in that work to build more public, social and affordable homes. The Fitzroy Gasworks is a terrific example of where we are wanting to build more homes, but unfortunately I do not think we are on a unity ticket with the member for Richmond on that one.

In terms of what the member for Richmond has referred to, I will seek some further advice from the Minister for Housing. Of course the Minister for Housing is very busy at the moment with the \$6.3 billion that we have invested through our Big Housing Build to build more public, social and affordable homes, but I will seek some further advice from the Minister for Housing on this matter.

Gabrielle DE VIETRI (Richmond) (14:36): It is really puzzling that the Premier, in the middle of a housing crisis that she insists is all about supply, is unaware that or unable to justify why her government has not been able to take these empty homes and these people needing a home and put them together. I can think of two possible reasons why. Either this government is incompetent and has defunded and deprioritised housing to such an extent that the department cannot do its job, or this government is deliberately keeping these homes empty for years and years to make it easier to demolish them without a fight and hand the land over to private developers. Which is it?

Mary-Anne Thomas: On a point of order, Speaker, on the question, it is important that questions are factual, and also they cannot be speculative. I suggest to you that that was not a question from the

member for Richmond but a rant and that she was making it up as she went along. I ask you to ask her to rephrase her question.

Sam Hibbins: On the point of order, Speaker, it was a very clear question from the member for Richmond. It may have gone unheard by the members of the government, who again talked all the way through the member for Richmond's question – a constant tactic of theirs – but it was a very clear question outlining and asking for the reasons behind why the government is leaving these houses vacant. I ask that you rule the point of order from the government out of order.

The SPEAKER: I ask the member for Richmond to rephrase her question. It was based on a hypothetical.

Gabrielle DE VIETRI: My question is: is the 6.3 per cent vacancy rate in state owned and managed public housing due to inadequate funding, making it impossible for the department to do its job to actually fill those homes, or is it in anticipation of this Victorian Labor government's plan to privatise that land in order to be able to demolish those buildings empty?

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (14:38): The answer to the member for Richmond's question is no and no. Can I be really clear: we are proud of the work we are doing to build more public, social and affordable homes in this state, and where from time to time that involves working in partnership with investors and developers to build more public, social and affordable homes, we will do so.

Sam Hibbins: On a point of order, Speaker, this is not a question about property developers or building, this is a question about using the existing public housing stock that is available. It is a very clear question, and I would ask you to bring the Premier back to answering the actual question.

The SPEAKER: The Premier was being relevant to the question, and she has concluded her answer.

Ministers statements: pedestrian safety

Melissa HORNE (Williamstown – Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, Minister for Local Government, Minister for Ports and Freight, Minister for Roads and Road Safety) (14:39): I rise today to update the house on this government's investment into making our roads safer for some of our most vulnerable road users, pedestrians. Tragically, this year 28 pedestrians have lost their lives on Victorian roads.

A member interjected.

Melissa HORNE: Let us not politicise this, please. This is a 40 per cent increase on the number of pedestrians who had lost their lives at the same time last year. A \$23 million investment will improve pedestrian safety for all pedestrians but in particular our youngest travellers, those walking to and from school. This important investment will see 29 locations across the state upgraded where we know pedestrians are at higher risk. We will be making improvements to these locations with infrastructure upgrades, including zebra crossings, raised intersections – also known as wombat crossings – and pedestrian-operated signals.

Jacinta Allan interjected.

Melissa HORNE: That is what they are called. We have worked closely with local councils to identify the projects to be delivered. I am sure the member for Pascoe Vale will be pleased that we are installing a raised intersection and two crossings to make it safer for students crossing the Essex Street–Landells Road intersection. I also visited Rouse Street and Esplanade East with the member for Albert Park earlier this year, where we are installing a raised pedestrian crossing and kerb extensions. Last year I visited Mill Park Secondary College with the member for Mill Park, and I am sure she is pleased to hear that we will be delivering a wombat crossing at Moorhead Drive. Member for Polwarth, it is good to see you back in the chamber. You will be excited that at North Torquay wombat crossings are being installed at intersections along the Fischer Street pedestrian link. Lastly, one for the member for

Mildura: in Merbein we are delivering improved pedestrian connections to schools, including Merbein P-10 College and Our Lady primary. These are only a handful of investments that we are seeing across the state with the improvements to be completed.

Construction, Forestry and Maritime Employees Union

Peter WALSH (Murray Plains) (14:41): My question is to the Premier. In 2022 the directors of an Indigenous labour hire firm sent detailed evidence to the Premier that CFMEU officials were threatening extreme violence and unlawfully banning non-union-preferred companies from state-funded projects. Why did the Premier fail to respond to this firm for more than 12 months?

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (14:42): I thank the Leader of the National Party for his question, and I particularly thank the Leader of the National Party for his question because it puts a lie to the allegation that the Leader of the Opposition was making in his earlier question about me not having addressed these questions previously.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier will not use that language in the chamber.

Jacinta ALLAN: I really do thank the Leader of the National Party for clarifying that matter for the house today. In terms of the question that the Leader of the National Party has put, I, again, addressed this matter a couple weeks ago, and I am again happy to address it for the benefit of the house. This was a matter that was raised with a number of members of federal and state Parliament, I am advised, and also a range of different government agencies.

I do acknowledge there was a delay. I do not dispute that the organisation first wrote to a number of people in April of 2022. However, the correspondence was not brought to my attention until January of 2023, having been logged with my office in late October. Of course what happened in late October was we very quickly soon after that went into the caretaker period, and the correspondence was activated as we came out of that caretaker period. I responded formally in writing in 2023 in April, and between that January and April period conversations were had with that company and representatives of the Major Transport Infrastructure Authority, and I concluded those conversations by corresponding formally in writing to that organisation. Part of the advice to that organisation was that, given the federal government wields the industrial relations powers in this state, their matter needed to be addressed and responded to by the Fair Work Commission.

Peter WALSH (Murray Plains) (14:44): In recent days the Premier has told Victorians that if they witness corrupt or criminal action by the CFMEU they should report it to police. Why did it take the Premier more than 12 months to refer the allegations of corrupt and criminal misconduct by the CFMEU?

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (14:45): I thank the Leader of the National Party again for his question, because this provides me with the opportunity to make a very clear distinction between allegations. The allegation that was put to me in that correspondence did not contain allegations of criminal behaviour. The one time allegations of criminal behaviour were put to me, I have outlined the actions I took to this house. In other instances, those matters have been referred to the relevant agencies for their response, which I have also outlined for the benefit of the house today. Again I thank the Leader of the National Party for assisting the Leader of the Opposition in getting up to speed on what has been happening in the state in the last few weeks in terms of how we are responding to pull this rotten culture out by its roots. We have zero tolerance for this behaviour. We are taking strong action, and that is the action that I will focus on.

Ministers statements: education

Ben CARROLL (Niddrie – Minister for Education, Minister for Medical Research) (14:46): I rise to update the house on how we are delivering the Education State to those that need it most. Yalingbu Yirramboi means ‘today and tomorrow’ in the local languages of the Boon Wurrung and Woiewurrung peoples. It is also the name of our brand new school at the Royal Children’s Hospital. The Premier,

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the Minister for Health and I visited the school site late last year. Led by Naomi McBride, it is providing world-class health care as well as world-class education to our most vulnerable and sickest kids in the state of Victoria. Students are receiving individualised teaching and learning programs aligned with the Victorian certificate of education via flexible teaching modes, including classroom sessions, small group sessions, individualised bedside support and remote learning opportunities. There are 22 registered teachers and six education support staff at the brand new school at the Royal Children's Hospital. They are now benefiting from a greater range of teaching materials, supports and professional development opportunities. This is also the sixth government school that is linked to our health services. This ensures students can continue their learning between hospital, school and their home base.

Our newest school at the Royal Children's Hospital is the 122nd school to be opened since we came to office. That is 122 schools in 10 years, and it could not be any more special than at the Royal Children's Hospital, because every child deserves a quality education, no matter where they live and no matter their bank account or the circumstances that their family may find themselves in. We are proud to be building the Education State. We are proud to be making sure that we are helping and supporting our youngest, littlest, sickest kids to get the education they deserve – that they do not have a disrupted education and that they get all the way to year 12 and beyond in the Education State.

The SPEAKER: The time for questions has ended. The house will move to constituency questions.

Roma Britnell: On a point of order, Speaker, I bring to your attention that I have an overdue constituency question that was due to be answered on 28 June: constituency question 660 to the Minister for Health. We want her answer to the question: will she rule out mergers? If she does not want to tell me here, she can tell me at the rally in Warrnambool on 16 August. I invite you, Minister, to attend.

The SPEAKER: Order! That is not the way to raise a constituency question.

David Hodgett: On a point of order, Speaker, I too have an overdue constituency question, which was asked on 5 March this year: number 532 to the Minister for Planning. I would ask that you raise that with the minister so that I can get a response that I can take back to my constituent.

Bridget Vallence: On a point of order, Speaker, I have a number of questions that have been unanswered by ministers in this Labor government: 655, an adjournment matter to the Minister for Children, unanswered. These are all for the Minister for Skills and TAFE – 1135, 1137, 1138, 1139, 1140, 1141, 1148, 1149, 1150, 1151, 1215, 1220, 1221, 1222, 1227, 1229, 1231, 1233, 1234, 1235 –

The SPEAKER: I ask the member for Evelyn to pass her list to the clerk when she has concluded.

Bridget Vallence: There are more for other ministers: to the Attorney-General, question 1214; to the Minister for Jobs and Industry, questions 1216, 1219, 1223, 1239 and 1240; and to the Minister for Economic Growth, 1323, 1324, 1325, 1326, 1327, 1328, 1329 and 1330. Could you please ask those delinquent ministers to answer the questions for my constituents, thank you.

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for Evelyn, that is very inappropriate language in the chamber. Member for Ripon, do you have a prop in the chamber by any chance? I ask you to remove the prop.

Brad Rowswell: On a point of order, Speaker, I also have some questions on notice outstanding – two. They are 1211 to the Treasurer, which was due last month, and 1042 to the Premier, which was due about three months ago.

Constituency questions

Malvern electorate

Michael O'BRIEN (Malvern) (14:51): (710) My constituency question is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and I ask: will the Labor government accept responsibility for the atrocious state of

the roads in my Malvern electorate by properly compensating people who have suffered personal injury or property damage as a consequence? If cars are required to be roadworthy, shouldn't our roads be carworthy? That is the question my constituents are asking, because their high taxes are not seeing even the basics done when it comes to road maintenance. Large potholes are laid out like landmines ready to cause major damage to cars and motorcycles. Worse, I have even had to write to the minister about a constituent who dislocated his shoulder coming off his bike thanks to a Toorak Road pothole. We know that Labor have slashed the road maintenance budget, so if they refuse to fix the roads the least the government should do is compensate my constituents who have suffered loss or damage as a result of this Labor government's absolute failure.

Bellarine electorate

Alison MARCHANT (Bellarine) (14:52): (711) My constituency question is for the Minister for Health Infrastructure. Minister, what is the timeframe for the completion of the children's emergency department at the University Hospital Geelong? Earlier this year I was able to visit the \$20 million facility that was under construction. It was terrific to learn how this dedicated paediatric emergency department will ensure kids in the electorate of Bellarine and the Greater Geelong region will receive that dedicated care they need when they need it. This purpose-built facility will ensure a calm environment with family-centred design and will change the way children and families receive care in what can be a distressing time when a child is unwell. I look forward to that opening soon and to the benefits to our region.

Shepparton electorate

Kim O'KEEFFE (Shepparton) (14:53): (712) My question is to the Minister for Health, and the information I seek is: how will the minister address the staff shortages at Goulburn Valley Health when the hospital is experiencing regular requests to put a freeze on staff recruitment? I was contacted by a staff member from GV Health who said, and I quote, 'the hospital is in a mess.' On this particular day the emergency department was short by 10 nurses plus staff on sick leave. She said these positions are usually replaced with agency staff but that had been frozen, and it was the same for theatre and medical staffing. They are closing beds instead. She said that there is also a freeze on any recruitment, so no new additional staff are allowed. Agency staff who are about to finish contracts were told they would not be reinstated. The problem is only going to get worse with an extraordinary 500 job vacancies that need to be filled, yet there is a freeze on recruitment. She said they are continually faced with ambulances ramped for hours because of no staff and enforced bed closures. She said that this is what they are continually faced with.

Lara electorate

Ella GEORGE (Lara) (14:54): (713) My question is for the Minister for Education. How is planning progressing for the upgrades at St Francis Xavier primary school in Corio? Leading up to the 2022 state election, I was extremely proud to inform students and teachers at St Francis Xavier that, if re-elected, a Labor government would commit \$2 million towards an upgrade of their school, and that is exactly what we have done with funding confirmed in last year's state budget. This will support St Francis Xavier with their plans to build a new administrative building near the rear of their school. This will significantly increase the school's ability to provide a safe environment, in particular a safer entrance for their students. The administrative building is currently at the centre of the school grounds, which means visitors must walk through the school to access the office, and this redevelopment will place the administrative building closer to the school's perimeter. The remainder of the current building will be converted into a library and digital tech space to create another dedicated learning space for students. So again, I ask the minister: how is planning progressing for works at St Francis Xavier Primary?

Sandringham electorate

Brad ROWSWELL (Sandringham) (14:55): (714) My constituency question is to the Minister for Health. Alfred Health operates Sandringham Hospital in my community and has been advised of severe cuts to health services in the 2024–25 budget. I, on behalf of my community, am deeply concerned that cuts to Sandringham Hospital will reduce the hospital's capacity to provide high-quality care for members of my community. Alfred Health's CEO Andrew Way has stated that no area will be exempt from funding cuts, which may translate into delays in care; mass redundancies; hiring freezes; cuts to preventative care, such as cancer screening; and a reduction in hospital beds. My community urgently needs the Sandringham Hospital emergency department to remain resourced and open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to ensure patients get the care that they need. So my question to the minister is: will the Minister for Health provide assurance to my community that no department staff or services at Sandringham Hospital will be cut?

Box Hill electorate

Paul HAMER (Box Hill) (14:56): (715) My constituency question is for the Minister for Transport Infrastructure. When will the north-west oval at Surrey Park be returned to the Box Hill community? The north-west oval at Surrey Park was a critical staging point used to deliver the much-needed removal of the dangerous and congested level crossings at Mont Albert Road and Union Road. At the time the government announced that it would be using this oval as part of the level crossing project it committed to returning the playing surfaces to the community in brand new condition alongside new lighting at the adjacent baseball diamond. With Surrey Park no longer required for the project, local residents and sporting clubs are keen to know when the rehabilitation works will get underway and be returned for community use. I look forward to the minister's response.

Melbourne electorate

Ellen SANDELL (Melbourne) (14:57): (716) My question is to the Labor Premier. Why are nearly 100,000 homes, including many public homes in my electorate, empty right now across Victoria when we are in a housing crisis? A recent report shows that there are nearly 100,000 homes sitting empty across Victoria. Another report found that there are thousands of public homes – that is, homes that are managed and owned by the Labor government – also empty, many empty for over a year, and that includes many homes in the North Melbourne and Kensington public housing towers in my electorate. Why is Labor keeping these homes empty when we are in a housing crisis? Is it because Labor wants to run public housing into the ground so the towers are easier to demolish? Does Labor want to keep people out of these public housing towers so there is less resistance to its plan to demolish and privatise the public housing estates? Labor leaving public homes empty in the worst housing crisis that we have had in decades is absolutely a disgrace.

Yan Yean electorate

Lauren KATHAGE (Yan Yean) (14:58): (717) In May we celebrated 500 million containers being returned as part of the container deposit scheme, which is \$50 million for the community. I want to ask the Minister for Environment how we are tracking, because that was May, and I know that at the reverse vending machine at Waterview Recreation Reserve in Mernda in June alone 100,000 containers were deposited – \$10,000 back into the pockets of the local community just in time for school holidays and the costs that come with haircuts before going back to school. So I would like to know: in July, how many containers were deposited across the electorate of Yan Yean?

Nepean electorate

Sam GROTH (Nepean) (14:59): (718) My constituency question is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and anybody who has driven down to the southern Mornington Peninsula will realise just how bad the roads are in my electorate of Nepean. There are potholes everywhere, and as reported widely across the media today, in the latest RACV road survey more than 10 per cent of the worst roads in Victoria are actually in my electorate, including Frankston-Flinders Road and Boneo Road.

Anybody who has driven down Eastbourne Road has seen all the potholes. Anybody who has driven down Point Nepean Road has had to swerve past those potholes. We know this government has cut the road resurfacing budget from \$200 million down to roughly \$37 million this year, so my question to the minister is simple: when will the government fix the potholes and repair the crumbling road network in Nepean?

Bass electorate

Jordan CRUGNALE (Bass) (15:00): (719) My question is for the Minister for Government Services. Can the minister please provide an update regarding new upgraded and issued permits for mobile towers in Clyde and Clyde North? Good connectivity is crucial for access to health care, education and emergencies, and with the changing landscape of employment, many are able to work from home and run their businesses out in the field. My community continually raise the need for better coverage, and while telecommunications is a federal responsibility and the placement of towers is subject to council planning, I am proud that our government has stepped in to deliver a \$540 million Connecting Victoria program to fast-track better mobile and broadband connectivity in as many places as possible. It was wonderful to join with the minister and colleagues last week at Ramleigh Reserve with the new tower switched on and an uplift seen in the immediate area. With more coming, I am keen to hear of those that will significantly improve connectivity for the estates of Eliston, Hartleigh, Riverfield and Edgebrook.

Rulings from the Chair

Constituency questions

The SPEAKER (15:00): I have reviewed the constituency questions from 20 June 2024. The member for Evelyn asked if the minister could allocate funds to redevelop a reserve and so asked the minister for an action. I therefore rule the member's question out of order. The member for Mornington asked the minister to provide information, which I have previously ruled is a request for action. I therefore rule the member's question out of order.

Katie Hall: On a point of order, Speaker, the member for Melbourne appeared to ask a number of questions in her constituency question, and I ask that you review that because I believe that is out of order.

The SPEAKER: Member for Footscray, I review all of the constituency questions after every day and find there are many that are still ruled out of order. I will be reviewing today's constituency questions.

Ellen Sandell: On the point of order, Speaker, my question – I have got it written here – was: why are nearly 100,000 homes being –

The SPEAKER: Order! I have already ruled on the point of order, member for Melbourne.

Bills

Residential Tenancies and Funerals Amendment Bill 2024

Introduction and first reading

Gabrielle WILLIAMS (Dandenong – Minister for Government Services, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Public and Active Transport) (15:02): I move:

That I introduce a bill for an act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 in relation to part 4A parks, to amend the Funerals Act 2006 in relation to funeral goods and services price lists and coffin price lists and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

James NEWBURY (Brighton) (15:02): I ask for a brief explanation on the bill.

Gabrielle WILLIAMS (Dandenong – Minister for Government Services, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Public and Active Transport) (15:03): I will be pleased to provide that brief explanation. The bill seeks to enhance consumer protections for residents of residential parks by strengthening precontractual disclosure requirements and requiring site agreements to provide the specific formula for calculating rent increases. The bill also seeks to increase transparency around funeral pricing by prescribing the particulars and the form of a funeral goods and services price list that must be displayed by funeral providers.

Read first time.

Ordered to be read second time tomorrow.

Prahran Mechanics' Institute Repeal Bill 2024

Introduction and first reading

Melissa HORNE (Williamstown – Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, Minister for Local Government, Minister for Ports and Freight, Minister for Roads and Road Safety) (15:03): I move:

That I introduce a bill for an act to repeal the Prahran Mechanics' Institute Act 1899, to dissolve the Prahran Mechanics' Institution and Circulating Library incorporated and to provide for the transfer of property, rights and liabilities of that entity to the PMI Victorian History Library Inc., and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

James NEWBURY (Brighton) (15:04): I ask for a brief explanation of the bill.

Melissa HORNE (Williamstown – Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, Minister for Local Government, Minister for Ports and Freight, Minister for Roads and Road Safety) (15:04): Of course. The Prahran Mechanics' Institute Act 1899 restricts the ability of the committee to manage the Prahran Mechanics' Institute and make financial decisions in the best interests of its members. Repealing the Prahran Mechanics' Institute Act 1899 will enable the PMI Victorian History Library Inc. to continue serving the community under modern governance arrangements. The Prahran Mechanics' Institute is also known as the only mechanics institute in Victoria governed by its own act of Parliament, and it is no longer appropriate for the Prahran Mechanics' Institute to be governed by legislation that restricts its activity.

Read first time.

Ordered to be read second time tomorrow.

Government Construction Projects Integrity Bill 2024

Introduction

David SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) (15:05): I move:

That I introduce a bill for an act to impose certain obligations on parties to construction contracts entered into by or on behalf of the Crown and on certain registered employee organisations and for other purposes.

This bill is about booting bikies and organised criminals off taxpayer-funded worksites. The bill is a test for the Premier's leadership. If the Premier is serious about cleaning up corruption on the Big Build, then Labor will act immediately and support this bill.

As a proud Victorian, I hate that this Labor government has turned Victoria into the gangster state. Labor's rotten culture of CFMEU corruption did not happen overnight. It has been happening for years, and it must end right now. For a decade, first as the minister in charge of the Big Build and now as the leader of our state, the Premier has turned a blind eye to John Setka and the CFMEU corruption on taxpayer-funded building sites. For years the Premier has put on a hard hat and a hi-vis vest and taken media out to Big Build projects and Allan government sites at any possible opportunity. And

the cost to the Big Build – that did not matter. The CFMEU bullying and corruption – that did not matter. The one thing that mattered to the Premier was cutting ribbons and getting the headlines. Well, this must stop. We need to clean up corruption. We need to clean it up now, and that is why we need to introduce this bill right here and now to remove bikies from Big Build sites.

The CFMEU bikie gangs have bullied contractors into signing away taxpayer funds on CFMEU deals. They have harassed workers who refused to join their union. They have taken over every single major project in this state and driven project costs right through the roof. And because the Premier has spent a decade doing deals with her CFMEU donors, Victorians are paying the price: \$40 billion in infrastructure projects; the highest taxes in the country; cuts to hospitals, schools, emergency services, local hospitals and infrastructure and roads. Everything is a shambles because we are broke, and the money is being spent on the rorts of taxpayer funds. A state debt bigger than New South Wales –

Mary-Anne Thomas: On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, I am not quite sure what the member for Caulfield is speaking about now, but it is definitely not on whether or not to introduce a bill into this place. I ask that you call him back to addressing the issue that he wishes to raise, which is introducing a bill.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Caulfield was talking about reasons for introducing his bill and can continue.

David SOUTHWICK: I know the government is keen to hide the facts, but it is so important right now to clean up the mess – to clean up the bikie gangs from the Big Build on taxpayer-funded construction sites. The time is now. Not in a week, not in a month, not in a year – it is right now. If the Premier is serious about cleaning up this mess, the Premier would move to this bill and debate the bill and pass the bill. There is nothing more important now than cleaning up this mess. Every single day wasted is more taxpayer-funded money that is being used to pay people off and to ensure this criminal behaviour by these bikies continues to happen. Dollars wasted: \$40 billion of taxpayers money has been wasted on these projects, and we now know where this money has gone. In recent times, even since this was exposed by *60 Minutes*, we have been told that this behaviour is continuing to happen. Only today I received a message from somebody on a Big Build site to say the CFMEU has got worse. No more delays, no more wasting time – if the Premier wants to show some leadership, if the Premier wants to clean up the mess, she simply needs to pass this bill now.

This bill is so important to clean up corruption. It removes bikies and criminal activities off Big Build sites. It treats these worksites like every other worksite. If everybody else has the ability to run police checks, why shouldn't we do the same on these Big Build sites? Why can't we get these things under control?

We know for a decade, as the minister in charge of the Big Build and now as the leader of our state, the Premier has been John Setka's chief enabler. She has allowed bikies to get rich off taxpayer-funded projects, all while slashing funding for teachers, nurses, hospitals, schools and regional roads. Victorians are paying the price because Labor cannot manage major projects, and the Premier has been in charge for 10 years.

Mary-Anne Thomas: On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, this is not an opportunity to mislead the house. I ask that you ask the member for Caulfield to deal in facts. Our government has not cut funding to health or schools, or any of the other allegations that he has made.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! That is not a point of order, Leader of the House, and I think you know that. The member's time has expired.

Paul EDBROOKE (Frankston) (15:11): Unbelievable. It is almost as if those in the opposition think that the louder they speak, the more truth they speak, or the more angry they get, the more factual they will be. Even in hearing the long-form title for this bill I was a little bit confused. We had the long-form title of this bill, and then the shadow minister went off on his own rant, totally against

standing order 60, about how bills should be put together in the form that the house requires. We have an agreement where the Leader of the House, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and any third party, under standing orders, will meet as a business committee, and they will try to agree with members of the house on what the house will deal with for government business that week. This is the first time I have heard of this bill being introduced, and certainly I do not see any reason to change our government business program to accept this.

We have heard a ton of allegations from that side of the house, certainly things that I think people would not say on the front steps of Parliament about others. It is great to have the protection of parliamentary privilege, but I would say to other people: be brave, step 10 steps outside the door and say those things to the media. Say those things loud and clear and tell us what you really think, because it is incredibly cowardly to make allegations under parliamentary privilege like we have just heard. The facts still remain, as the Minister for Health just said, on allegations regarding cuts. As the minister said, there have been no cuts to health. We still hear this time and time again from the opposition, again like repetition will make something a fact. It is very Trumpian. It is very JD Vance in a lot of ways as well. But certainly in this house, where on this side we have integrity, we will not be putting up with rubbish like that.

I stand up now to say to those opposite: if you do have a bill you would like to introduce in good faith, a bill that would help the community of Victoria, bring it to the business committee that sorts out the business of the house. Do it the right way. Do not just stand up and do the performative content for the cameras. Do not just stand up like the Greens and be media influencers and put your clips on social media. If you want to get things done in this house, do it the right way. For that reason I see no reason to support the introduction of this bill today. I do not think there would be a person in this house that would see a bill being based on dialogue, as we just heard, that is not factual, that is very inaccurate, to say the least – you would not base a bill on that. You would not base the substance of a bill on that. It brings into question whether this bill has actually been formed under the procedures of the house, and those procedures in the standing orders are very, very black and white. I note again that the long-form title of this bill is far from the 5 minutes we just heard from the opposition.

David Southwick: On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, the member should know that you are not able to actually speak on the bill. This is in terms of the importance of having the bill brought on and the timing of the bill., so I ask you to bring him back to his contribution.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Frankston was referring to the long title. Before that –

Members interjecting.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am not sure any of us actually know the content of the bill. Certainly I do not, so I cannot necessarily comment. But I encourage the member to come to the purpose of the introduction or otherwise.

Paul EDBROOKE: If that is all they have got, I am feeling quite safe. I know people on this side agree that this would be a flagrant waste of the house's resources, especially with the reasoning we have just heard, to put this bill up in this house. With that, I will leave it to other members of this house to give their opinion on why we should not be supporting this.

Bridget VALLENCE (Evelyn) (15:15): Under Labor in Victoria the ugly gangster culture of bullying, thuggery, intimidation, abuse and corruption by CFMEU bosses and bikie gangs is absolutely rife and enabled by Premier Allan's Big Build, the rotten Big Build. This is precisely why we are introducing the Government Construction Projects Integrity Bill 2024, because it is about time we restore integrity on construction projects and state government projects in this state. We have all known about this militant and corrupt behaviour for at least a decade, but with the exposure in these past weeks the Liberal leader John Pesutto has wasted no time in ensuring integrity in construction is restored, which is why this major projects integrity bill should be debated and should be debated now.

The Victorian Liberals have demanded a royal commission. We have written the terms of reference already, and we have committed to a Liberal government installing a new building watchdog to rid Labor's state government projects of criminal links and corruption. But sadly Premier Allan and the Labor government have ignored these important reforms, which is precisely why we are introducing this major projects integrity bill for debate today.

Juliana Addison: On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, I believe the member for Evelyn still thinks that she is at Liberal Party state conference and not in the Parliament.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Wendouree knows better. That is not a point of order, and she is warned.

Bridget VALLENCE: Clearly Labor thinks corruption on state government projects is funny, which is why you are doing absolutely nothing to clean it up. If you are serious about this you would absolutely clean it up, and you would support this bill and bring it on for debate right now.

Mary-Anne Thomas: On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, the member is not using the correct forms of this house. She is referring to 'you'. I am sure she is not meaning to cast aspersions against you, Deputy Speaker, but that is exactly what she is doing in her speech. I ask you to call her back, to use the correct forms of the house and to respect you as Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask all members to refrain from using the word 'you' as it is a reflection on the Chair. I also ask the member for Evelyn to resume her debate on the introduction of this bill.

Bridget VALLENCE: The Premier was minister for the Big Build and major transport infrastructure projects dominated by CFMEU control and thuggery, and it is really hard to believe that the Premier or anyone in this Labor government was not aware of the corruption taking place on these infrastructure projects. It has become the rotten Big Build, and when serious allegations of corruption and criminal links surfaced a few weeks ago, Premier Allan took half a week to come out of hiding before fronting up to the cameras to say that she would, and I quote, 'tear this rotten culture out by its roots'.

If the Premier was actually serious about doing just that and tearing this rotten culture out by its roots and being true to her word, then the Premier would support this bill. If she and the Labor government do not support this bill and have debate right now, then Premier Allan is effectively giving a green light to bkie gangs and convicted criminals to continue the bullying, abuse and intimidation on worksites like the West Gate Tunnel Project and like the North East Link Program today. Nothing has changed, and the Premier and Labor's dismal response to have a bureaucrat doing a bureaucratic review will do nothing to restore integrity and safety on these worksites. They are not safe for the construction workers who want to do the right thing. It is not safe for them right now under this Labor government – these workers are trying to do the right thing – and that is because the Premier has a vested interest in appeasing militant and corrupt CFMEU bosses so she can keep her grip on power longer.

Mary-Anne Thomas: On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, this narrow procedural debate is not an opportunity for the member for Evelyn to cast imputations on the Premier. I ask you to ask her to refrain from doing so.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I take it the point of order is on relevance. The member had strayed a little from the introduction of the bill. Please come back.

Bridget VALLENCE: We see that Premier Allan wants to keep her grip on power, but we want to restore integrity and safety on construction projects, on state government projects, which is precisely why we want to bring on debate right now on the Government Construction Projects Integrity Bill. Allegations of kickbacks and misuse of public funds by the CFMEU are not being ruled out by this Labor government.

Nina TAYLOR (Albert Park) (15:20): I am going to pick up on that word ‘integrity’, because I think if the opposition were really serious about prosecuting that matter then they would have raised this particular bill in the appropriate format. They would have done it in good faith and not gone on the rather extraneous tangents that we have heard over the past 10 to 20 minutes or so, with all sorts of accusations flying wildly.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, just for clarity for the chamber, we are at the moment on introduction of bills. Is there another time to introduce a bill other than during introduction of bills?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I do not believe that is a point of order, but I am quite happy to refer your question to the Speaker for a response. The member for Albert Park to respond to the introduction of the bill debate.

Nina TAYLOR: The premise to that I would be prepared to give the benefit of the doubt if it had been put forward in an appropriate manner. But we saw the wild and woolly accusations flying left, right and centre, because it is hard to see a central and consistent thread – a purposive element to the central tenets of legislation to be put forward here and to be taken seriously. Rather we saw this sort of wild and woolly rant, plus all sorts of pretty scurrilous accusations et cetera that were not well substantiated. Hence it is hard to give this purported legislation any sort of credence or to value it because of the rather loose and fast manner in which it has been introduced to the chamber. Referring to some of the language that has already been referred to – X equals Y and all sorts of strange correlations – it really does not make good sense.

On that front, I am not questioning the introduction of a bill per se, but I am looking to the lack of rigour that has been attributed to this process in the chamber. Ergo how can it be taken seriously when you look at the rather ridiculous manner in which all sorts of accusations are flying about? On the one hand, ‘It is strictly procedural’; on the other hand, ‘We are seeking to validate this legislation.’ It is all very confusing. I would suggest if they really did have conviction behind this cure-all bill that purports to be able to magically correct anything and everything that is going on in the state of Victoria, then they would have put in a little more work in the lead-up to the delivery of this particular piece of legislation. Hence we are not particularly impressed in the chamber and would prefer that we could actually debate bills that have been introduced appropriately and which have the requisite rigour.

David Southwick: On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, just for clarification if I could, the request was for the ability to introduce the bill, not to debate the bill. Can I have clarification: are we able to debate the actual contents of the bill? Because if we can, our next speaker will do that. I think the member is straying in terms of what she is saying.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The debate is on the introduction of the bill. The member for Albert Park was debating the introduction of the bill, and she can continue.

Nina TAYLOR: Exactly. I concur 100 per cent with the premise on which the Deputy Speaker has responded to the query that was raised, because on the one hand saying, ‘Yes, we do not debate the bill’ is accepted – granted – but on the other hand, wild and woolly accusations are flying about as if somehow to validate the premise of the introduction of this bill. That seems to be rather contradictory in and of itself. Hence it is not that evident on this side of the chamber exactly what the opposition are trying to achieve, but for a stunt to interrupt the normal and appropriate processes of the Parliament. Of course we are accustomed to the opposition delaying, mucking about and obstructing processes in the chamber. Yes, granted, we are accustomed to this. However, on this front I would say a bit more rigour in the lead-up to the introduction of the bill would go a long way, rather than flouncing about and making some pretty unfair and unwarranted accusations which were not substantiated in any case. On that note I will – *(Time expired)*

Wayne FARNHAM (Narracan) (15:25): I am very happy to rise to speak on the Government Construction Projects Integrity Bill 2024. I am going to start off by saying this first off: there are

hardworking men and women in the construction division of the CFMEU. I have many friends working on government projects. We are going to talk about facts. I am going to go to facts, but I want to say this first up: there are many, many hardworking men and women that are not guilty of corruption. It is a small, small percentage of people. I have been in this industry a long time and I have had to deal with the construction division of the CFMEU. I have had to deal with them and their bullying tactics, and their intimidation has been the same for a very long time. But over the last decade it has accelerated. The current crop of CFMEU organisers make Normie Gallagher look like a pickpocket compared to what they have been doing in the construction industry. They make Normie Gallagher look like he took small change. I can tell you now I have been on worksites where I have had to put up with these roided, neck-tattooed Neanderthals – because that is what they are, and they intimidate people.

The Premier alone has been in this portfolio since she has been here. She has been in government a decade, and you cannot tell me that it passes the pub test that she did not know prior to 2022. I find that absolutely amazing. But this bill is about stamping out the corruption. The City of Melbourne now in construction is like the old New York mafia days in the 1980s, when we had the five crime families. But now we have got the bikies – and nobody can deny that. The member for Frankston wanted to be factual. That is factual. There is bikie infiltration right throughout this construction industry now, and the government either has chosen not to do anything or is powerless to do something, to do anything at all. Back in 2010 to 2014 under Napthine and Baillieu we had a watchdog, a state-based watchdog, and it was fantastic because the unions had to give us notice to come onsite. They had to give us a reason to come onsite, and it quelled the behaviour of the union. There is nothing there anymore. Then when their Labor federal mates abolished the Australian Building and Construction Commission these guys saw it as a green light and went nuts.

This industry has to be cleaned up. We are giving the government an opportunity to support this bill, to back what the Premier says, to clean the industry up, roots and all. The Premier has said it 100 times in the last week. So why won't we pass this bill to clean it up? This is the first step. If you are serious about cleaning up the industry, take notice of what we are doing, because we are doing it for a good reason. We are trying to protect the workers – the honest workers of the CFMEU. We do not care about the corrupt ones. We are trying to protect the honest people that go to work; they are trying to earn a living, support their family and put their kids through school. That is what this bill is about. It is about getting rid of the criminal element, and I cannot believe the government is resistant to this. They are resistant to something that is going to protect workers.

What about the young fellow that the CFMEU thugs locked in the shed? He went home that night for 3 hours and then committed suicide. This is what this bill is about. This is why we are debating this bill. Get on board with it, because we are doing it for good reason. I contributed to this bill, and I am proud I did, because I know the problems in the industry. There are a lot more problems out there than what have been reported to date – Nick McKenzie has only touched the tip of the iceberg. But the problem is people will not come forward because they are scared. You end up with a big bikie on your front door because you spoke out and you see how you feel – you have got your wife and kids inside. How would that feel, for anyone to end up with one of these thugs on their doorstep?

I would strongly urge the government to get behind this bill because we have introduced it for good reason – because the criminal element in the construction industry now is rife. The government has had a decade to deal with that and has done five-eighths of stuff-all. So now it is time to get on board, read the bill, see what the bill is about, support the bill and clean up the bloody industry.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind the member for Narracan that 'bloody' is unparliamentary.

Wayne FARNHAM: My apologies, Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Accepted.

Nick STAIKOS (Bentleigh) (15:30): I did not disagree with everything that the member for Narracan just said. I think the member for Narracan is a good, decent member and I do respect the expertise that he brings to this house. But I will say this: I disagree with him when he says that the opposition have brought this bill to the Parliament with the best of intentions. This is just a stunt. It is just a stunt because the opposition know the outcome of the vote we are about to take, because the government overwhelmingly has the numbers in this house. But I would also say there is no need for the member for Caulfield's intervention on this matter. The government does not require the member for Caulfield's intervention on this matter, because the government has also taken a number of steps to address the rotten culture that was uncovered in recent revelations by the media. Firstly, the government has referred these matters to both Victoria Police and the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission. Secondly, it is important to note that in the 1990s industrial relations powers – the bulk of them anyway – were referred to the Commonwealth government, so the state government, based on that, has requested that the federal government use its own powers under the Fair Work Act 2009 to review and if necessary to terminate CFMEU enterprise bargaining agreements on Victorian construction sites to prevent criminal activity.

As the Premier reminded the house again today, she has ensured that the government will undertake an independent review to strengthen the power of Victorian government agencies that are engaged with construction companies and construction unions. So the reality is that we do not need the intervention of the opposition to deal with this matter. This is a very inexperienced opposition. It is probably the most inexperienced opposition in the country. The government does not need their assistance or their intervention to deal with this matter. The government has already outlined a series of very strong steps to deal with this matter.

If I were a cynic – and I am a bit of a cynic sometimes – I would say that this has a lot more to do with the decade-long opposition of those opposite to the government's infrastructure agenda. We heard from their second speaker on this, the member for Evelyn, who called it the rotten Big Build. But I have heard the member for Evelyn in this house I guess really lament the fact that the government has removed several level crossings in her electorate in Lilydale, I think, so there we go!

Bridget Vallence: On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, this is a serious procedural motion about introducing a bill to remove criminals who are actually still on state government construction sites today. Perhaps instead of trying to joke about things, government members may want to come back to the very narrow procedural debate about introducing a bill that will rid the Labor government's projects of criminal elements.

David Southwick: On the point of order, Deputy Speaker, the member for Bentleigh also misquoted the member for Evelyn, saying she called it the rotten Big Build. I think Nick McKenzie also called it the rotten Big Build.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is not a point of order, member for Caulfield. It was going so well. The member for Bentleigh had strayed somewhat, and I bring him back.

Nick STAIKOS: With points of order like that, my point is reinforced that the government does not need their intervention to deal with this matter – not at all. But I have made the point that the government is already addressing these revelations. That is why we do not need such a bill to be introduced. And as I said earlier, I do very cynically believe that perhaps this has more to do with a decade-long opposition to the government's historic infrastructure agenda, which I think has served Victorians very, very well. I really do think that this is an opposition that is very, very good at wasting the house's time. We see that sitting week after sitting week. They know what the outcome of this vote is going to be, yet they persist in wasting the time of this Parliament. I do hope that they turn over a new leaf after this is over, because there is a lot we need to deal with as a Parliament. We are debating three bills this week. We have got more bills to debate next week that we are introducing this week. I will leave it at that.

Assembly divided on motion:

Ayes (26): Brad Battin, Jade Benham, Roma Britnell, Tim Bull, Martin Cameron, Annabelle Cleeland, Chris Crewther, Wayne Farnham, Sam Groth, Matthew Guy, David Hodgett, Emma Kealy, Tim McCurdy, Cindy McLeish, James Newbury, Danny O'Brien, Michael O'Brien, Kim O'Keeffe, John Pesutto, Richard Riordan, Brad Rowswell, David Southwick, Bill Tilley, Bridget Vallence, Peter Walsh, Jess Wilson

Noes (51): Juliana Addison, Jacinta Allan, Colin Brooks, Josh Bull, Anthony Carbines, Ben Carroll, Anthony Cianflone, Sarah Connolly, Chris Couzens, Jordan Crugnale, Lily D'Ambrosio, Daniela De Martino, Steve Dimopoulos, Paul Edbrooke, Matt Fregon, Ella George, Luba Grigorovitch, Bronwyn Halfpenny, Katie Hall, Paul Hamer, Martha Haylett, Mathew Hilakari, Melissa Horne, Natalie Hutchins, Lauren Kathage, Sonya Kilkenny, Nathan Lambert, Alison Marchant, Kathleen Matthews-Ward, Steve McGhie, Paul Mercurio, John Mullahy, Tim Pallas, Danny Pearson, Pauline Richards, Tim Richardson, Michaela Settle, Ros Spence, Nick Staikos, Natalie Suleyman, Meng Heang Tak, Jackson Taylor, Nina Taylor, Kat Theophanous, Mary-Anne Thomas, Emma Vulin, Iwan Walters, Vicki Ward, Dylan Wight, Gabrielle Williams, Belinda Wilson

Motion defeated.***Business of the house*****Notices of motion and orders of the day**

The SPEAKER (15:41): General business, notices of motion 8, 9 and 20 to 28 and order of the day 5, will be removed from the notice paper unless members wishing their matter to remain advise the Clerk in writing before 5 pm today.

Petitions**San Remo Primary School**

Jordan CRUGNALE (Bass) presented a petition bearing 506 signatures:

Issue:

This petition of residents in Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly the delay of the promised funding of \$5.3M to San Remo Primary School for critical infrastructure improvements. This petition highlights the school's urgent need for funding to address aging infrastructure, accommodate a growing student population, and provide adequate fit-for-purpose facilities. Bass Coast Shire Council has projected that San Remo will grow substantially across the next 20 years, with the region identified as one of the fastest growing regions in Victoria. These growth projections underscore the crucial importance of timely funding for San Remo Primary School, which was poised to address its infrastructure challenges with plans drawn up for construction. This year marks the 150th anniversary of San Remo Primary School and the need for fit-for-purpose facilities is more apparent than ever. The delay in funding not only hampers the school's ability to upgrade its facilities but diminishes its capacity to meet the basic needs of its students and teachers and provide safe and suitable learning spaces.

Action:

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to reinstate the remaining promised funding for San Remo Primary School to allow the school to commence construction works at the end of 2024 as planned.

Ordered that petition be considered tomorrow.**Housing**

David HODGETT (Croydon) presented a petition bearing 18 signatures:

Issue:

We the undersigned, draw to the attention of the Legislative Assembly, that there is community support to change the legislation to the Victorian Planning Scheme section 52.23 to allow for: – A limit on the number of rooming houses a street, and any particular area can have. – That there be a minimum distance between

existing rooming houses (e.g. one rooming house per 1km radius) – That a rooming house be restricted to being built in MUZ, RGZ or GRZ zones – not NRZ – given the commercial purpose of a rooming house. – Community consultation through council or private building surveyor when building a domestic scale rooming house. It's unfair that a developer could knock down a standard home and replace it with a rooming house with less restrictions than to build a tall fence or cut a tree down. The impact of rooming houses on a community is large and the community should be consulted, allowed to object and to provide feedback to this process. We understand the need for additional housing within Victoria, but at the moment rooming houses are being used by developers to loop-hole community consultation, build with no restrictions and avoid covenants.

Action:

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to review the Victorian Planning Scheme section 52.23 to allow for: – Only one rooming house per street – Have minimum distance limits placed between rooming houses – Allow for community input and provide an opportunity to raise objections – Be built within MUZ, RGZ or GRZ zones.

Ordered that petition be considered tomorrow.

Alexandra District Health

Cindy McLEISH (Eildon) presented a petition bearing 3008 signatures:

The petition of the people of the Shire of Murrindindi, and of the State of Victoria, alerts the house that the current powers and responsibilities of the Alexandra District Health's Board of Directors are under review by a secretive "Expert Advisory Committee" of the Victorian Department of Health. We respectfully request that the findings of this committee be released to the public. We also request that any proposed Health Services Plan be subject to genuine public consultation. We further request the Assembly that the powers and responsibilities and authorities remain with the Alexandra District Health Board and no amalgamation take place.

Ordered that petition be considered tomorrow.

Mornington aquatic centre

Chris CREWETHER (Mornington) presented a petition bearing 138 signatures:

Issue:

This petition of residents in Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly that the residents of Mornington and nearby surrounding suburbs need better access to a public aquatic centre where they might use a swimming pool, warm-water hydrotherapy pool or heated spa to benefit their health and wellbeing. Whilst some excellent facilities do exist on the Mornington Peninsula, such as the YAWA Aquatic Centre in Rosebud, many people are for various reasons unable to travel the distance from their home to attend these places on a regular basis. This is an issue that affects a broad cross-section of the constituency, ranging from families with young children to older seniors and less-abled or otherwise dis-advantaged members of the community.

Action:

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to provide funding to build an aquatic centre in Mornington, giving local residents easy public access to water-based exercise, therapeutic rehabilitation and recreation in a location that is close to their home.

Ordered that petition be considered tomorrow.

Members

Acting Speakers

The SPEAKER (15:44): Under standing order 20, I have tabled my warrant amending the panel of members to preside as Acting Speakers to include Kim O'Keeffe.

*Committees***Electoral Matters Committee***Inquiry into the Conduct of the 2022 Victorian State Election*

Luba GRIGOROVITCH (Kororoit) (15:44): I have the honour to present to the house a report across two volumes from the Electoral Matters Committee on the inquiry into the conduct of the 2022 Victorian state election, together with appendices, extracts from proceedings, minority reports and transcripts of evidence.

Ordered that report, appendices, extracts from proceedings and minority reports be published.

Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee*Alert Digest No. 9*

Kathleen MATTHEWS-WARD (Broadmeadows) (15:45): I have the honour to present to the house a report from the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee, being *Alert Digest* No. 9 of 2024, on the following bills:

Aboriginal Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

National Energy Retail Law (Victoria) Bill 2024

Subordinate Legislation and Administration Arrangements Amendment Bill 2024

Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine Bill 2024

Youth Justice Bill 2024

together with appendices.

Ordered to be published.

*Documents***Documents****Incorporated list as follows:****DOCUMENTS TABLED UNDER ACTS OF PARLIAMENT** – The Clerk tabled:

Audit Act 1994 – Performance Audit of the Auditor-General and the Victorian Auditor-General's Office 2024

Auditor-General:

Access to Emergency Healthcare – released on 25 June 2024

Managing State-significant Risks – released on 27 June 2024

Results of 2023 Audits: Universities – released on 28 June 2024

Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978

Order under s 17D granting a lease over Rosebud Public Park and Recreation Reserve

Orders under s 17B granting licences over Alexandra Garden Reserve (two orders)

Gambling Regulation Act 2003 – Report of Independent Review Panel: Wagering and Betting Licensing Project

Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission – Annual Plan 2024–25 – released on 27 June 2024

Integrity and Oversight Committee – Report on the Independent performance audit of the Victorian Ombudsman – released on 1 July 2024

Parliamentary Committees Act 2003 – Government response to the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee's Report on Gambling and liquor regulation in Victoria: a follow up of three Auditor-General reports

Parliamentary Salaries, Allowances and Superannuation Act 1968 – Report on Distribution from the Assembly Suspension Fines Fund 2023–24

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

Bass Coast – C167, C168
Bayside – C194
Brimbank – C225
Colac Otway – C124
Glen Eira – C247
Greater Bendigo – C241
Greater Geelong – C470
Macedon Ranges – C157
Melbourne – C381, C471
Mornington Peninsula – C305, C306
Southern Grampians – C60
Stonnington – C340, C343
Surf Coast – C138
Whitehorse – C245, C249, C251
Yarra – C293, C322

State Owned Enterprises Act 1992 – Constitution of Breakthrough Victoria Pty Ltd under s 75

Statutory Rules under the following Acts:

Building Act 1993 – SR 59
Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021 – SR 55
City of Melbourne Act 2001 – SRs 56, 57
Country Fire Authority Act 1958 – SR 49
Fundraising Act 1998 – SR 67
Honorary Justices Act 2014 – SR 66
Local Government Act 2020 – SRs 56, 57
National Electricity (Victoria) Act 2005 – SR 69
Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 – SR 63
Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2010 – SR 65
Petroleum Act 1998 – SR 64
Residential Tenancies Act 1997 – SR 47, 58
Road Management Act 2004 – SR 61
Road Safety Act 1986 – SR 60
Sale of Land Act 1962 – SR 48
Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 – SRs 51, 52, 53
Supreme Court Act 1986 – SR 36
Treasury Corporation of Victoria Act 1992 – SR 68
Victoria Police Act 2013 – SR 50
Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 1998 – SR 54
Water Act 1989 – SR 62

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994:

Documents under s 15 in relation to Statutory Rules 33, 40, 45, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69

Documents under s 16B in relation to:

Dairy Act 2000 – Dairy Food Safety Victoria Legislative Instrument Determining Licence Classes and Fees for Dairy Businesses

Duties Act 2000 – Notice of Declaration of a Kind of Insurance that is Excluded from the Definition of Business Insurance under Section 3(2A)

Education and Training Reform Act 2006 – Ministerial Order No. 1454, Government ELC Workforce (Employment Conditions)

Water Act 1989:

Corangamite Catchment Management Authority By-law No 5 Waterways Protection 2024

Goulbourn Broken Catchment Management Authority By-law No 4 Waterways Protection 2024

Mallee Catchment Management Authority By-law No 2 Waterways Protection 2024

Ministerial Prohibition Determination Applicable to Particular Place of Take Approvals that are Tagged – July 2024

North Central Catchment Management Authority By-law No 2 Waterways Protection 2024

North East Catchment Management Authority By-law No 2024/01 Waterways Protection 2024

Order to Amend the Water Trading Rules for Declared Water Systems 2023 (Removing the Grandfathered Use Reserve from the Goulburn to Murray Trade Rule)

West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority By-law No 4 Waterways Protection 2024

Wimmera Catchment Management Authority By-law No 3 Waterways Protection 2024

Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal:

Members of Parliament (Victoria) Annual Adjustment Determination 2024

Members of Parliament (Victoria) Guidelines No 1/2024

Victorian Inspectorate:

Annual Plan 2024–25 – released on 28 June 2024

Inspection Report 2022–23 on controlled operation records and reports under the *Crimes (Controlled Operations) Act 2004*, *Wildlife Act 1975* and *Fisheries Act 1995*

Inspection Report 1 January to 30 June 2023 under s 30Q of the *Surveillance Devices Act 1999*

Inspection Report March to August 2023 under s 37D of the *Terrorism (Community Protection) Act 2003*

Special report – Investigation of unauthorised disclosures by an integrity officer – released on 25 June 2024

Victoria Police, Chief Commissioner – Report 2023 under s 96 of the *Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981*

Wrongs Act 1958 – Notice of scale of fees and costs for referrals of medical questions to medical panels under Part VBA (*Gazette G26*, 27 June 2024).

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

Gambling Legislation Amendment Act 2023 – Division 2 of Part 3 – 30 August 2024 (*Gazette S406*, 23 July 2024).

State Electricity Commission Amendment Act 2024 – Whole Act – 1 July 2024 (*Gazette S319*, 18 June 2024)

Sustainable Forests (Timber) Repeal Act 2024 – Whole Act – 1 July 2024 (*Gazette S345*, 25 June 2024).

Transport Legislation Amendment Act 2023 – Part 5 and ss 37, 47, 49 and 55 – 1 July 2024 (*Gazette S319*, 18 June 2024).

Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation Repeal and Advisory Councils Act 2024 – Whole Act – 1 July 2024 (*Gazette S345*, 25 June 2024).

*Announcements***Assistant Clerk Committees**

The SPEAKER (15:48): Under section 18 of the Parliamentary Administration Act 2005, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly has appointed Mr Joel Akira Hallinan to be Assistant Clerk Committees in the Department of the Legislative Assembly.

*Bills***Sustainable Forests (Timber) Repeal Bill 2024***Council's agreement*

The SPEAKER (15:48): I have received a message from the Legislative Council agreeing to the Sustainable Forests (Timber) Repeal Bill 2024 without amendment.

Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Bill 2024**Sustainable Forests (Timber) Repeal Bill 2024****Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation Repeal and Advisory Councils Bill 2024***Royal assent*

The SPEAKER (15:48): I inform the house that the Governor has given royal assent to the Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Bill 2024, the Sustainable Forests (Timber) Repeal Bill 2024 and the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation Repeal and Advisory Councils Bill 2024.

Youth Justice Bill 2024*Appropriation*

The SPEAKER (15:48): I have received a message from the Governor recommending an appropriation for the purposes of the Youth Justice Bill 2024.

*Motions***Construction, Forestry and Maritime Employees Union**

James NEWBURY (Brighton) (15:49): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier, who accidentally confirmed that she was aware of illegality and corruption in government projects, saying that illegality was nothing new and she was aware from time to time.

Leave refused.

Middle East conflict

Gabrielle DE VIETRI (Richmond) (15:49): I move, by leave:

That this house notes the International Court of Justice report advising that Israel's occupation of Palestine is unlawful –

Leave refused.

Gabrielle de Vietri interjected.

The SPEAKER: The member for Richmond is warned.

*Business of the house***Program**

Mary-Anne THOMAS (Macedon – Leader of the House, Minister for Health, Minister for Health Infrastructure, Minister for Ambulance Services) (15:49): I move:

That, under standing order 94(2), the orders of the day, government business, relating to the following bills be considered and completed by 5 pm on 1 August 2024:

Youth Justice Bill 2024

State Sporting Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Aboriginal Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

As we return after what is called, for reasons I do not fully understand, the winter ‘break’, it is good to be back at Parliament. I know that members on this side of the house have been extremely active in their communities. They have been out doorknocking, they have had street stalls and they have been on the phones, and they are listening to the people of Victoria. They are listening to the issues that matter to them so that we can translate those issues and concerns into the business that we bring to this house. Yes, it has been my great pleasure not just to be in my own community of Macedon but also to accompany our caucus colleagues in their electorates as we talk about our government’s investments in health care. That is what we have been doing over winter. But of course we are back here in the Parliament with a busy program ahead of us – as I said, continuing to connect with the people of Victoria, listening to them, understanding their issues and concerns and translating those into the legislation that we bring to this place.

There are a couple of points that I want to make before I talk about the bills that we will be debating. I want to firstly acknowledge the request that I received from the Manager of Opposition Business to facilitate the debate of the State Sporting Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 today to ensure that the shadow minister has the opportunity to speak on the bill. We are happy to accommodate this request that was made by the opposition, and I thank everyone for their cooperation in facilitating this. I know that everyone wants to talk on the state sporting bill, because why wouldn’t you want to talk sport right now when I know that every single one of us is celebrating the many fantastic achievements of Australia’s Olympians in Paris. I am going to be listening to this debate because everyone is going to use this as an opportunity to shout out to people from their own communities who are representing our great nation in Paris. That is incredible. I know we are all ruing the fact that the Olympics are on the other side of the world and therefore it is very hard to get enough TV time in when you have to serve your community and be in this place as well, but I am sure that the State Sporting Legislation Amendment Bill will be a debate to watch. The legislation is about doing some important work to enable Melbourne and Victoria more broadly to continue to be the sporting capital of Australia.

The Aboriginal Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 is another extremely important bill that I know that members on this side of the house will be very keen to debate. Whether we see many on that side get up and tell us what they really think, let us see, because what we have seen over the winter break again has been some disgraceful race-baiting by those on the other side when it comes to respect for our First Nations people.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, the minister knows far better than to make the allegations that she has, and I would ask you on relevance to bring her back to the motion.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, the words that the minister used were unparliamentary. They have been ruled unparliamentary before, and I would ask you to consider the unparliamentary language the minister used.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Manager of Opposition Business knows two things – or should know two things. Firstly, the reference that was made was to a collection of people, not an individual.

Therefore your imputation is not necessarily correct. I did not hear any unparliamentary language; I have already ruled.

Mary-Anne THOMAS: As I said, our government and the members on this side of the house look forward to talking about our government's ongoing resolute commitment to truth-telling, to treaty and to self-determination, unlike those on the other side, who walked away from their commitments to First Nations people in this state. It is an absolute disgrace that they tracked back their commitments to the First Peoples of this state of Victoria. We will also be debating – *(Time expired)*

James NEWBURY (Brighton) (15:55): I will start on a positive note and thank the Leader of the House in relation to facilitating the State Sporting Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 being debated today. The fact that the coalition is opposed to the government business program is in no way linked to that facilitation, so I appreciate very much the scheduling. However, in relation to the business program the coalition has again, considering the nature of the Youth Justice Bill 2024, which is a thousand pages – it is a substantial bill – sought from the government an opportunity to take the bill into consideration in detail. As we have spoken about in this house before, the government has very rarely over the last 10 years provided opportunities for bills to be considered in detail in that process in this place – once in this term when I approached the minister directly, and I do not think even his own cabinet could have stopped him from accepting the opportunity, and there has been one other instance that I am aware of over the last 10 years.

The government declined our request to take that huge bill into consideration in detail, and it is just not good enough. I appreciate that the minister is not able to deal with the questions that would be asked. I accept that that is the reason why the offer was declined. But just because a minister is not good enough is not an opportunity, I think, to shirk the house being provided the chance that it should have to deal with the bill in detail. So the coalition will be opposing the government business program. We do hope that ministers are good enough, tough enough and smart enough to one day take a bill into consideration in detail, as Minister Pearson did; he was happy to do so. At least there is one minister who is not afraid to answer difficult questions. So we will be opposing the government business program.

I do want to note that – I am keeping track for government MPs just as much as coalition MPs – there are still 22 Labor members who have not been given an opportunity to speak on the budget. We have spoken about this in the chamber many times. The government does not want to provide an opportunity to talk about the budget, because, wow, that was a bad budget. But to not let their own members speak really shows quite clearly how afraid they are to add any oxygen to the debate around the budget – the budget that I do not think anyone remembers, because it was so bad. But there are 22 Labor members and 11 coalition members – of course I want to make sure that our members have an opportunity to speak, but there are 22 on that side – who have not had an opportunity. In fact not only have 22 not had an opportunity, I know one was overruled in the middle of a debate by a factional opponent when the minister walked in and took the call over that member in, quite frankly, an embarrassing display. So not just have 22 not had a go, but we saw a factional go play out between the left and the right.

Mary-Anne Thomas interjected.

James NEWBURY: I was here; I saw it.

Mary-Anne Thomas: On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I have to confess that I was not really listening, but when I did, what I heard had absolutely nothing to do with the government business program, and I ask that you call the member back to speaking on the narrow procedural debate, which is of course the government business program.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Lauren Kathage): The member for Brighton has the call.

James NEWBURY: I have given a reason as to why the coalition will not be supporting the government business program. When it comes to the Youth Justice Bill, it is clear that the

government's priorities are not in line with fixing the youth crime crisis in Victoria. To water down the law at a time when there is a crime crisis is, frankly, shameful, and the community will see that for what it is. There are a number of issues that we could be debating. The coalition moved to clean up government projects today and the government opposed that, not surprisingly. But we should be debating issues like that in this chamber. The coalition will be opposing the program.

Tim RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) (16:00): It is a pleasure to rise and speak on the government business program. Coming back from the winter break, we see a bit more of the same. We see the coalition with various tactics that they have cooked up over the last six weeks despite some of their absences. But what you see from this government and the continued work that we do is that we are ready to serve. We are ready to serve the Victorian people. We are ready to hit the ball back over the net. We are ready to get on with the government business program. We want to hit the fastest serves we ever have on getting legislation through, and if we have to go into committee and do five sets up in the upper house, we will do it, because we are ready to serve on this side. Despite puff pieces about legacies and hopeful, wishful thinking and the member for Nepean being clearly scolded in the corner over there – he looks very forlorn today and a bit sad – we are ready to get on with the work of government.

These are important bills, particularly the Youth Justice Bill 2024 and what we see in the community and where that will go. That is important legislation that has been years in the making. Obviously we have had an evolution of work that we have done from the time when we saw changes to aggravated home invasion through to where we find ourselves with the Youth Justice Bill today. That will be an important opportunity.

The member for Brighton of course keeps score on who speaks on what, but the member for Brighton still has not been able to motivate his colleagues, like the member for Nepean has not motivated his colleagues, to speak on particular bills, and so we are looking to see a great –

James Newbury: On a point of order, Acting Speaker, on relevance, the fact that the Minister for Planning has not turned up to 40 per cent of the question time days this year is not a matter for debate in the government business program.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Lauren Kathage): A point of order is not an opportunity to make a statement.

Tim RICHARDSON: There are 11 speakers to go on the take-note motion that the member for Brighton alludes to, but there are not many on that side to get through the list, so when you get to a Wednesday or Thursday you see the speaking drop right off, you see the contributions drop off – not like the constant drumming of those opposite and the concerns that have been shared about the performance of the Leader of the Opposition. He has not spoken on bills – he has not contributed – and he does not make any speeches at all on behalf of the opposition on policy. That is left to some of the heavy hitters on their side, like the member for Gippsland South and the member for Brighton. The member for Sandringham rocks up for a couple of months to speak on legislation and the member for Eildon does a stack of work, but you see then a gulf, a deficit, in contributions on that side. So we want to see them actually contribute on behalf of their communities.

But I note that there is a new change as we come out of the winter break. There is new hope, like changing courts in a season. There is new hope for renewal, for the future and for what might be possible: maybe more contributions on bills; maybe perspectives from the member for Nepean on the Youth Justice Bill or the Aboriginal Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 or the State Sporting Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 – some contributions to make as he exhibits his willingness to serve and get on with it. This is important legislation that we need to bring forward.

I note the member for Brighton's comments around the take-note motion on the budget, but there will be plenty of opportunities to discuss record funding in health, record investment in our hospitals and health system and our ambitious program in housing and construction. There are so many different

things, so there will be opportunities, just not in this business program, because it is quite substantial with the work that we have got underway in government. So that is the challenge: to front up rather than do stunts.

We have now got to 5 past 4, and I know the member for Brighton is desperate to give 30 minutes of the best on the State Sporting Legislation Amendment Bill. But where are the contributions made by those opposite to front up on behalf of their constituents and actually represent them and their interests as well, rather than undermining and pointscoreing and state councils and tickets to the greatest show ever, which will be down on Queen Street when the defamation trial gets underway? They should be charging money to rock up to that show, because that is going to be the hottest ticket in town.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Acting Speaker: relevance.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Lauren Kathage): I ask the member for Mordialloc to come back to the business program.

Tim RICHARDSON: I was just checking that the member for Brighton was listening there – he was. So let us see what contributions they make on these bills, because it is critical on behalf of communities to not be a half-time MP like we see on that side and to rock up and actually present on these bills. When I walk around when someone is speaking on our side, sometimes there are only two or three names on their list, and you just wonder, because they are not doing anything in their constituencies. They are not inviting out the member for Nepean or the member for Hawthorn to their electorates. So what are they doing during the three days in here? Probably undermining and scheming. Get on with the work of opposition.

Jade BENHAM (Mildura) (16:05): I wish it was a pleasure to rise to speak on the government business program today, but as the Manager of Opposition Business said, we are opposed to this for the simple fact of the matter that we cannot consider the Youth Justice Bill 2024 in consideration in detail. This is a very important bill to those of us within the Victorian Nationals, who have been working very, very hard, member for Mordialloc, and contribute an enormous amount in this chamber and within our communities each and every day. We have done an enormous amount of work in the youth justice area. With the crime stats the way they are at the moment, particularly in my electorate of Mildura, with the highest aggravated burglary rates in the state and the incredible amount of youth offending, to have a 1000-page bill not able to be considered so we can have some input into how that sort of legislation impacts those of us who do not have the ability to call on stations up the road for police support and who are so isolated and do not have the infrastructure to implement what may or may not come out of this legislation is absolutely abhorrent as far as we are concerned. It is just one of those sticking points that we have done so much work around. We have consulted with our local police members. I know every single one of us have sat down and spoken to victims of crime. We have spoken to families about the fact that youth offending is just getting worse, and there seems to be little practical application. To not allow consideration in detail on this robust – for want of a better word – thousand-page bill, obviously we are incredibly frustrated by that.

When we talk about those that contribute an enormous amount in this place, in the Victorian Nationals – again over the winter recess, we will call it, because not many of us got to have a break – some of us went to Kokoda with some young people to teach them about history. There will be members statements throughout the entire week that talk about everything that we have been up to over the last few weeks, including things like talking with families, like visiting schools – all sorts of things – like health. For goodness sake, health has been at the top of our list for quite some time. The amount of community forums and the amount of board members of small rural healthcare services that we have spoken to that have come to us and ambulance members that have come to us to voice their concerns – these are the sorts of things that we have been working hard at.

You will notice that there are four Victorian Nationals on the program to speak about the State Sporting Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. I know there is frustration around when we talk about Kardinia

Park, or what has become affectionally known as Pork Barrel Park, with the level of investment of a \$4 million scoreboard, and we talk about netball clubs, who contribute a huge amount into each and every rural community and who are the thread that holds the social fabric of rural communities together. We talk about sporting legislation and funding. Let us talk about actually getting the correct funding into grassroots sport and being able to actually play netball on courts that will not cause injuries – things like that. So you can understand where the frustration from the Victorian Nationals comes from when we talk about this kind of government business program. We are out in our communities talking to people every single day, and yet we come in here and try to do our job and try and speak up for those communities and we are ultimately gagged at the end of the day. We do not get to contribute what we would like to.

The Aboriginal Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 as well is very important for people in my community. We have the highest population of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders in the state. It is incredibly important in my electorate, and I know the member for Murray Plains in the neighbouring electorate also will have an important contribution.

So, yes, we are opposed to the government business program based solely on the fact that we cannot contribute what we need for the most isolated parts of this state, which are impacted in such a very different way to those who sit in metro seats.

Sarah CONNOLLY (Laverton) (16:10): It is a great pleasure to rise and speak on this week's government business program and of course to follow the member for Mildura. I do have to say, in following on from the member for Mordialloc talking about the lack of contributions from that side of the house, the member for Mildura often does make a contribution. I would like to thank her for those contributions, although we may not always agree on all things.

One thing the member for Mildura and I do agree on is that we get out and about in our communities and speak to local constituents. I was doing some street stalls on the weekend and visiting sporting clubs and having chats to folks just about what is going on in their households. A lot of the things that they talked about are in fact on the agenda this week to speak about. As the Leader of the House talked about, rightly, those conversations that we have in our community time and time again are conversations that we bring back into this place, and we are able to drive change here in this state through legislative reform – and this week is indeed no different.

One of the great things I did in the winter break, I have to say, was not just doing street stalls and visiting sporting clubs; the highlight was probably doing a tour of the West Gate Tunnel. Wow, oh wow, what an incredible project that is. It is the largest transport infrastructure project that has ever been built here in the history of Victoria when it comes to folks in the western suburbs. We know that it will soon be open – probably in the back end of 2025. It is an incredible engineering feat and is certainly a tribute to what a big, bold and visionary government the Allan Labor government is. I have to say it was just an absolutely incredible view, and I know folks in my electorate, whether they are inner, middle or outer westies, will absolutely love and embrace their tunnel.

As it stands this week we have quite a few pieces of legislation lined up. There are three bills for debate this week – most notably, as has been discussed previously, our Youth Justice Bill 2024. Time and time again I have stood in this place and talked about the reforms that this side of the house has introduced when it comes to youth justice and justice and crime prevention in general in this state. It is an incredibly serious issue and incredibly complex, and I really look forward to speaking on the bill this week. I know that folks in my part of town will really look to, appreciate and understand many of the good things that that bill will indeed do. And I really look forward to listening to those opposite make contributions on this bill. They talk about youth justice and youth crime. It is certainly something that they talk about in their communities or they see, but they talk about it here as though they know everything about it. I do look forward to hearing a couple of contributions from that side of the house, and I hope there are more than the usual three names – the same names over and over again that ever

bother to get up and speak on any legislation before the chamber each and every single week – that I have seen over the past 6½ years now.

In addition to this, we will be debating the State Sporting Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, which provides some small but really important technical changes to the laws governing how some of our biggest major sporting venues are operated in Victoria. I have to say, just because we are talking about sport and I said I have been down at my local sporting clubs on the weekend: how great are the Paris Olympics and being able to watch that and the incredible, incredible moments of triumph that we are seeing from the Aussies? It is just absolutely extraordinary. It has been great sitting around the kitchen table with my kids watching sports that they had never even seen or heard of before. I know that watching the gymnastics my son was absolutely blown away by what those gymnasts can do. It put a little smile on my face, because for him everything is always about footy and always about soccer, but he could see that there are some extraordinary athletes here in Australia and indeed across the world doing incredible things in Paris at the moment. So a big shout-out to them. This is a great government business program, and I commend it to the house.

Roma BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (16:15): I rise to oppose the government business program. I do so today because there are three bills on the government business program and there actually should be four. Today we introduced a very important bill, a bill that was to address the government's construction –

Mary-Anne Thomas interjected.

Roma BRITNELL: No, it is how it works. The manager of government business says it is not how you introduce a bill, but you absolutely can introduce a bill through the parliamentary process that we took on this morning. What this government does not want to do is to address the corruption in the Labor Party that the CFMEU and the Labor government have been facilitating through a very long relationship.

Mary-Anne Thomas: On a point of order, Acting Speaker, we have been here before. This is a government business program debate. It is a simple debate on the government business program. It is not an opportunity to sledge the government, to cast aspersions on the Labor Party. I ask that you ask the member to come back to the narrow procedural debate.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Lauren Kathage): The member for South-West Coast is to return to the government business program.

Roma BRITNELL: I return to the fact that I am opposing the government business program because the government will not allow debate on anything other than what they think is suitable for debate. There are two sides of the chamber, and it takes two sides to have a debate. So when we can follow the process and introduce bills, I think it should be respected as the parliamentary process that allows for debate to occur. When you have got a government that is so linked with the corruption that we saw revealed in last week's media, and it continues today –

Mary-Anne Thomas: On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I want to draw your attention to a ruling in relation to unparliamentary language. I want to suggest that the member's repeated use of unsubstantiated allegations that the government is corrupt is indeed unparliamentary. I ask that you find that in your ruling.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Lauren Kathage): I suggest that the member for South-West Coast might like to come back to the government business program and stick to that.

Roma BRITNELL: I will come back to the government business program, which we oppose today. The three bills we have got on the program include the State Sporting Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, and that does come at a time where we are all getting up, I am sure, as I am during the night to watch our Australian Olympians. It was amazing to see the girls in the pool this morning and all the other medals that we have been watching at 3:30 or 4:30 or whatever time you are setting your alarm

for, and this morning was quite reasonable at 5:30. I would like to also give a shout-out to young Jaylen Brown, who will be participating in the Paralympic Games. He is a wheelchair basketballer from South-West Coast, and I cannot wait to watch him. He is a most talented young man from a talented basketball family from South-West Coast. So good luck, Jaylen.

We also have on the government business program the Aboriginal Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, and I take great offence to the manager of the government business program saying that we do not have the depth of knowledge. I think I spent 15 years working in Aboriginal health. I have quite a deep knowledge and look forward to speaking on the Aboriginal Land Legislation Amendment Bill. I think the tokenism that this government overlays on the Aboriginal community is actually quite insulting, and I look forward to the opportunity of calling that out and referring to the different community members I have been speaking to about it of late and how they feel about the way they are being treated.

Lastly, the reason we oppose is because of the Youth Justice Bill 2024, and the reason –

Steve Dimopoulos: You oppose treaty as well.

Roma BRITNELL: Yes, well, let us talk about that at a later time, Minister Dimopoulos, because you and I both know that I certainly have –

Mary-Anne Thomas: On a point of order, Acting Speaker, the member knows full well that she should direct her comments through the Chair. It is unparliamentary to speak to members over the table.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Lauren Kathage): I ask the member for South-West Coast to continue through the Chair.

Roma BRITNELL: Yes, certainly, through the Chair. The Youth Justice Bill is something we are not – *(Time expired)*

Assembly divided on motion:

Ayes (50): Juliana Addison, Jacinta Allan, Colin Brooks, Josh Bull, Anthony Carbines, Anthony Cianflone, Sarah Connolly, Chris Couzens, Jordan Crugnale, Lily D'Ambrosio, Daniela De Martino, Steve Dimopoulos, Paul Edbrooke, Matt Fregon, Ella George, Luba Grigorovitch, Bronwyn Halfpenny, Katie Hall, Paul Hamer, Martha Haylett, Mathew Hilakari, Melissa Horne, Natalie Hutchins, Lauren Kathage, Sonya Kilkenny, Nathan Lambert, Alison Marchant, Kathleen Matthews-Ward, Steve McGhie, Paul Mercurio, John Mullahy, Tim Pallas, Danny Pearson, Pauline Richards, Tim Richardson, Michaela Settle, Ros Spence, Nick Staikos, Natalie Suleyman, Meng Heang Tak, Jackson Taylor, Nina Taylor, Kat Theophanous, Mary-Anne Thomas, Emma Vulin, Iwan Walters, Vicki Ward, Dylan Wight, Gabrielle Williams, Belinda Wilson

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

Motion agreed to.

Members statements

Melton electorate projects

Steve McGHIE (Melton) (16:26): During the winter break Melton was bustling with activities and significant progress on several major projects. We also welcomed 60 new citizens to the Moorabool shire. I had the pleasure of heading down to Cobblebank Stadium to watch the Thornhill Flames compete, and the under-14 girls and boys played very well in their basketball tournament.

Recent works around the level crossing removals in Melton have included assessing the ground and soil conditions as well as checking on the electricity, gas and water services below the ground. Final designs for these projects will be released in the coming months, with construction to start later this year.

Tim Richardson interjected.

Steve McGHIE: Yes, I did have a week off, Tim; sorry about that. The long-anticipated consortium for the Melton hospital was announced, with Exemplar Health to build the hospital. This includes both Capella Capital and Lendlease. This project alone will create 2400 construction jobs and more than 3900 health-related jobs once it is open, and I thank the Premier and the Minister for Health for coming out to Melton to make this great announcement.

Nimarsh Sohi

Steve McGHIE (Melton) (16:27): In the past week I also welcomed year 10 student Nimarsh Sohi from Melton Christian College into my office to complete her work experience. I asked her to share some of her thoughts on the importance of being involved in politics for younger generations. She said:

Youth should get involved in politics and with their local members to gain valuable insights into how governance affects their lives. As future voters, understanding these systems is crucial for making informed decisions.

I think that is a great passing on of information from Nimarsh.

Paris Olympics

David SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) (16:28): We have heard a lot, unfortunately, in my community about antisemitism, but I want to share a really good news story. We are all tuned into the Olympics at the moment, and there are so many proud Jews that are celebrating and working really hard for Australia. The first one is Jess Fox. How good is Jess Fox, Australian flag-bearer at the Olympic ceremony. She won gold, and of course she will be back with the K1 to defend her previous Olympic title. She is also joined at the Olympics by her sister Noemie, and we wish her all the best as well. Jemima Montag, a Melbourne local competing this week in the women's 20-kilometre race walk, launched Play On, alongside Maccabi Victoria, to give young women the opportunity to learn more about sport and also about feeling confident in themselves. I also want to give a big shout-out to other athletes – Sienna Green, Josh Katz, Alexandra Kiroi-Bogatyreva, Jess Weintraub and Josh Giddey – that are also competing.

It also gives me an opportunity to talk about Maccabi and the great work that they do in community sport and particularly the all-abilities team. I want to shout out Caren Lubofsky, the all-abilities program manager, and the various sports including cricket, Dolphins basketball and the Ajax all-abilities football club, which I am a proud sponsor of, and thank you so much to Jeff Israel for his great work with that team.

Laverton Magpies Football Netball Club

Mathew HILAKARI (Point Cook) (16:29): Recently I had the pleasure of attending the Laverton Magpies football club's 100th anniversary gala dinner, a great event for the football club's community, past and present. We were there to celebrate the impact the Magpies have had on Melbourne's south-west. I would like to thank president Stephanie Hartnup, Tony Jofre and the countless others around the club who keep turning up and will contribute to their success over the next 100 years.

Webster Street Reserve

Mathew HILAKARI (Point Cook) (16:30): I also had the opportunity to open Point Cook's newest pavilion on Webster Street Reserve, the home of the West Point Soccer Club, West Point Cricket Club and Point Cook Tennis Club. I want to acknowledge the support of Wyndham City Council and the clubs' presidents Amanda Oliver, Alex Chamorro and Rahul Patel and thank them in

particular, and every volunteer who makes these clubs great. They have over 900 participants already, meaning the female-friendly changing rooms, the social spaces, the kitchen facilities and umpire rooms will be well used, supporting the recently completed cricket oval and training facility, the four soccer pitches, the seven tennis courts and the multiuse court helping these clubs have a great new home.

Container deposit scheme

Mathew HILAKARI (Point Cook) (16:30): Finally, we are not kicking the can down the road in Point Cook and Altona Meadows, we are recycling them through the container deposit scheme. We have in Altona Meadows alone 3.2 million containers already deposited with the scheme. Over half a million dollars have gone to residents and clubs in Point Cook already from the program. I look forward to many, many more.

Health services

Emma KEALY (Lowan) (16:31): I condemn the Allan Labor government for their failure to manage Victoria's public health system, and Victorians are paying the price. Across the state we are seeing the catastrophic impact of Labor's funding cuts to our public health services. We all know that that can only mean one thing, and that is cuts to health services that Victorians need and deserve. Why on earth are we getting funding towards projects that are putting money in the CFMEU's pockets to go back to be donated to Labor to fund their own election campaigns for their own ambitions and meanwhile we have got Victorians who cannot access health services? This is exactly what we see in Victoria. You are leaving nurses high and dry. They are working double shifts. They are burnt out and stressed because Labor is not prioritising their needs. We have got paramedics who are burnt out because they are not getting support. They are stuck, frustrated, on the driveways of hospitals and are unable to answer calls because Labor has failed to stand up for paramedics. What is more, we have got forced mergers of hospitals, which is just resulting in loss of services, loss of local decision-making and loss of local staff. The Allan Labor government have completely stuffed up the health system in Victoria. It is a blight on each and every one of these Labor members, who have turned their back on Victorian health care, and every single Victorian is paying the price for Labor's mismanagement of the health system in Victoria.

Ray Bastin Reserve

Belinda WILSON (Narre Warren North) (16:32): I recently visited a very exciting new infrastructure project in my electorate at the Ray Bastin Reserve in Narre Warren to announce the start of a \$3.1 million redevelopment project for the playground and the surrounding area. This is a joint effort between the Victorian government and the City of Casey which aims at revitalising the reserve to provide new amenities for our local community. The redevelopment will also include a state-of-the-art inclusive playground designed for children of all abilities. It will upgrade the existing skate park and BMX track, offering modern facilities for youth. It will have a new barbecue facility, shelter and seating for rest stops to encourage social gatherings. It will have a public art installation and landscape planting, enhancing the reserve's aesthetic appeal. These upgrades will transform Ray Bastin Reserve into a vibrant hub of recreation and social connection, providing lots of revitalisation spaces for outdoor activities and family fun.

Narre Warren level crossing removal

Belinda WILSON (Narre Warren North) (16:33): Over the weekend I was joined by Mr Galea and Mr Tarlamis in the other place when I attended the community fun day for the brand new Narre Warren station following the completion of the level crossing removal and the building of our brand new station. There was facepainting, magicians and a sausage sizzle of course, and a huge shout-out to the Narre Warren scouts, who did a really great job on the barbecue. I want to say a huge thankyou to the amazing team at the Level Crossing Removal Project, who have done such a great job on this

project and have really transformed the area. It is great to have the station back and open, and the feedback from the community is overwhelmingly positive.

Stefan Romaniw

Matthew GUY (Bulleen) (16:34): I rise to make some comments about Stefan Romaniw, who in the break received a state funeral, fittingly, where the Premier and Minister Shorten spoke. Stefan was a former chair of the Victorian Multicultural Commission. He was a former head of Australian Ukrainian organisations, both state and federal. He was a man of immense talent and of immense skill and apart from that a very, very good personal friend to many, many people. He was someone who saw the best in our state, saw the best in every community. He was someone who, more than any – and I do not take away from others – if a funeral from our state was to go toward just an ordinary bloke who was doing his best to make our state a better place for all of our children, it was Stefan Romaniw.

He was a man that so many of us in the Ukrainian community, and I personally, looked up to immensely. While at just 68 years he passed away in Warsaw, not a minute of his life did he waste. He was always up; he was always awake. It was not always about politics or Ukraine, it could be any topic; he was there to talk to you at any stage you needed it as the true gentleman that he was. And that is what he was – a gentleman. His funeral fittingly reflected the life of the outstanding person he was. Stefan Elkovich Romaniw: Стефан Ілковіч Романів. Наш друг. Наш голова. Наш герої. Вічна Пам'ять. God bless him.

Tiny Towns Fund

Michaela SETTLE (Eureka) (16:36): Our tiniest towns matter, and that is why this government has been backing community-driven projects through the wonderful Tiny Towns funding. The first round of Tiny Towns grants was recently announced, and they include some really fantastic projects from across my electorate: the Committee 4 Warrenheip and the Clarendon Recreation Reserve committee of management are using their respective grants to create local play spaces, providing local kids and families somewhere close to home where they can play and explore. The Friends of Paddock Creek in Gordon are able to undertake a native vegetation survey and develop updated concept plans for the reserve. The Shelford Progress Association are using their grant to improve the Shelford Common with picnic tables, tree plantings and more. And the Inverleigh Public Hall is getting an upgrade, with more storage to allow them to hold more events, host more activities and get together as a community. To cap off the first round of Tiny Towns grants the annual Buninyong Christmas festival will also receive funding to create art installations for this year's Christmas event. So to each and every gorgeous town in my electorate: there will be another round of Tiny Towns grants opening in coming months; get your thinking hats on and come up with ideas to make our wonderful towns even better.

Middle East conflict

Ellen SANDELL (Melbourne) (16:37): For the last nine months we have watched as the people of Gaza have suffered horrors beyond our comprehension: tens of thousands of Palestinian people killed at the hands of the Israeli military; tens of thousands of children crushed under buildings, killed by bombs or shot by the Israeli military. But let us not forget that amongst all of this absolute horror Palestinians have also been suffering for a lot longer than nine months. Just two weeks ago the International Court of Justice advisory report found Israel is illegally occupying not just Gaza but the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The ICJ have ordered this annexation to end, along with reparations and sanctions, and they have also ordered other nations not to render aid or assistance in maintaining Israel's presence in those illegally occupied territories.

Yet Labor here in Victoria is aiding and abetting the Israeli Ministry of Defense. In fact it has signed a secret MOU specifically to offer mutual support. Labor in Victoria act like they cannot do anything about this war, but in fact they are actively supporting the Israeli military and Israeli weapons manufacturers, including financially through our taxpayer dollars and including being a major sponsor

of the land forces arms and weapons expo coming to Melbourne – the state Labor government is a sponsor of that. Labor could do something, but instead they stand by and wring their hands as more children are killed.

Debre Genet St Michael Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church

Luba GRIGOROVITCH (Kororoit) (16:39): It was my pleasure to recently attend the annual Ethiopian St Michael church community celebration alongside my good friend the member for Laverton Sarah Connolly. It was a wonderful community event. For those of you who do not know, St Michael church is located in Ravenhall and has for a long time been a centre of unity and strength for both the community of Kororoit but also the Ethiopian community across Victoria. The celebration was more than just a day on the calendar. It was a celebration of togetherness and the profound impact that the church has on our community.

The day included dancing, singing and of course wonderful food. It was a great display of what St Michael church is really about, and that is nurturing youth, supporting the elderly and fostering community inclusivity. The church offers a variety of activities above and beyond pastoral care, including sports, arts and leadership programs that create a safe and supportive environment for young people to thrive and show their full potential. A notable example of this is the homework support program, which is full every day. It has been greatly beneficial to VCE students in Kororoit, helping them to excel academically and positively influencing the wider community. Additionally, St Michael extends compassion to the elderly and families through weekly home visits, social events and essential services, ensuring that everyone feels valued and connected. I would like to thank Father Fica Hamamichael and everyone involved for bringing this event together. I thank Debre Genet St Michael Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

Rural and regional roads

Richard RIORDAN (Polwarth) (16:40): The roads of western Victoria, south-western Victoria and across the seat of Polwarth are in ruin this year. The RACV has confirmed what every single resident living right across the Polwarth region has known for a long, long time now. This government has not got the money, has not got the resources and has not got the capacity to properly manage one of the most important infrastructure networks that we need to thrive and survive in Victoria. This government's dealing and wheeling with the CFMEU here in Melbourne is costing jobs, it is costing livelihoods and it is costing huge expense for the transport industry and to cars alone. The Princes Highway on the east side of Colac in the past week has seen massive craters taking not only small cars off the road but massive B-double transports. This is a crisis if it continues. We have heard in recent times there has been a 95 per cent reduction in road surfacing and maintenance across our regional roads. This is unsustainable. With the government so entrenched in debt, with its commitments to the CFMEU on big, bloated projects here in Melbourne, people of regional Victoria will continue to suffer. They will suffer with poor roads, dangerous roads and a complete and utter lack and loss of productivity that is so vital to make us thrive.

Severe weather event

Daniela DE MARTINO (Monbulk) (16:42): The Dandenong Ranges was hit once again this month with wild weather, with several landslips, flooding and trees down owing to heavy rain and high winds. Whilst not as severe as the February event, the recent weather has once more highlighted the indispensable role of emergency service volunteers. They work day and night, often in dangerous conditions, to provide critical assistance, perform rescues, clear debris and restore calm in the aftermath of storms. The Yarra Ranges was identified in the Climate Council and Emergency Leaders for Climate Action's report *Too Close to Home* as the second-most vulnerable local government area to disasters across our nation. So it is unsurprising that Emerald SES has consistently been one of the busiest units in Victoria over the past decade. On behalf of all the residents of the district of Monbulk I would like to send our heartfelt gratitude and deep appreciation to our SES and CFA volunteers and all first responders for their tireless efforts over those difficult days.

Tiny Towns Fund

Daniela DE MARTINO (Monbulk) (16:43): On another matter, I am very pleased to update the house on two new projects in Monbulk which will be delivered through the first round of the Allan Labor government's \$20 million Tiny Towns Fund. This fund is all about supporting local communities to deliver quality tourism and community facility projects, from community halls to local sporting club upgrades. The Hilltop Recreation Association has received \$45,500 to deliver asphaltting around the Olinda Recreation Reserve to make it more accessible, and the Kallista Mechanics Institute Hall has received \$50,000 for a full rejuvenation of this lovely century-old building. These successful projects celebrate each community's local spirit, and I cannot wait to see them when they are completed.

Mildura electorate events

Jade BENHAM (Mildura) (16:43): It has been a long, cold winter thus far, but that has not stopped me or the rest of the region. The past few weeks I have attended many events, like the launch of *The Settler's Lot* written by Henry Tankard AM. I shout out to Mr Tankard, his wife Pam and his aunty Carol. This book describes the difficulties faced by the founders of the Mildura colony, the state government and early settlers and how it almost failed. It is a fascinating account and a great read.

The Christie Centre hosted the Big Balloon Bash Night Glow to celebrate 70 years as part of their major fundraiser, an extraordinary event with nearly 12,000 people in attendance. Congratulations to Florence and the Christie Centre team. It was a magnificent way to celebrate their anniversary of being a brilliant organisation and social enterprise.

The Penrite Hattah Desert Race was held as usual over the first weekend of July, and with 850 entries it was the biggest and one of the best, in my opinion, races we have seen, with local rider Callum Norton winning outright and Ken Reed finally riding for a factory team in his 24th Hattah. Well done, North West Victorian Motorcycle Club.

The Mildura Racing Club celebrated the running of the 100th Mildura Cup a couple of weeks ago, and it was terrific to see the Minister for Racing in attendance and Jimmy the Bear win the cup.

I also visited the Murrayville P-12 school recently and spoke with students who were devastated they could not take part in Youth Parliament recently. We have been hatching a plan though to take Parliament to the most isolated school in the state, so watch this space.

The Robinvale-Euston Rotary Club recently awarded Siua a Paul Harris Fellow at their recent transition dinner for his service. And Josh Waters finished fourth at Suzuka.

Maggie Shrapnel

Paul HAMER (Box Hill) (16:45): I would like to pay tribute to Margaret Mary Shrapnel, known to all as Maggie, who passed away peacefully on 25 June 2024 surrounded by her loving family. Maggie joined the ALP in 1999 and during her 25 years as a party member was a major contributor to the Canterbury branch as both secretary and treasurer. As a party member, Maggie also championed many progressive causes and participated in many peace marches and community projects. Maggie was a true believer and one of the first branch members to support my election campaign in 2018. Maggie was always keen to help out in whatever way possible, including having a large election sign displayed on her prominent Whitehorse Road corner block, much to the joy of local Labor supporters and the chagrin of some of her more conservative neighbours. Maggie's health declined in recent years, but she was always happy to chat and unfailingly cheerful and positive. Maggie was a tolerant and caring friend to many, and her commitment to making the world a better place will be remembered by all. Vale, Maggie.

Chinese Health Foundation of Australia

Paul HAMER (Box Hill) (16:46): Can I congratulate the Chinese Health Foundation on their 30th anniversary that they celebrated recently. The work of Johnny Yu and Mei Yu in leading that organisation has been fantastic – the outreach they provide to our local Chinese community, making sure that they are informed with the latest health developments and giving the community the information that they need to fully partake in the betterment of their health. Congratulations on 30 wonderful years.

Snowfest Gippsland

Wayne FARNHAM (Narracan) (16:46): It is a pleasure to congratulate the organisers of the 2024 Snowfest event held in Warragul on the weekend, which attracted roughly 18,000 people. This event has been held annually and was created by the Warragul Business Group, and this year they raised much-needed funds for our local hospital, the West Gippsland Hospital. It is great that for people that cannot afford to go to the snow, we bring the snow to them. The main street of Warragul gets filled with snow, and the kids have an absolutely ripping time.

Narracan electorate roads

Wayne FARNHAM (Narracan) (16:47): It is becoming clear that the government has run out of money, and this is having a real impact on regional communities. Every day my office is contacted about the state of our roads in Narracan. We have had it confirmed via the budget that road funding has been cut. Labor MPs might want to argue that, but I can tell you, if you leave Melbourne you will see it on every street across every region. The government must take action on our regional roads and upgrade them as soon as they possibly can. My suggestion to the government is: if you are going to do some major infrastructure work on roads in my electorate, use the AWU, not the CFMEU, because you will probably save about 30 per cent.

Pakenham electorate achievements

Emma VULIN (Pakenham) (16:48): It has been a cold winter, but what warms my heart is the community spirit that continues to shine in my electorate. Bonnie Inkster won the Empowered Women in Trades Apprentice of the Year. I congratulate Bonnie on excelling in the male-dominated motorsport industry. She really is an inspiration for other young women.

Student Farjad Safwan from Minaret College Officer campus was presented the Premier's VCE award for business management and health and human development. Receiving this prestigious award for two fields of study is a wonderful acknowledgement of his hard work.

Marg Jones is one of Pakenham's quietest volunteer achievers. As president of the Pakenham Lions Netball Club, she has led the investment in and development of facilities, committees and a generation of netballers. With love and encouragement, Marg continues to mentor and support our local nettie community.

Everyone in Pakenham knows of Bobo and her charity Have a Little Hope. Drawing great strength from personal experience, Bobo understands and believes in people affected by the hardships of suicide, trauma and grief. Bobo's team work tirelessly to provide food, goods and support to many people without judgement.

Rob Porter OAM was a stalwart of the Officer community for his whole life. Rob passed away last year, yet he remains legendary, particularly at the Officer football and sports recreation reserve, which has recently been named in his honour.

I also want to mention the multicultural swimming program supported by the Officer gurdwara in partnership with Cardinia Life, encouraging people from culturally diverse backgrounds to learn to swim.

Sir Edward ‘Weary’ Dunlop Awards

Annabelle CLEELAND (Euroa) (16:49): Today I had the pleasure of celebrating 11 extraordinary students from my electorate who are deserving recipients of the Sir Edward ‘Weary’ Dunlop Award. I want to congratulate Xavier Berriman, Murph Lazenby, Tammanie Robinson, Ella Currell, Lori Perry, Estella-Rose Kipping, Charlie Mackrell, Brianna Maher, Dustin Cocks, Asha Embling and Olivia Williams, who were all here at Parliament today. The award is named in honour of a local legend for those in my electorate, and it is an initiative that I am so happy to be a part of. This annual award recognises students across the Euroa electorate who demonstrate the attitude and values that Weary showcased throughout his life and his time in prisoner-of-war camps, including compassion, humility, friendship, forgiveness, courage, leadership and integrity.

Whether it be coming back from illness, participating in sports championships, growing academically, taking on school leadership positions or just being a great friend to those in need, these kids have all done amazing things. I am so proud of all these award winners. They are students who have gone through more hardship than most yet continue to demonstrate incredible resilience. Some of these kids may still be young, but the qualities they have shown prove that our future is in good hands. I also want to thank the parents and guardians of these award recipients. You should all be so proud of the influence you have had over these beautiful young souls, who are growing to be extraordinary young people. I know I am.

Parkdale level crossing removals

Tim RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) (16:51): I am really happy to announce to the house that Parkdale is level crossing free. Not since Parkdale station came to our community in 1919 have we seen such excitement and such aspiration and hope in our local community. We have seen 20,000 vehicles move through this precinct on average each and every day, and it was an Andrews and an Allan Labor government that committed to making these level crossings a thing of the past. It has been a challenging time for our community with the destruction and the impacts that have gone on for many months, but true Parkdale, Mentone and Mordialloc spirit is fronting up each and every day and supporting our wonderful communities and shopping strips and the aspiration and hope and the real connection that we see in communities like no other. So we give a big shout-out to our community for their patience and resilience during this time and to the traders that are going to have a more accessible, more inclusive and, importantly, safer precinct. Just to be down there and to thank the workers – the hundreds of workers – that have been working around the clock to make this happen; to see the food that they are putting on the table from the work that they are doing; to see the back-to-back shifts 12 hours at a time and the money that they are spending in our patch supporting our businesses during these works – we really appreciate the work and service that they provide, because this will have generational significance. We have seen the tragic impacts of loss of life on level crossings. We saw that many years ago at Warrigal Road, and thankfully now no-one has to take a deep breath while crossing as a pedestrian, on their bike or in a car. The level crossings are gone from Parkdale, and the station opens soon.

Tiny Towns Fund

Alison MARCHANT (Bellarine) (16:52): The Bellarine has recently been very successful in securing grants, which I know means a lot to the communities across the Bellarine electorate. Recently I visited the Queenscliffe Maritime Museum to congratulate them on their successful application under the Tiny Towns Fund. I met with the family members of the late Gil Allbutt, who the historic boatshed is named after. The \$50,000 grant will go towards developing this boatshed into a creative and immersive accessible space for community gatherings. Four other successful recipients of the Tiny Towns Fund include the St Leonards Progress Association, the Indented Head Yacht Club, Portarlington Bayside Miniature Railway and the Bellarine Bears Baseball Club. Our Bellarine towns may be small in population but they have a big heart in creating wonderful community spirit, and I am

so proud of all the passionate volunteers and organisations that have worked incredibly hard to see projects like these come to life.

Bellarine electorate development

Alison MARCHANT (Bellarine) (16:53): I was also delighted to host the Minister for Regional Development in my electorate last week whilst being joined by many of my regional caucus colleagues. Despite what many may say, we have a strong representation across regional Victoria with a clear and strong agenda for our regions and our rural areas. Incredibly, this Labor government has made a record investment of \$45 billion since 2014, making our regions the best places to live, work and visit. I thank the minister for visiting and hearing directly from Bellarine's small and medium businesses and stakeholders in the region.

South-East Monash Legal Service

Meng Heang TAK (Clarinda) (16:54): I was delighted to visit the South-East Monash Legal Service last week to catch up with the SMLS executive director Kristen Wallwork and director of advocacy and development Ashleigh Newnham. Community legal services do an incredible job making sure Victorians can have access to the legal supports that they need, and the SMLS is a wonderful example of this, delivering vital services and representation, particularly in family law and domestic violence. Thank you to everyone at the SMLS for the important work that you do. We are supporting that work with \$28.8 million for community legal centres and specialist legal services, including the South-East Monash Legal Service. Funding will support these services and the Sporting Change program, with over \$220,000 a year for the next four years. This fantastic program partners with schools in Melbourne's south-east to teach young people about the justice system, supporting access to justice with a school lawyer integrated into a school wellbeing team, and it is having a real impact on issues in schools and communities, such as cyberbullying and consent.

Cambodian Association of Victoria

Meng Heang TAK (Clarinda) (16:55): Lastly, thank you to the outgoing federal Minister for Home Affairs, the Honourable Clare O'Neill, for joining me at the Cambodian Association of Victoria last week to hear the community's concerns about foreign interference from foreign agents toward the diaspora. It was fantastic to hear how the Australian government is taking real action.

BLOC Music Theatre

Juliana ADDISON (Wendouree) (16:55): Whilst Ballarat is well known for its winter weather, freezing temperatures and icy wind chills, the show must go on and it does. Congratulations to the BLOC Music Theatre on their staging of *9 to 5: The Musical* at the Civic Hall for two weeks in July. Well done to the cast, crew and orchestra for putting their heart and soul into an outstanding production, with stellar performances and amazing singing and dancing supported by skilled sound and lighting. The fantastic costuming, hairdressing and make-up transported us to the 1970s workplace of Violet, Judy and Doralee. Thank you to BLOC chairperson Jason Muller and the committee for their enduring commitment to musical theatre and the countless hours they volunteer to create opportunities for talented performers and musicians to entertain our community.

Sovereign Hill Winter Wonderlights

Juliana ADDISON (Wendouree) (16:56): And I just want to say well done to Sovereign Hill with their Winter Wonderlights – 80,000 visitors, 21 kilometres of fairy lights and spectacular light projections. Well done, and what an innovation.

*Business of the house***Orders of the day**

Steve DIMOPOULOS (Oakleigh – Minister for Environment, Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events, Minister for Outdoor Recreation) (16:56): I move:

That the consideration of government business, orders of the day 1 and 2, be postponed until later this day.

Motion agreed to.

*Bills***State Sporting Legislation Amendment Bill 2024***Second reading***Debate resumed on motion of Steve Dimopoulos:**

That this bill be now read a second time.

Sam GROTH (Nepean) (16:57): I rise to speak on the State Sporting Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. I know it is an exciting time in the world of sport at the moment, and I promise you that this bill will not contribute to that level of excitement, unfortunately. I know the member for Mordialloc was looking for something pretty special today, but unfortunately I cannot see that coming. The bill was introduced by the government a few weeks ago to amend the ANZAC Day Act 1958 to change the description of an area in which sports are held on Anzac Day. There are also a series of changes made to the Kardinia Park Stadium Act 2016, the Melbourne and Olympic Parks Act 1985, the Melbourne Cricket Ground Act 2009 and the State Sport Centres Act 1994. These changes are in relation to trusts, membership, leasing powers and a whole bunch of other miscellaneous amendments. The bill also amends the Professional Boxing and Combat Sports Act 1985 in relation to acting appointments and for other purposes.

The main provisions of this bill revolve around largely inconsequential changes to the various impacts of those acts, but there are some noteworthy exceptions. Right across all of these acts and throughout the bill the Governor in Council has had its powers transferred to the minister in several instances, and the bill will also see the abolition of two advisory bodies in both the Kardinia Park advisory committee and the State Netball and Hockey Centre advisory committee.

The government have advised that they intend to abolish these committees due to the onerous nature and the process of appointment due to their current statutory nature. The appointment process requires the completion of substantial documentation, including probity checks such as police and bankruptcy, disqualified director searches and the preparation of declarations of private interest. For a lot of those committees and a lot of members that are on them it is a very onerous process. Some of those people change regularly, and it is probably appropriate to make that process a little less onerous. Public board committee members are considered public officials under section 4 of the Public Administration Act 2004 and are bound by the legislative requirements of the Victorian public sector values and directors code of conduct. The minister and the government do not feel this reasonably aligns with the purposes and intended composition of those committees. However, there are certainly still questions around the composition and execution of the government's sports-related policies, which will come up throughout this contribution and the process of the bill.

The bill also will amend the Melbourne and Olympic Parks Act 1985. It will change requirements relating to the resignation of members from that trust and change powers relating to the appointment of acting members. It will change requirements relating to the approval of leases over the National Tennis Centre and Olympic Park; it will permit the minister to delegate the approval of leases that are not major leases over land managed by the trust; it will provide the minister with discretionary powers related to fees, allowances and remuneration of members of the trust who are representatives of Tennis Australia and the Victorian Tennis Association, which previously was not allowed; and it will change

the requirements of the trust relating to nominations made by Tennis Australia and the Victorian Tennis Association.

It will also amend the Melbourne Cricket Ground Act 2009. It will make changes in regard to the resignation of members. It will permit the minister to delegate power to make floodlight determinations, which we have seen in recent years with the rolling fixture and events changing timelines at the MCG, and I am sure that will save the minister plenty of time when it comes to signing off on those floodlight determinations. It will permit the minister to make acting appointments to the trust and it will increase the membership size of that trust as well. For the Professional Boxing and Combat Sports Act 1985, it will permit the minister to make acting appointments to that board.

It will amend the State Sport Centres Act 1994. As I mentioned, it will abolish that State Netball and Hockey Centre advisory committee, and I will come back to that. It will increase the membership of the trust from seven to 11. As we see more state sporting centres come into the fold, like we did recently out in Knox with the basketball, those board members have to sit on quite a number of subcommittees. It will actually free some of those members to have more impact in those committees that they attend, but also divide up the time of those people on the trust to make sure they are able to attend everything they need to. Again, it permits the minister to delegate the approval of leases that are not major leases, and it makes other minor and technical amendments to that act.

I just want to go into a few pieces. The State Netball and Hockey Centre is a great facility, but when it comes to hockey this government, in my opinion, continues to let that sport down. Currently interstate competition is dominating Victoria when it comes to hosting these major hockey events, and it is not because we do not have the facility to do so. These other states are getting a high return on investment on those events. When you look at the Mega Masters, the recent event in Western Australia, they would have loved to bring that event here, but the cost of renting out the State Netball and Hockey Centre to host that event did not fit. But for WA, who we have already seen start trying to poach our tourism events economy, a huge investment by Western Australia in their recent budget – of course we want to see all of these things staying in Victoria – that event delivered a 20-to-one return on the investment. With the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events sitting at the table here, I would encourage him to make sure we are getting many of those events here at that centre and doing everything we can to make it cost effective for those organisations trying to host those major events. While we do have some huge events and a great major events calendar, we still need to be adding ones that maybe are not as high profile but are still going to bring that economic investment back into the state. I think it is very, very important. It does not reflect a lack of quality events that we have. Of course we have a great major events calendar, but we just need to keep pushing forward with that.

The government's work in attracting these events has been, I would say, a disaster. When you look at the Commonwealth Games, and I am sure I will touch on the Commonwealth Games a number of times during this contribution, the decision to hold the Commonwealth Games out in regional Victoria and to build those facilities – and I absolutely see the value in building them, yet we had facilities here in Victoria ready to go. We could have moved and hosted those sports and done it in a far more economically smart way. It would be great to see these facilities used more often. The State Netball and Hockey Centre is a perfect example. It is a little bit of a white elephant. In a government press release from October 2018, the government described it as being 'the epicentre of hockey and netball in Victoria', which it certainly has the ability to be, and said that the 'upgrade will expand the capability of the venue to host big events'. The problem is at the moment it is actually not hosting any of those events. It is a \$65 million centre. It sits there. It does not do very much. It delivers no revenue and very little return on investment for Victorian taxpayers. It is a world-class centre. It has the ability to draw competition and events from around the world, so not just here in Australia but actually globally, but sadly we are yet to see this government have the appetite to support that hockey centre.

It is one thing to invest in these things, but it is another thing to actually deliver the events that those facilities can deliver. We have seen this again and again from this government across a myriad of their responsibilities. They promise to throw the money around, but delivering that is another whole thing.

This government presided over one of the most monumental failures of the state, falling behind its neighbours, losing opportunities, events, competition and that private sector investment, and this bill, while it has been largely described as a housekeeping bill, will not solve any of these issues around that state hockey centre created by the government. The government is focused on dollars rather than outcomes – we see that across a whole range of portfolios. The State Netball and Hockey Centre is so underutilised, it is another case of that. Given this state's dire financial position, we want to see things like the State Netball and Hockey Centre rented at a reasonable price and actually able to be used.

I mentioned the Mega Masters event in Western Australia. When Western Australia actually announced they were going to host that major event, the Hockey Australia acting CEO at the time Michael Johnston in a press release that he put out to the WA media thanked Tourism WA for the investment and for showing a genuine appetite and interest for hosting these events. I think that is something that should absolutely ring in the ears of this government.

The advisory committee that is being abolished by this government – there are plenty of stakeholders. When you talk about the problems with that venue and its lack of leasing, the abolishment of that committee certainly raised the eyes of some of the stakeholders. Some of the stakeholders have certainly said the committee was not functional, and others have raised concerns about how their voice will now be heard in terms of their input into how that centre is run. We have heard this government say they are committed to re-establishing that committee in a less formal way, and we do wait to see what that will look like. We obviously want to make sure that hockey, netball, any other sports, small or large, that operate out of that facility still have the ability to have an input into how it is used. So we will wait for that. But for a committee that was not functional, the government's response so far has just been to abolish it. We do want to see that that is going to be done in the right way, and we do have that commitment both to us and to the stakeholders that that committee will be established in that less formal way and will still have an input.

I will move on to the Kardinia Park advisory committee. Just like the State Netball and Hockey Centre, that is also going to be abolished, and there were some concerns initially raised by some of the stakeholders out there. The government again has addressed with those stakeholders that that committee will be re-established; again, we will wait for that. We do not know how that committee is going to look, the make-up of it. I have every trust in the government, I guess, on this one, and that they will actually put those back into place, but I think with what we have seen out at Kardinia Park in recent times, it has been a place that has had incredible investment, if I can say it, from this state government and from the federal government. More than \$340 million has been put into that stadium out there over a number of years. Of course we all know in the last state budget there was another \$4.1 million for a scoreboard out at that stadium. Maybe that scoreboard was going to be put out there because Kardinia Park, or GMHBA Stadium – however you want to refer to it – was going to be hosting the closing ceremony of the Commonwealth Games. I am not sure if they just forgot to pull that commitment out of the budget once they did cancel the Commonwealth Games, but it seemed to manage to stay in it. Obviously it raised serious concerns with the public at a time when another \$4.1 million was going to be spent out there at the stadium in Geelong but at the same time the VCCC, the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre, had its funding dramatically slashed, and we saw a lot of media reports and a lot of discussion around that and about the priorities of this government.

Just this week, if you have read the newspaper and you follow your AFL, you will have seen the Geelong Cats have had to move out of that site because of ground issues. They have moved all of their training offsite. There were some problems in their game against the Western Bulldogs in terms of ground –

Members interjecting.

Sam GROTH: Yes, the deck was a bit of an issue; it was. But we have certainly now seen the Geelong Cats have had to move out. I saw the Geelong Cats come out and say that they absolutely appreciate the work that their ground staff do – and they do everything they can, and we have had a

lot of rain. But when we are making investments in these spaces and there are advisory committees, we need to make sure everyone is working together to make sure investment goes into these stadiums and they are actually able to deliver the outcomes, and of course we want to see Geelong being able to use that stadium. This bill does not do anything to help that.

We also see in this bill the government propose an increase to the number of members of the trust for Kardinia Park from seven to 11. They are increasing the number of State Sport Centres Trust board members. It is probably not normal practice. I think anybody who deals with corporate boards would know 11 board members is a very high number. They say that is the maximum number of board members that is going to be used or be available to be used. Futureproofing, I think, is how the government are looking at this, in case they want to add people later or add new sports centres later. We just want to make sure that we still are seeing best practice from these boards and that people are not just being added on. There is a cost – there is a payment to these board directors, and that is fine – but we want to make sure those numbers are not increasing over the top.

Overall this is just a bill that tidies up a whole range of bits and pieces. It is quite non-offensive. It is a bill that is going to make the minister's life easier, from the conversations that we have had. It is a bill that will abolish those committees, and they will be re-established. Overall the opposition will not oppose this bill. I do not see any reason why it should not be moved through, and it will tidy up those things. But I encourage the government to do more work around making sure that our state sporting facilities are used in the best capacity that they can be. There is work to be done at the State Netball and Hockey Centre, and there is work to be done with the MCG in terms of securing some of our major events. We know the government still has not secured the Boxing Day test long term. I think all Victorians want to see them lock that event in long term.

I think the point to note with all of this as well is that we have the facilities in Victoria, here in Melbourne, that can host these major events and should have been utilised when we were pitching for something like the Commonwealth Games. There was no reason to try and blow out costs, inflate the numbers and hide numbers in contingency when it came to budgeting when the event could have been held in some capacity back here in Melbourne. We have facilities sitting here ready to be used that are currently not able to be rented out by stakeholders and currently not being able to host other large events. I encourage the government to do more to make sure they are bringing these things to Victoria. Believe me, I love these events as much as anybody else. It is not just about the Australian Open; it is not just about the grand prix. There are other events in the sporting space that this government can be hosting that will deliver economic impact, and I encourage the minister to do more in this space to make sure that they can be held here in Victoria.

As I said, we will not be opposing this bill. I think I have probably eked as much out of this as I possibly can. I could have probably read almost every clause. I probably could have read through every clause and got another 3 or so minutes out.

Members interjecting.

Sam GROTH: No, I can promise you I am not going to get there. I could have read every clause, but at the same time –

Jade Benham: Tell us an Olympic story.

Sam GROTH: No, you can get those later in the week. We will not be opposing this bill, but again I encourage the government to do more in this space.

Josh BULL (Sunbury) (17:14): I am pleased to have the opportunity to follow on from the member for Nepean, who I think could have probably given us another 13 minutes. He was just starting to move from third to fourth gear and starting to wind up. I reckon he could have given us at least another 10. I am pleased to have the opportunity to contribute to debate on the State Sporting Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, to be back in the chamber with colleagues from the Allan Labor government,

committed to supporting our local communities right across the state and to ensuring that all of the facilities and all of the local services and things that this government has been able to provide will continue both today and well and truly into the future.

As we have just heard from the previous speaker, this legislation contains a number of minor amendments to a number of acts. Specifically the bill amends the Melbourne and Olympic Parks Act 1985, the Melbourne Cricket Ground Act 2009, the Kardinia Park Stadium Act 2016, the Professional Boxing and Combat Sports Act 1985, the State Sport Centres Act 1994 and the ANZAC Day Act 1958 to promote good governance and reduce administrative burden. What I will do in my contribution this evening is go to just a couple of those changes, but before I do, I broadly want to acknowledge just how important the calendar of events is – the significant, important and many major sporting events that we have in this state – and acknowledge the incredible work that is done by so many within those events on the sporting calendars of both our terrific state but also local communities. It is a fantastic list. It is a long list. It is something that I know this government and indeed all Victorians are incredibly proud of. Whether it is the Australian Open, the F1 grand prix, the Spring Racing Carnival or the AFL Grand Final, just to name a few, we know and understand as a state that so many of these events are critical to our sporting fabric and critical to the economy of what is a very, very proud state.

Right now we know that the eyes of many Victorians – whether it be at 3, 4 or 5 in the morning – are of course on Paris. The eyes of a nation are indeed looking over at Paris and supporting the more than 90 athletes that we have sent from this state to the Olympic Games. I want to acknowledge all of those athletes and the paralympic athletes as well. There is serious and important training – a phenomenal effort – to make an Olympics. I certainly have not. Member for Footscray, I do not know if you –

Katie Hall interjected.

Josh BULL: You have been watching; very good. There has been amazing hard work and dedication and support from many. When we hear of the journeys, the stories, of our athletes, no matter the sport or the competition that they are in, the acknowledgement of local sport, the acknowledgement and support of families and friends and the opportunity to represent our nation are indeed things that we should celebrate and acknowledge, and we do that of course today.

What is important, certainly from our perspective – and it goes to some of the changes contained in this legislation – is making sure that we are an outfit and indeed we are a government that supports all of those within our sporting bodies right across the state and ensures that we are financially backing the wonderful work and the incredibly hard training that so many do each and every day. The governance around the way that sporting bodies operate is important. This goes to, as I mentioned, some of the changes that are contained in the bill before the house this evening.

I mentioned earlier some of these changes, being allowing the appointment of acting members or chairs to trusts, with a particular change to temporary vacancies on trusts. We know that often they can arise with little notice. Currently across various sporting trusts there are no provisions to permit the appointment of acting members or an acting chairperson. The bill ensures consistency across all government sporting trusts so that acting members and chairpersons can be appointed when required, a relatively minor but nonetheless important change.

On the change to the delegation of leases, what we know is that the current legislation provides that any lease granted by the trust over the land on a number of trust sites must be approved by the minister. While it is important of course that the minister controls long-term leasing arrangements over major state assets, there is no compelling reason to require the minister to approve minor leases over small areas, for example, short-term leases over a small number of areas. The amendment will give the trust flexibility and certainty and will reduce administrative burden.

There is also contained within the changes a change to the trust resignation process. Members currently across a number of trusts are required to resign by a written notification to the Governor in Council,

with resignations only to be taken into effect when considered at an executive council meeting. This has presented difficulties for members whose resignation needed to take effect on the day that it was made – for example, when a member has been appointed to become a court judge. Resignation to the minister is consistent with other sports legislation, and again goes to reducing administrative burden.

Broadly, what we are doing with this legislation is amending and making sure that the governance provisions – the arrangements – within a number of these trusts are tidied up, the red tape reduced and the administrative burden lessened. I do say though, on our sporting calendar and on all of the work that has been done by relevant agencies and by the minister and the department, it is something to be incredibly proud of – that we have such a strong, vibrant, successful sporting calendar of events. In many ways the envy of so many is to know that right here in this state we are continuing to make sure that we remain at the top of the sporting fabric of the nation, and we will always ensure as a government that we work with fantastic agencies like the Victorian Institute of Sport and so many others who do incredible work to support athletes right across our state.

I do want to again say to every member of every local club and every committee: I am someone who benefited significantly from local sport. I know that when you play local sport you are part of something that is bigger than you. The most important thing about that is the mentoring, the support and the conversations that happen at footy training and at swimming – all of that makes for a great community, and when we have good communities, we have a better state. What we know and understand is that by backing so much of this work we collectively become better. We know that for many people going through challenges in their life, no matter what those challenges may be, a sporting club can often be a place of solitude and a place where individuals get support that they may not get in a more formal setting. I think sometimes, while we do not forget to acknowledge that, that is something that we should acknowledge more, because when you do that – when you provide, as I said, good support within grassroots community organisations, when people volunteer their time and when people actually support other people to be better people – that is something that we should always support and we should always be proud of.

This bill contains a number of amendments that I have gone to, and I want to acknowledge the work that has been done by everyone that has brought this piece of legislation to the house. The member for Footscray continues to write her cards here at a great pace, but I very proudly commend the bill to the house.

Jade BENHAM (Mildura) (17:24): I do take quite a bit of joy when I am able to rise in this place, in fact in any place, and get to speak about sport. It is my first great love of course, and there are no boundaries. I will watch pretty much anything, darts included.

A member interjected.

Jade BENHAM: Thank you. I am more than happy to rise to speak on the State Sporting Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. It has been spoken about before by the member for Nepean, who did not go through every clause, but there is quite a bit to go through with the tidying up of red tape. There are a couple of things I do want to highlight. We will start with the State Netball and Hockey Centre advisory committee, netball being one of my great loves. I have played at the State Netball and Hockey Centre many, many times. I have even competed in taekwondo at the State Netball and Hockey Centre. It is a multifunctional centre and has had a level of investment. It is a great place. I have also played and refereed state titles in netball there a number of times.

The advisory committee was a committee that offered advice to government on issues. Changes in all sorts of sporting rules – Netball Victoria have changed the rules again this year – do have an impact on things like that. When there are rule changes, which might be the run-off of the netball courts for referee safety, player safety or that kind of thing, they are the things that need to be fed back to government so that there can be changes made to spaces. This is really important stuff, but unless you are involved in playing netball at those facilities you would not know about it, so to abolish the

committee, to me, does not make any sense. Fixing it, yes – there may have been all sorts of issues around the committee and getting onto it et cetera, et cetera – but to abolish it rather than to rectify those issues is perplexing to say the very least.

We know that it is a great facility, and one of the great joys when I was growing up playing country netball was that I got my C-grade umpiring badge at the State Netball and Hockey Centre. I will not give you the year, but I was 15 years old. It was quite an achievement for someone of 15 to be awarded their C-grade badge back in those days.

Sam Groth interjected.

Jade BENHAM: Yes, eight years ago. That is exactly right. Thank you, member for Nepean; I appreciate that. But the training for that happens on our country courts, and when you get there you see these facilities that are like ‘Wow’. Meanwhile our home courts, the courts at John James Park in Ouyen, for example, have needed resurfacing for years and years and years. There are complications around the committee of management at a grassroots level which also perhaps need to be and could have been looked at in this bill. When it gets down to councils, committees of management, different clubs and associations that might use these facilities and who is responsible for what, it ends up largely being the volunteers that do the work in maintenance, that do that resurfacing work if it is for netball. I know the Ouyen football–netball club did a huge amount of work to make sure their courts were safe. These are volunteers in a town of around a thousand people. They are a magnificent community, but there is a very stark contrast when we talk about grassroots level facilities and things like the State Netball and Hockey Centre.

Kardinia Park is one that many constituents have come to me post budget about, when the \$4 million scoreboard was talked about. It is now not very affectionately known as ‘Pork Barrel Park’ in my electorate because of the rigmarole that many clubs have had to go through to get new digital scoreboards. When I was growing up the footy score was changed by kids up in the scoreboard on freezing cold winter days, changing the scores manually for a can of Coke and a packet of chips. That was reward aplenty for us, but we have evolved – it is 2024. The rigmarole that many clubs have had to go through to get simple scoreboard upgrades, because volunteerism, as we know, is dropping off and it is hard to find volunteers. They do a magnificent job. Every sporting club in the state and the country and the people who volunteer for them does a magnificent job, but it is hard to find volunteers. Even trying to run a canteen these days is really, really hard.

So you can understand the contrast for those of us out in the most isolated parts of the state. I was in Murrayville last week having a look at their new clubrooms and their new facilities, which are fantastic, but their league is in South Australia – just to give you some perspective on how isolated some of these clubs are and how much they rely on volunteers. Just a little fraction of that money that goes into places like the State Netball and Hockey Centre and Kardinia Park I know John James Oval would have benefited from greatly.

The Hattah Desert Race – I spoke about that in my members statement earlier – is a magnificent event. It has been going for 26 years now, but the security of this event centres around land. They do it on private land at the moment. What happens with succession planning in farming when that might change hands? There is no security, so an investment from the state government to support such a huge event – and events like it in all disciplines of sport, which bring such huge economic value to smaller regional and rural towns – is vitally important.

The Mildura Harness Racing Club is another one. The Minister for Racing was in Mildura a couple of weeks ago and was kind enough to give the Mildura Harness Racing Club time to meet and discuss with them their options for upgrade. Their building was affected by floods during the heavy rains in 2022, and also there are also some issues around scheduling and whatever. But it was great of the minister to come and discuss that with the harness racing club. That is another shared facility. You have got two footy clubs that play there and two netball clubs, you have got cricket clubs and you have

got harness races. Trying to manage a venue like that is difficult to say the very least – and it is the local showgrounds.

The Mildura Racing Club, which I also mentioned in my members statement earlier, were inundated for six weeks in water taller than me and managed to run their 100th Mildura Cup a couple of weeks ago, but it took over 12 months. They were 18 months without racing, and that hurts clubs that rely on those facilities to be able to hold events like the Mildura Cup, which was a fantastic event. It really was. The minister also attended that, which was fantastic. These are the sorts of grassroots clubs, when we talk about sport being the backbone and the spine of country Victoria, that really are. So when it comes out in the news that Kardinia Park has had a \$4 million investment, or the MCG and things like that, you cannot blame regional people for getting a little bit frustrated when there are so many volunteer hours that go into the maintenance and improvement of local facilities.

The Mildura Lawn Tennis Club is another one that was inundated during the floods, and they have done a magnificent job – tennis clubs do do an incredible job – to bring that back to the state that it is in. They had their pro tournament earlier this year, which was fantastic and which I believe the member for Nepean won a long, long, long, long time ago. He is ignoring me, and that is fine.

The Hopetoun go-kart club is also another fantastic community club which is managed again through volunteerism. A lot of speedway and motorsport local clubs rely on their own funds, running raffles, sausage sizzles at Bunnings and things like that.

Just to finish up – I could go through and name every single sporting club in my electorate, but I would be here for the entire 10 minutes – I also need to mention the Birchip–Watchem Netball Club, another club that needed upgrades to their court, which have been completed, but for safety reasons they have been unable to play on it. Councils are trying to manage this as well, particularly small rural councils, who are already stretched for resources. That is not often the remit of councils, which is why it lands in the lap of volunteers.

For the Nullawil and Wycheproof–Narraport footy clubs, it is their last year this year, both of those small clubs. As I said, it is getting harder and harder for grassroots clubs to remain, so it is their last year. I wish them all the best and all the best in their venture as an amalgamated club next year, which will be the Lions. I look forward to being able to support them next year.

John MULLAHY (Glen Waverley) (17:34): It is a pleasure to rise to speak in favour of the State Sporting Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. From the outset I would like to thank the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events and his team for the immense effort that has been put into this piece of legislation, and I trust that it will make a positive impact on Victorians. I take great pride in knowing that Melbourne and Victoria are the sporting and major events capital of Australia. There is no doubt that people from across the world find Victoria to be a destination state, whether it be for the concerts, for the Australian Open or to visit the biggest stadium in the Southern Hemisphere, and this is only possible thanks to this government's continued investment into this sector to both attract talent to perform in our state and ensure that major events stay right here in Victoria.

Not only are these events a source of great entertainment and enjoyment, but they also provide a significant boost to Victoria's economy. Take the Australian Open, for example, where we are privileged to host the best players in the world in one of only four tennis grand slams. More than 1.1 million fans passed through the gates across three weeks, which created some 1700 jobs and contributed more than \$387 million to Victoria's economy. As anyone who has been to Melbourne Park knows, we host some of the most modern, clean and up-to-date facilities in the world. This government made a significant contribution of close to \$1 billion for the Melbourne Park redevelopment, and over the past 10 years the Australian Open has returned that investment threefold. A thriving Melbourne and Olympic Park complex means that the Australian Open will remain in Melbourne until at least 2046, and we will continue to attract performances to the Rod Laver Arena. This area has generated more than \$740 million in visitor spend alone in the past 12 months, with it

hosting nearly 100 concerts and 50 other entertainment events and welcoming more than 3 million visitors in total. A clear indication of the economic success of this government's investment is that some 1.2 million bed nights were booked in hotels as more than 900,000 visitors from other parts of the state flocked to Melbourne. From Robbie Williams, Dua Lipa and Billie Eilish the precinct brought some \$880 million in revenue, forming 6 per cent of Australia's sports industry and 9 per cent of the country's live entertainment industry. This cumulatively has created 4200 jobs, with an additional 1600 jobs supported indirectly across precinct activities.

Our commitment to strengthening Melbourne as the events capital of the country is good for jobs, good for opportunities and good for the economy. Another example of Melbourne's sporting prowess is the Formula One Australian Grand Prix, which had an estimated attendance of more than 450,000 people. Hotel occupancy averaged more than 91 per cent during the week, and networks recorded the biggest ever live stream audience.

To ensure that Melbourne and Victoria continue to thrive in hosting sporting and major events we must proactively work towards improving legislative frameworks, and this bill seeks to do just that by improving consistency in governance provisions and reducing red tape as well as modernising legislation. This will ensure that important decisions can be made with greater efficiency. Necessary amendments will be made to five state sporting acts: the Kardinia Park Stadium Act 2016, the Melbourne and Olympic Parks Act 1985, the Melbourne Cricket Ground Act 2009, the Professional Boxing and Combat Sports Act 1985 and the State Sport Centres Act 1994.

The change to the Kardinia Park Stadium Act will allow for the minister for sport rather than the Governor in Council to make event management decisions. This will cut waiting periods, increasing efficiency. This bill also abolishes the Kardinia Park advisory committee and the State Netball and Hockey Centre advisory committee. The reason for this decision is that both committees are advisory bodies with no decision-making authority. Considering that the appointment process is arduous, these changes will facilitate a similar process in which advice is received, albeit without the delays and administrative difficulties.

Further red tape is cut by allowing the minister to delegate floodlight determinations for the MCG to the department, as well as reducing the administrative burden for the Melbourne and Olympic Parks Trust. Consistency will be applied across both trust and advisory committee applications and resignation processes by empowering the minister to appoint acting chairpersons and members and receive resignations directly. Additionally, this bill removes outdated provisions which prohibit Tennis Australia and Tennis Victoria employees from being eligible for payment as members of the Melbourne and Olympic Parks Trust and increases the maximum number of members on both the MCG and the State Sport Centres trust.

Changes will be made to the ANZAC Day Act 1958 to update language choices and modernise the legislation such that it is fit for purpose. Amendments will be made to update measurement terminology and remove outdated gendered language – I think we are going from miles to kilometres, finally.

As a sports fan myself – go Cats – I know how much of a privilege it is to have excellent and accessible sporting facilities in your community, whether they be there for major events or for local community sport. I say that as a proud representative of the Glen Waverley district, which is home to some of the best community sports infrastructure in the state. It is always a pleasure to be invited down to visit clubs and learn more about the incredible work they do. Although there are too many to mention I would like to give a special shout-out to some of the local sporting heroes in the Glen Waverley community.

Firstly, congratulations to the Whitehorse United Soccer Club on its incredible success over the last 30 years. It went from one team to 48 teams, and it is truly a thriving community club. It was an absolute pleasure to join the committee members Enrico Marrone, Amanda Armstrong, Karen

Foreman, John Parisella, Kim Marrone, Andrew Findlay, Terry Howse and Maria Mavrogiannis at their annual president's lunch last weekend. From meeting with life members, sponsors, supporters and families to learning about the possible improvements the club could undergo, it was a special day. I would like to again acknowledge the ongoing issues of drainage on the ground, and I look forward to working with council to address this issue to ensure that the club has a viable pitch to train and play on.

I would also like to take a moment to reflect on the incredible life of Paul 'Bluey' Tierney, who was a stalwart of the Blackburn baseball club. A member of the inaugural team from some 61 years ago, he devoted so much of his time to the game he loved and the club he served. I want to acknowledge Bluey's work in being an instrumental part of the rebuild and success of the Blackburn baseball club. Without Bluey's passion and tireless commitment the baseball community just would not be the same, and I offer my condolences to his family and friends.

And of course a special shout-out to the amazing crew down at the Mazenod Panthers. The Panthers, who play at Central Reserve, which has received \$300,000 in the latest budget for resurfacing the south oval, are a kind and nurturing club. Just this past weekend the Panthers played against the Monash Demons in the George Soles Memorial Cup, in recognition of his service as a committee member and timekeeper for more than 20 years. This weekend after a remarkable record-breaking 20 years of playing in Mazenod colours, Mark Vandervan and Simon Pollock will be playing their 200th games for the mighty Panthers. This is an incredible achievement, and I know their loyalty and courage is an inspiration to all.

It is an honour to have so many amazing community sports clubs in my electorate, and to see the smiles on everyone's faces as they learn and grow is a joy. A special thankyou to all the players, coaches, staff, parents and volunteers who make it happen, and I look forward to joining our community at more of these events soon. Local sport is the backbone of our community, and whether it be funding to resurface the oval at Central Reserve south or building a new pavilion at Brandon Park Reserve, this government is backing in the next generation of superstars that will hopefully one day play in the precincts that this legislation changes.

Briefly, best wishes to the Australian Olympic team competing in Paris as we speak now. A special shout-out to Marena Whittle in the women's basketball team, Nicholas Lum from the table tennis team and William Petric from the swimming squad. Marena, Nicholas and William are all residents of the Glen Waverley district, and they are all doing us very proud, representing the best in our district.

I am proud to be part of an Allan Labor government that backs our state's position as the sporting and major events capital of this country. Our continuing investment will ensure that we receive the economic and social benefits, as well as giving Victorians an opportunity to be the best versions of themselves. I strongly believe that this bill, by making these minor amendments to the state sporting legislation and the ANZAC Day Act, will have a positive impact on cementing our place as a thriving sports and major events hub, and I commend the bill to the house.

Cindy McLEISH (Eildon) (17:43): I too rise to make a contribution to the State Sporting Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, which interestingly enough is about state facilities rather than grassroots sport. I think a lot of the members in the chamber have absolutely just confused that. This is about changing things at the higher level to make it a little bit better and to streamline things. The bill implements a number of reforms to several acts: the Kardinia Park Stadium Act 2016, the Melbourne and Olympic Parks Act 1985, the Melbourne Cricket Ground Act 2009, the Professional Boxing and Combat Sports Act 1985 and the State Sport Centres Act 1994. If you actually read the bill and go through it, clause after clause after clause is about removing gendered language. Anything with 'she' or 'he' is now 'the commissioner', 'the participant', 'the promoter' – all of that sort of language is being removed, first and foremost. There are also some changes in relation to trust membership and leasing powers, and I am a little bit concerned about some of the things around leasing

powers and acting appointments for trust and board members through the acts that I have just mentioned.

I am actually going to start with the changes to the State Sport Centres Act 1994. One of the things that this does is abolish the State Netball and Hockey Centre advisory committee. Now, this worries me. We do have this gold-plated facility out in Parkville, known to me probably as the state hockey centre rather than the netball and hockey centre. There has been an advisory committee. Feedback from stakeholders says that this has not been working effectively, so the government are moving to – rather than fix it and have proper mechanisms for feedback – abolish it altogether and try and put in something new. I am not sure that that is always the right way to tackle something that there are issues with.

What it is also looking to do is increase the maximum membership of the trust, which is seven now, to 11. I worry when membership of these sorts of boards and trusts increases to a certain level. I referred to the Australian Institute of Company Directors to get a rule of thumb idea about appropriate board sizes. As I expected, this is on the upper level. A large ASX-listed company would have eight to 12 members, and here we are looking at seven to 11. Eight to 12 for a large ASX-listed company – that is talking about BHP, Westpac; it is not talking about the state sport centre. A small ASX-listed company might have four to six members. I just worry that the bigger they get the less effective they become, and people may not participate to the same degree. Of course some small charities and not-for-profit boards have five to eight members, but then again public sector boards might have six to 12. I know in a lot of public sector boards they are actually on that lower end. So I am a little bit concerned about the reasons why they are looking to increase the membership.

One of the other elements here is permitting the minister to delegate approval of leases that are not major leases over certain land managed by the trust. Major leases are big 21-year leases over large infrastructure. I worry that changing the delegations or the authorities may remove the minister from knowing exactly what is going on. If you are a good minister and you have got a good secretary of the department, that information is being fed to you. But there is that possibility that they become removed, and we cannot have them removed from what is going on.

One of the other areas that is being amended is the Professional Boxing and Combat Sports Act 1985. They have had problems in the past, and you do not want the minister not knowing what is going on there. So I am a little bit concerned about the delegations. I understand why – that it might be trying to streamline it – but at the same time we could be increasing the risk.

While I am talking about the State Sport Centres Act – and as I said, it covers the State Netball and Hockey Centre out at Parkville – I do want to mention that we have two Victorian hockey players in the Olympics. Even more exciting is those two players belong to Southern United Hockey Club. I have belonged to Southern United Hockey Club since 1991, and I have played there every year since, except when I was pregnant.

A member interjected.

Cindy McLEISH: Only until 16 weeks. So I have watched these players grow and develop. It is so exciting for our club to have Amy Lawton and Nathan Ephraums representing Australia at the Olympics. Amy made her debut in Tokyo, and it was obvious from a young age that she was an exceptional talent. You do well at juniors and you move through the senior teams and get into the state league team fairly quickly, and Amy was one of those kids. It has been really exciting to watch her. Her sister Josie also plays. I know her parents Julie and Oliver are so excited. In fact on Sunday night the club had a function down there to watch the first of the women's hockey matches. They expected maybe 40 and they got 140, and Channel 9 covered it, so it was all very exciting. Also Nathan got the late call-up, and he was training initially. Nathan, when he played in the under-9s, one year got 100 goals, and I thought this was pretty amazing. I spoke to the coach, who I knew quite well, Chris Abaniel. Chris said, 'It's amazing. He can find the back of the net. He knows where the goals are.' So

it has been no surprise for us at Southern United to see Nathan go on and do what he has done. It is so exciting that he has now had this opportunity to represent Australia at the Olympics. His parents Dave and Petra will be so excited, as will his brother Josh. Dave hung up the stick a few years ago, and I know how much of an inspiration he was for Nathan. I cannot tell you how proud Southern United is of both Amy and Nathan.

Back to the bill, I want to touch on part 6, which is amending the Professional Boxing and Combat Sports Act. A lot of this is changes around gendered language, but it also gives the minister an opportunity to appoint a member of the board to act as chairperson, and it outlines the functions and delegations that that person has. I understand that this is important because you do need to have that continuity, that something can continue to flow, and I think it is important. In the past this area has had some difficulties, and I think it is good that it is being looked at here. The Professional Boxing and Combat Sports Board are the regulating authority, and they issue some 800 licences. The minister can act here to make these acting appointments, and the bill outlines some of the duties and functions.

We have also got some amendments here to the ANZAC Day Act which change the description of an area where sports are held on Anzac Day. We know things have moved in this space quite a bit over the last decade or so from when sport was not played on Anzac Day, then we had it at a certain time on Anzac Day and then we had more sports getting in on being able to play, but we have had to have legislation around that.

The amendments to the Kardinia Park Stadium Act permit the minister to make event management declarations rather than having, I think it was, the Governor in Council do that, which is something that you would like to see. It abolishes the Kardinia Park Advisory Committee, and again I have spoken about the abolition of advisory committees. As long as there is a mechanism in place – what can happen without that mechanism in place is that things can become slack. You might expect to have meetings every two months, maybe every three months, and then you miss a month and then it is four months, then once every six months, and, before you know it, it is once every two years. That is not effective. We need to have good processes and systems in place. I urge the government, when they are abolishing such committees, to ensure that they do have good processes in place.

The minister here also can delegate the approval of leases that are not major leases over certain lands that are managed by the trust, as I mentioned previously with the State Sporting Centres Act. I reiterate my concerns that the minister can become too disengaged, and they must have appropriate mechanisms in place to work effectively with the trust and with the department to make sure that things do not fall between the cracks, because we do need the minister to understand what is happening. Sport is an integral part of the way we live our life in Victoria, whether that is as participants or as spectators.

There are changes to the Melbourne and Olympic Parks Act changing the requirements relating to resignation of members from the trust, changing the powers relating to the appointment of acting members to the trust and approval of leases over things like the National Tennis Centre and Olympic Park – such important and valuable assets to the state of Victoria. I think everybody agrees that the use of the tennis centre and Olympic Park is really wide. It is well beyond sport. We have all sorts of exhibitions, and we have had some great world championships in different areas and lots of concerts. It is important that we do have good mechanisms for management in place.

Paul EDBROOKE (Frankston) (17:53): I take from the member for Eildon's speech that she just got knocked off the Olympic list by that young'un in hockey. I know you were there, I know you are passionate about hockey, but it might be a case of the older we get, the better we were. I can speak personally from that perspective.

I want to start out by mentioning a Frankston High School student Brock Batty, who is very talented. As I said, he is attending Frankston High School at the moment, but right at this point in time he is in

Paris, and he is competing in the trampolining. I find that pretty frightening. I see the trampolining, and the skill required is amazing, but the heights those people jump to are just crazy.

A member interjected.

Paul EDBROOKE: Jumping out of planes is different: you cannot see the ground. While I am on that segue – thank you, member – I want to say congratulations to my speed skydiving coach or mentor Mervyn O’Connell. He got the silver medal in Germany a couple of weeks ago for speed skydiving, ISSA Speed Skydiving, and he crushed it by diving out of a plane and reaching 512 kilometres an hour I think, so Mach 0.5. The guy is a crazy Irishman. He lines himself up in the door of the plane and he actually uses the door to leap out of the plane so he can get as much grunt into his jump as he can. I just look on with amazement.

It is with that kind of amazement that I watch the Olympics at the moment and I see the high level at which our performers take these medals. I would argue to anyone that this is not about grassroots sport, because those people are role models. When they come back to Australia, we will not just be seeing them on TV; we will be seeing them in real life, and many of those people are Victorians.

I do not want to offend anyone at the department, but while we might find this bill a little bit boring – it is about the constitution of boards; it is about crossing some t’s and dotting some i’s – it is very important that we have these functions and tools in place and operating effectively so that we can actually grow these athletes from teeny-weeny little Auskickers to people that are performing at the Olympics.

With that I would say also that Melbourne and Victoria are the sporting capital of Australia, and that is consistent with government investment. We have seen so much growth in major events over more than 25 years of focusing on the major events calendar. Research commissioned by Visit Victoria in 2023 found Victoria’s major events calendar contributed \$3.3 billion to the economy and generated more than 15,000 jobs for Victoria every single year. Those major events drive interstate and international visitation and put Melbourne and Victoria on the global stage, filling hotels and supporting Victorian jobs. If you want to see Victoria on the international stage, you can watch the Olympics now. When some of our Victorians take home medals, often they will be speaking about their home, they will be thanking their local coach and they will be thanking their local clubs, and that is again Victoria on the international stage. Again, it is bills like this that make it easy for clubs to run, for boards to run, and to spend time focusing on the actual sports themselves.

One of those sports that we have heard other people talk about is obviously the 2024 Australian Open. We smashed attendance records this year with more than 1 million fans passing through the gates over all three weeks, including the opening week as well, which was a sight to behold. I went there for one day and wanted to get back for more, but unfortunately, alas, we have got to work. We have shown through analysis that the 2023 event created more than 1700 full-time jobs and contributed more than \$387 million to Victoria’s economy.

Whether it is a sporting event, which might be the cricket at the G, or a music concert – whoever has played most recently, Tay Tay or whoever – these kinds of events actually contribute so much to our economy. If you think of a major band or a major artist coming and filling up the MCG, you might be accurate I think if you are talking about tens of millions of dollars generated over one single night in hotels, in hospitality, in ticket sales and in all the other things that people do when they come and visit Melbourne, which is amazing. The other major event we have had obviously is the 2024 Formula One Grand Prix. We have heard other people talk about that, but 452,000 people attended this year’s event, which is a record-breaking figure, I think.

This bill will go on to change the constitution of and numbers on some of our boards, and this is seen as a good thing by people on this side of the house. We have heard that it could make boards a little bit too big, a little bit too unwieldy, but I think what you will hear is that it makes things more fair, more efficient and easier to get across the line. One of the other changes in this bill is about making

sure that if someone needs to resign from a board, whether or not that be to take up a job immediately – one example might be as a judge – they do not have to wait for that to be signed off or they do not have to wait for the board to actually meet again to do that, and that is really important.

The delegation of leases is another issue that has been brought up a few times, and basically what this bill does is introduce efficiencies so the minister does not have to approve or oversee very minor changes to these leasing arrangements which we might see as fairly trivial things. The minister will have absolute control over whether to make a delegation and the scope to approve a lease, which may be narrower than the delegation power, but despite making a delegation the minister may choose to exercise a statutory approval power at any time with respect to any lease.

As far as event management declarations and floodlight determinations go, events which are commonly subject to an event management declaration at Kardinia Park or the floodlight determination at the MCG include AFL and AFLW matches, Big Bash League cricket matches and A-League soccer matches. During COVID we saw these events move to floating schedules that were more flexible around what we were seeing in case numbers of the day and things that were popping up at the time. It makes it difficult to have these declarations and determinations made at the time, and it can be frustrating. This enables the minister to make event management declarations at Kardinia Park and the secretary of that department to make floodlight determinations at the MCG and will provide greater flexibility and allow these orders to be made more quickly when events are announced.

We have touched on resignations, and I think this is just a very non-controversial, commonsense way of doing things. In the past people have had to wait; it has held up some of their career moves and their life. It makes sense that if someone puts their resignation letter in then as quickly as possible that can be made official and put out there into the public sphere.

As far as membership levels go, we heard the member for Eildon's opinion on this, and what I got out of that was that I am not sure that the member for Eildon really saw a point to it, I guess. The current membership provisions of the Melbourne Cricket Ground Act 2009 require the Melbourne Cricket Ground Trust to consist of a chairperson and not less than six and not more than eight members. Increasing the maximum membership by one member will enable greater diversity and skills on the board to strengthen management of this important state sporting asset, and it is not required that all nine positions be filled. I think what we are trying to do here is expand on the equity and diversity piece on our boards. I think that is really smart. I also think that, at times, people are often on a few boards or they have got their own business or their own work commitments. It is smart to be able to make a quorum of five people out of nine, perhaps.

The other thing I would say here is it is adding one person to these boards. I do not think that is going to create any kind of mess that we heard elucidated before. I do not think adding one person to a board to make it nine instead of eight is going to cause many problems, but if it does increase our equity and diversity and if it does bring more diversity to our boards, just like we have done with our state boards, I think that is a really good thing. I think people throughout the house will appreciate that. I do not think it is controversial at all. The State Sport Centres Act 1994 really has the same focus. It has got part-time members, and it is going to see a small increase as well.

With that, good luck to our Olympians, good luck to our local Olympians and Brock from Frankston. I commend this bill to the house.

Martin CAMERON (Morwell) (18:03): I rise to speak on the State Sporting Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, and at the start I would like to thank the member for Nepean for the work that he did. I note that we do not oppose this bill, and as everyone has got up and spoken about, it is a very bland bill. We have to dot some i's and cross some t's and set it all up. But sport is a passion of mine, and if it has to do with some housekeeping, well, so be it. The bill has been introduced by the government to amend the ANZAC Day Act 1958 to change the description of an area in which sports are held on Anzac Day. There are also a series of changes to the Kardinia Park Stadium Act 2016, the

Melbourne and Olympic Parks Act 1985, the Melbourne Cricket Ground Act 2009 and the State Sport Centres Act 1994 in relation to trust membership, leasing powers and other miscellaneous amendments. The bill also amends the Professional Boxing and Combat Sports Act 1985 in relation to acting appointments and for other purposes.

Heading back to the ANZAC Day Act 1958 to change the description of an area in which sports are held on Anzac Day, I remember, going back over a decade now in our junior football league in Traralgon where I live, the Southside Junior Football Club decided to be proactive and have an Anzac Day match. The complications of going through and working with the RSL to allow junior sport to hold an Anzac Day match were fairly long and drawn out, but on the flip side of getting it up, it was not only a fantastic event for the Traralgon & District Junior Football League – and I note there are some other leagues around our area that have followed suit – but it was also good for the kids. It was an education for them to attend the dawn service and lay a wreath on behalf of the clubs that were participating, to the extent where we had the bugler come down and do the last post before the under-16s actually took the field.

Also it is, as I said before, to amend the Kardinia Park Stadium Act 2016 to permit the minister to make event management declarations and abolish the Kardinia Park advisory committee – we heard the member for Eildon have a few concerns about that; I think with the housekeeping that needs to go through there are going to be a few concerns with a few bits and pieces, but in totality I think these are things that we can work with – and change the membership and procedures of the trust and permit the minister to delegate approval of leases that are not major leases over certain land managed by the trust.

I note that in the budget, and it was spoken about before by the member for Nepean, \$4.1 million was put out for Kardinia Park to get a new scoreboard. Harking back to my local football club, Traralgon, that I played for, back in June 2021 the club was inundated by floodwaters, and to this day – I was lucky enough to be able to do my bit for the club and umpire the reserves for them so they could get a game up last Saturday – no works have been done on the club amenities. It is over 1100 days since the flood, and still both male and female footballers and our netballers are in change rooms that are not acceptable, which have been put back together virtually by the club with the help of the local council. The away teams are in portable amenities.

We see Geelong get \$4.1 million and the Traralgon Football Netball Club waiting. They have a certain amount of money to build. The council has come back with a plan. It is a plan that I think both the sporting users and I would suggest the council themselves are not really happy with, but they do not have the money to be able to build what they want to build for the next 10 generations of people moving forward. It would be great to be able to get some money come towards the club so they could achieve that. As I said, it is over 1100 days since that flood went through, and they still do not have any rooms. To president Kev Foley, vice-president Nat Jaensch and also a good mate of mine Andrew Quenault, who are in negotiations and trying to get the club up and going with the best facilities, kudos for being so patient.

The bill amends the Melbourne and Olympic Parks Act to change requirements relating to resignation of members from the trust, and we just heard the member talk about that as well; change powers relating to the appointment of acting members to the trust; change requirements relating to approval of leases over the National Tennis Centre and Olympic Park to permit the minister to delegate approval of leases that are not major leases over the land, so it is just tidying up stuff there; and change the membership requirements of the trust relating to nominations made by Tennis Australia Limited and the Victorian Tennis Association.

I know we talk about the tennis at Melbourne Park, but all our regional areas that have major tennis tournaments in the lead-up to our Australian Open come under this as well. This will permit the minister to delegate the power to make floodlight determinations and permit the minister to make acting appointments to the trust. As we heard from the member for Frankston before, if someone wants to get off a board and puts in their resignation, they should not have to wait for a long time for it to be

ratified. So hopefully this can fix that up. People do the right thing and go on boards. In the city that is on boards of the Melbourne Cricket Club or Kardinia Park or the tennis centre, but it is the same thing when it flows down through our regional clubs, as we do that. This will also amend the State Sport Centres Act 1994 to abolish the State Netball and Hockey Centre Advisory Committee, increase the maximum membership of the trust and permit the minister to delegate approval of leases that are not major leases over certain land managed by this trust.

As everybody else has been talking about, we get caught up in an Olympic year, especially when the Australians are doing so well. We have a few people out of my area down in the Latrobe Valley that are representing Australia and in part are also representing their home towns in the Latrobe Valley and the state of Victoria. Jade Melbourne is one. Jade is playing for the Opals. She is a very unassuming young lady who has done fantastic things. I am able to talk with her mum and dad, who are from my area. Her dad, Brett, and mum, Sharyn, sent a photo. They are over there supporting their daughter. They did not get the result they wanted last night, but I think they will bounce back and hopefully be able to move through the competition. She has Brett and Sharyn and I think her two sisters over there supporting. It is amazing how many people go over to watch. Well done to Jade. We have got another Olympics before they come to Brisbane. I am tipping Jade will not only be playing for the Opals but will probably be captaining the side as they go through. She is a very special talent. I think the main ones that are happy that she is playing basketball are the junior footballers that she used to play against. She used to get pulled up for tackling the boys too hard. She is an absolute warrior. Well done to Jade.

Another young girl from Traralgon is Emily Beecroft. Emily is in the Paralympics in the swimming. Her dad will be the one with the T-shirt on with Emily on his chest, very proudly. This is I think her second Olympics, so now she is a seasoned veteran. She comes from the Traralgon Swimming Club. Brian Ford is the head of that, seeing these young ones come through. Michael Mihaly works behind the scenes there on timing. Every time there is an actual event with the Traralgon Swimming Club he is there. We wish them all well. We are all going to be in here over the next few days weary-eyed – but go the Opals! As I said, we do not oppose this bill.

Dylan WIGHT (Tarneit) (18:13): It is a pleasure to rise this evening to contribute on the State Sporting Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. Before I get to the bill, I thought I would just pick up on a couple of contributions that I have heard this evening as I have been listening intently. Firstly, I think it is important to note the member for Nepean's contribution at the beginning of this debate. For the lead speaker from the opposition – and if you are to believe the Melbourne tabloid the future leader of the opposition – to come in here and speak on something in his portfolio and something that is incredibly important to him, as he tells everyone, which is sport in this state, and not quite be able to reach the 30-minute threshold I think was a little bit embarrassing straight off the bat.

I have also heard several contributions from those opposite, including the member for Mildura when she was contributing to the government business program debate, speak about community sport and how, whilst they do not oppose this bill, speaking about these things and not speaking about community sport is just not quite right. Let me say that there are no greater supporters of community sport than those on this side on the government benches, the Allan Labor government. The investments that we have made in community sport in this state are absolutely unparalleled.

If you will indulge me for a moment to just go through some of the contributions that this government has made in my electorate of Tarneit: new lights for Tarneit Titans Football Club, and a new scoreboard for the Tarneit Titans Football Club in the previous budget; new lighting for Goddard Street Reserve – of course where the Wyndham Suns play; and a new scoreboard for the Wyndham Rhinos down there at Mossfiel Reserve – and it gave me great pleasure to go down to Mossfiel Reserve in April, before I played a game of football myself with the Tarneit Titans on that very same day, to announce that money was included in the budget for the Wyndham Rhinos at that reserve to put up a brand new electronic scoreboard. On the very same day on the very same reserve I also got to announce new lighting for the Hoppers Crossing Netball Association. These are sporting clubs, community groups, in my electorate that provide so much to the social fabric of both Tarneit and Hoppers

Crossing. I am always incredibly proud to go and engage with those clubs and talk about the fact that it is the Allan Labor government that is providing the community sporting infrastructure that they need.

Along with that, we have been able to provide smaller amounts of money for things like coaching courses and equipment to some different clubs. The Hoppers Crossing Football Club, for their Auskick program, received a smaller amount of money – I think it was \$1000 – to be able to provide equipment for their Auskick program. Good News Power Basketball Club in Tarneit received the same amount of money, as did Hoppers Crossing Soccer Club. That is just to name a few.

As I said, the Allan Labor government and those on this side of the house value community sport, and we understand the infrastructure that community sport needs and the integral role that it plays in our communities. But in saying that, as a government you have to be able to walk and chew gum at the same time. Of course we recognise the absolute importance of community sport, but what we are speaking about today with this bill are facilities that make up some of the state's most valuable and greatest assets. The MCG, Olympic Park, Kardinia Park and the state sport centres provide a significant amount of economic activity to this state. They hold some of this state's, some of this country's and in fact some of the world's greatest major events. It is incredibly important that we protect and we administer those assets – some of the state's greatest assets, as I said – properly, diligently and in the best way that we can, and that is what this bill this evening goes to.

Just to pick up on that point and on some of the major events that these facilities hold but indeed some of the major events that this state holds, Melbourne, Victoria – make no mistake about it – is the major event capital of this country. There is no debating it; there is no questioning it: Melbourne, Victoria, is the major event capital of this country. Consistent government investment into these events, into our sporting infrastructure and into our major event infrastructure over the past 25 years and indeed by this government over the last 10 years has been significant and has allowed us to be or to continue to be the major event capital of this country.

Research commissioned by Visit Victoria in 2023 found Victoria's major events calendar contributed \$3.3 billion to the Victorian economy – \$3.3 billion. A significant amount of that economic activity is household income, because those major events generate more than 15,500 jobs every single year. That major event calendar and the supporting infrastructure around it contributes a significant portion to this state, to this economy and indeed to this job market. I will reiterate, as I have said in here before, that Victoria has one of the strongest jobs markets in the country. Major events drive interstate and international visitation and put Melbourne and Victoria on the global stage. It is not just having the fantastic events that we do – being able to see all the hundreds of thousands of people attending things like the Australian Open, the grand prix and the AFL Grand Final – but it also is supporting that hospitality and hotel industry. If you come into the city on the Australian Open weekend, the streets are flooded. You cannot get accommodation and you cannot get restaurant bookings because the economy is going that well from all the interstate and international travellers that are coming here to see our fantastic state, our fantastic city and the fantastic events that we put on and that we support.

Major events are also part of our broader strategy to brand and market Melbourne and Victoria nationally and around the world. Our key major sporting events in the last year obviously included the Australian Open, which was significant. We had record crowds at the Australian Open. Over a million fans attended over that period. We also have the Formula One Australian Grand Prix. This is an event that in Australian terms is unique to Melbourne. There are no other Formula One races in Australia. Over the last two to three years – I think, frankly, with the help perhaps of a Netflix series, *Drive to Survive*, which everyone is pretty keen on, but also with the investment and the time that we have put in as a government to advertising this event around Australia and around the world – it has become one of the most significant events on our sporting calendar. Indeed almost half a million people attended that event last year. That is absolutely massive. So investment into our sporting infrastructure over that time has been absolutely critical.

Just to finish off, I want to make mention of a former Melbourne Cricket Club Trust member, the late Linda White. Linda was not just an amazing advocate for working people and an amazing senator, she was also, between her time with the union movement and the Senate, an amazing sports administrator with the MCC Trust. I did not think that it was fitting to not give her a mention in this contribution. I commend the bill to the house.

Annabelle CLEELAND (Euroa) (18:23): I rise today to speak on the State Sporting Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, a bill that we do not oppose. This piece of legislation is largely uncontroversial, with several housekeeping changes being made to existing acts. They include the ANZAC Day Act 1958, the Kardinia Park Stadium Act 2016, the Melbourne and Olympic Parks Act 1985, the Melbourne Cricket Ground Act 2009, the Professional Boxing and Combat Sports Act 1985 and the State Sport Centres Act 1994. While this piece of legislation is largely set to deliver housekeeping changes and administrative updates, sport is still a matter that is deserving of some debate in this place, particularly when it comes to the condition of our regional sporting clubs and the support that they require.

To start on a positive, I want to congratulate the Longwood Football Netball Club and club president Ricki Shiner on their recent funding windfall. The club is set to receive just under \$700,000, which will allow the club to finally complete their long-awaited female-friendly change room upgrades. The funding comes through the Regional Community Sports Infrastructure Fund alongside club and council funding. This fund was established to deliver projects in regional towns following Labor's shambolic failure to deliver the 2026 Commonwealth Games, and it is pleasing to see some of this finally reaching my electorate. While I have been advocating for this for the last couple of years, I have been on Ricki Shiner's frequent caller list, with weekly calls advocating to make sure that I am raising it here in Parliament, so I genuinely am thrilled for the community that we were able to pull this off.

The project in Longwood will include a change room area with adjoining toilets and showers, umpire change facilities with an administration area and a publicly accessible all-abilities bathroom with ramp access. Building female-friendly change rooms will be of great benefit to not just the local sporting club but visiting teams and the entire community. Improving accessibility for women in sport is a crucial part of growing participation and increasing the health, wellbeing, safety and comfort of girls and women across our region. This project has been the result of dedication and perseverance by all involved, and I do look forward to seeing the benefits this project brings to our region. I have been incredibly proud to advocate for, sponsor and support this club; answer the countless calls from Ricki; and write letters of support to the local council, encouraging them to apply for the Regional Community Sports Infrastructure Fund on Longwood's behalf.

Our local sports clubs are providing people with a strong sense of community and belonging and an active lifestyle, and they deserve all the support that they can get. Unfortunately they are not always so lucky to receive help from this government. Many of our region's clubs are still in desperate need of new and fit-for-purpose equipment, as well as amenities that can best serve our communities. While I am thrilled that Longwood was the beneficiary of this grant funding, many other deserving projects were not even considered.

In Euroa the Memorial Oval sought upgrades to allow for improved female facilities critical to the growth of their female clubs, but this never progressed in the funding process. In Violet Town it was a similar story: proposals to upgrade the netball surfaces did not receive funding, despite a detailed and beneficial proposal that would help improve the conditions for local women and girls that are seeking to take their sporting career to the next level. In Rushworth, despite considerable advocacy, their bowls club was sadly not chosen for much-needed upgrades to their surface. I do want to thank Sid Sprague and Jean Sprague for all they did to advocate for improved facilities, and I remain committed to making sure we get the results that this club deserves. Seymour Football Netball Club was also ignored for funding, as was one in Murchison. Seymour Football Netball Club players were at the forefront when the floods hit our community in October 2022, sandbagging local businesses and

protecting our community. It is necessary that this club have adequate facilities to play the game that they love and support our community in health and wellbeing. It is a similar case for Murchison and Toolamba. It is the heartbeat of the community, with players, volunteers and support coming from right across the Goulburn Valley to cheer on their team. But to ensure that this club keeps kicking goals, it desperately needs major upgrades to the facilities.

It is a shame that it seems there is only room to fund one thing at the time under this government, and while I welcome funding at Longwood, many of our neighbouring clubs continue to struggle. When you invest in our sporting clubs, you invest in the health and wellbeing of our communities. While it is disappointing that these clubs missed out on funding, I will be back again to advocate for them when new opportunities arise.

When it comes to other grants available, I was pleased to see four local sporting clubs among the 400 selected statewide in round 2 of the Victorian sporting clubs grant program, following on from the nine recipients recognised in round 1. Euroa Junior Football Netball Club, North Eastern Archers in Benalla, Pyalong Netball Club and Rushworth Football Netball Club all received minor funding boosts in this round. These funds, mostly around \$1000, allow for clubs to produce uniforms and buy crucial equipment for their facilities. Round 1 recipients included the Benalla Scout Group, Avenel Bowling Club, Broadford Cricket Club, Heathcote Cricket Club, Nagambie Bowls Club, Samaria Suns Sports Club, Tabilk Junior Football Club, Kilmore Junior Football Club and Nagambie Lakes Sailing Club. It is fantastic to have such a diverse range of sporting groups selected, all dedicated to bringing down the costs of being involved in sport.

With the cost of living pinching household budgets, now more than ever it is great to see community groups sourcing initiatives to make sport easier and more accessible for everyone. I hope these grants will work to remove barriers and boost engagement in our vibrant regional sporting scene by increasing participation. These grants are not always available. Young athletes have come to rely on the generosity of our local communities and local initiatives such as the Benalla Young Sportsperson Trust. It is a privilege to have been associated with this program, a program that supports young people to go on and achieve their dreams, bridging the divide between small-town sports and the major leagues. In past years this trust has provided funding to elite junior athletes, helping cover costs that could potentially be a barrier preventing them from reaching the heights that they are capable of.

For our regional communities, sporting clubs and the volunteers that support them are a crucial part of the local fabric, and it has been so disheartening to see them ignored by this government for so long. The cancellation of the Commonwealth Games was a slap in the face for regional communities across the state, and the need for more funding at a local level remains a major issue. Many of the clubs I have mentioned today have been campaigning for years to get these upgrades, and despite some receiving funding, the vast majority remain in desperate need of support. These are clubs that have been regularly overlooked at budget time and are often forgotten about when it comes to grant opportunities, but this has not stopped them from being incredibly determined and remaining a crucial meeting place for so many in our towns. Our local sport clubs are providing people with a strong sense of community and belonging and an active lifestyle, and they deserve all the support that they can get.

Sarah CONNOLLY (Laverton) (18:31): I have to say I definitely will not be brief on this one because I have absolutely so much to say. I will need more than 9 minutes and 45 seconds to get through it if I am talking about local sporting clubs in my community. I have been down with my local clubs in my community a lot over the past couple of weekends with winter sport. I feel like we are in the midst of winter sport, so rising to speak on the State Sporting Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 comes at a really good time because it does enable me to give a big shout-out to my local clubs.

I agree with the member for Euroa. She was just talking about the great work that is happening with female participation in sport and saying that we need to do a whole lot more to get girls and women into sport, and sports that traditionally they never felt were for them. When I think about local clubs in my community who are absolutely kicking goals – no pun intended – in that regard, that would have

to be the Williams Landing soccer club. I was just down there to watch a training match – it must have been on a Thursday night, when soccer trains – happening between Western United and the Williams Landing soccer club. I cannot remember what age group it was, but it was just an incredible opportunity to watch young kids – they were young boys in this case – play a sport that they absolutely love and absolutely excel at.

But it also gave me time to talk to a lot of the mums – as a soccer mum, I know a lot of mums turn up day in and day out to see their kids and enable their kids to play sport. I was talking to a whole lot of mums there on the sideline, but I was also talking to the president of the club, the secretary of the club, the social media person of the club and a lot of people on the club's committee. The great thing about Williams Landing soccer club is that the committee members are mostly women. I am very proud to say that there are quite a few women of Islamic faith on that committee as well, because their daughters are playing for the club.

I was talking to one of the mums there; I think her name was Robyn. She is Muslim, and she was telling me about the importance of women and mums there at the club participating in their children's sport – not just being a bit like me and turning up and maybe sitting in the car, because it is cold or it is raining or it is windy, for kids' training, but becoming a coach. She was telling me that she had gone and done the course to become a referee and she was refereeing quite senior games. She was talking to me about some of the barriers that she was facing as a woman and as a woman of faith who wears the hijab. One of them – I am sure she would not mind me passing it on here – was about going into the change rooms and there not being female change rooms and male change rooms for refs. Some of the men were getting changed in front of her, which was quite confronting and made her feel quite uncomfortable. But she is a pretty amazing woman. She stuck with it, and now she is actively encouraging other women – other mums at the club whose kids are training two or three times a week and then playing on weekends – to get involved, and that means showing leadership, in local sporting clubs. It was a great example of women running the club and girls' participation increasing.

The other great thing about Williams Landing soccer club, I have to say, is they are also enabling their young girls to undertake more serious athletic training to get them fit for soccer and also reduce injuries that they know quite often young girls and women get in soccer. We are talking about quite intensive training, almost CrossFit-like exercises. It looked absolutely incredible – young girls around that sort of age of 13, 14, 15, 16 having the opportunity to train like an elite athlete. I am intending to invite the Minister for Community Sport down to check it out and to go down myself and hopefully try to give those young girls a run for their money – or they might give me a run for their money with how fit they are versus me.

Sport in this state matters. Although, as we have talked about, this bill makes a number of small changes, they are important changes to the legislation that governs our major sporting administrative bodies. When we talk about sport in this state, people have incredible memories going right back into their childhood of being at the G with the AFL.

I was looking around on the weekend when I was at Albion footy club and they were having this really competitive – I am talking about really competitive – game with their arch rivals, which unfortunately for me was Sunshine footy club, which is also in my electorate. As I said to the boys, these grown men who were feeling pretty feisty about which club was the favourite of their MP, 'Boys, MPs are just like any good mother – we don't pick our favourites. We wish you all the best. We'll still be here for you at the end of the game no matter whether you win or lose.' They were not particularly happy about that; they wanted me to choose. I am very pleased to say that Albion won that match, and from what I have heard it is a prelude to the grand final, so I will most certainly be there to again do the coin toss.

What struck me about being there at that game – and it is just on a smaller scale than being at the G really – are the fans, who are locals, who are either going for Sunshine or Albion. Lots of them have generations of their family, past and present, that still play or have played for the club. On Saturday they had the past players presentation and also a barbecue for them. The clubhouse and outside were

absolutely packed. Anyone who is sort of like me in having to turn up on a drizzly Saturday morning to activities in their electorate would remember it was absolutely pouring and absolutely freezing on Saturday, and these guys were out there playing in mud like I have not seen. All I could think about was who was going to be washing their uniforms at the end of the game, because God knows they would never get the mud out of these uniforms. But they had a great game – it was a great match – and the community spirit on both sides in coming together in the most appalling, freezing, typical Melbourne weather was absolutely awe inspiring, and that really is what community sport is about. You had kids running around that were about this high. You had players. You had mums, dads, grandparents and great-grandparents there at the club, with the history of the club all over the clubhouse walls – all there to watch a game but also to socialise and have fun together as a community. I actually had a really good time. It surprised me, not having one of my kids playing there. It was a great moment, so I am looking forward to a rematch, which will hopefully be Sunshine and Albion versus each other in a couple of weeks.

We know on a larger scale – and the member for Taree has talked about this really well, as have other members in their contributions this evening – Melbourne has an incredible history with sport on such an elite level. If you think about some of the most iconic places in Melbourne, folks who may come to visit, like my parents from northern New South Wales do every now and then – they want to go and visit. I took my parents to watch an AFL match at the G, and they were, I think, actually quite overwhelmed. I know my dad felt overwhelmed that he was watching AFL – he loves NRL, being up there in northern New South Wales – but he was also completely overwhelmed by the size of the G and also the crowd and the atmosphere. It is one of the great things about Melbourne – you hear the cheering at the G and all of those sorts of things. It is such an iconic thing about Melbourne, and it makes it a great city to live in. But regardless, if it is not AFL, it is cricket, it is tennis, it is soccer and indeed it is also netball. Melbourne is home to Australia's Diamonds, and we know netball is one of the favourite sports that is played by girls and women right across the world – it is a fantastic sport – and Victoria is considered their home.

There is so much to talk about in relation to this bill and major sports, but at the end of the day it is really important to make changes, no matter how small – or mechanical amendments if you want to call them that. They are still amendments that need to be done to help make a piece of legislation like this one much more efficient and streamlined. I commend the minister for making the changes, and I most certainly commend the bill to the house.

Kim O'KEEFE (Shepparton) (18:41): Today I rise and stand to make a contribution on the State Sporting Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. The bill is, in all practical aspects, a spring-cleaning bill; however, there are one or two noteworthy clauses that appear to go somewhat beyond legislative spring-cleaning – namely, the abolishment of two advisory committees in the legislation and some changes to the delegation of lease management. The State Sporting Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 amends the ANZAC Day Act 1958 to change the description of an area in which sports are held on Anzac Day and makes a range of amendments to the Kardinia Park Stadium Act 2016, the Melbourne and Olympic Parks Act 1985, the Melbourne Cricket Ground Act 2009 and the State Sport Centres Act 1994 in relation to trust membership, leasing powers and other miscellaneous amendments; and amends the Professional Boxing and Combat Sports Act 1985 in relation to acting appointments and for other purposes. Clause 3 of the bill amends section 4 of the ANZAC Day Act 1958 to modernise the description of an area in which sports are held on Anzac Day by substituting a reference to distance in miles with a reference to distance in kilometres.

My office actually was contacted by a president of one of the many sporting clubs across my electorate inquiring about the possibility of playing their respective home games – football and netball sides – on Anzac Day this year, instead of the Saturday on which the match was originally scheduled to be played. They worked very closely with the RSL club and the guidelines. However, the sporting and major events requirements for playing sports on Anzac Day need the written approval of the minister, which needs to be submitted by 24 February, a timeline that they did miss this year. However,

hopefully they will have that arranged for next year. With the popular and well-attended Anzac Day AFL match, a wonderful acknowledgement of those who have served our country, these requests may continue to grow.

Another major provision in the bill is amendments to the Kardinia Park Stadium Act 2016. As such the State Sporting Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 permits the minister to make event management declarations, abolishes the Kardinia Park Advisory Committee, changes the membership and procedures of the trust and permits the minister to delegate approval of leases that are not major leases over certain land management by the trust. Clause 5 of the bill amends section 3 of the Kardinia Park Stadium Act 2016 to insert a definition of 'major lease', which means a lease that is for a term of 21 years or more or over the whole of the Kardinia Park stadium land. The effect of this amendment is to differentiate between the types of leases for the purposes of the minister exercising power to delegate the approval for leases that are not major leases under new section 31A inserted by clause 9 of the State Sporting Legislation Amendment Bill. In addition, clause 8 of the State Sporting Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 repeals section 30 of the Kardinia Park Stadium Act 2016 and abolishes the Kardinia Park Advisory Committee, as the committee is no longer seen as fit for purpose. The advisory committee was formed in September 2017 after all the committee groups that call Kardinia Park home reported together under one banner as the Kardinia Park Advisory Committee, known as KPAC.

The committee, since its establishment seven years ago, has been made up of several community representatives from the Kardinia Park Stadium Trust: the Geelong Football Club, the City of Greater Geelong and local sporting clubs of the Geelong surrounds. It is important that these voices are not lost from the advisory committee's abolishment. It is important that these voices continue to be actively engaged with the continual development of the Kardinia Park stadium precinct.

In addition, the State Sporting Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 makes several amendments to the Melbourne Cricket Ground Act 2009. Clause 25 of the bill amends section 7(b) of the Melbourne Cricket Ground Act 2009 to increase the maximum number of members that can be appointed to the Melbourne Cricket Ground Trust from eight to nine. Further, clause 26 of the bill amends section 9 of the principal act to provide that members of the Melbourne Cricket Ground Trust may resign by giving notice in writing, signed by the member, to the minister. Currently members are required to resign in writing, signed by the member, to the Governor in Council. It is hoped that the effect of this amendment is to reduce the administrative burden and the delays members experience when seeking to resign from office.

With the Paris Olympic Games now on, sport becomes front and centre on a global scale, and our community have been cheering on our amazing Aussie athletes. It has been wonderful to see our local schools across my electorate having many Olympic activities and celebrating participation in sport. We are very proud of our local girl Cortnee Vine, competing with the Matildas soccer team at the Paris Olympics. As you can imagine, her whole town is behind her and is very proud and cheering the whole team on. Also, future aspiring athletes get to watch the sporting dreams of our elite homegrown athletes become a reality. We have to ensure those opportunities are there and that sporting communities can get behind their athletes.

Communities need funding support so that they have adequate sporting facilities. Investing in sport keeps communities healthy and active. This government must support regional sporting facilities, and across my electorate we have a large number of run-down sporting facilities in great need of investment. The Shepparton Sports Stadium is in desperate need of a redevelopment and has been a community infrastructure priority for many years. The 1972 building is no longer fit for purpose. Both the federal and state coalition governments supported this project at the last elections. Basketball Victoria has this project as a priority project with the opportunity to attract both state and national basketball tournaments to Shepparton, which now are being lost due to the facility not being up to standard. It is worth noting Madeleine Garrick began her basketball career here in Shepparton and went on to be a professional basketball player, going on to represent Australia and play in the Women's

National Basketball League. I am sure she would be quite appalled by the lack of current investment in the basketball facilities which she played on many years ago.

Unfortunately, the people of Shepparton district, which I represent in this great place, each and every single day are paying the price for this government's financial mismanagement, and the sports stadium is just another example. The over \$20 million that we are paying in interest towards the state debt should be going towards facilities like the Shepparton Sports Stadium, as should the \$600 million cost of cancelling the Commonwealth Games. Imagine the amount of sporting clubs that could have benefited from that \$600 million; we could have had our stadium funded 10 times over with that money. The regional Commonwealth Games led to great disappointment in my electorate as one of the host cities – we were to host the BMX competition. We also know the economic opportunity sporting events bring to communities, filling accommodation and keeping our businesses busy. This is often an enormous economic injection. This government needs to understand how much that means to regional communities. I have heard members on their feet today talk about the investment within Melbourne, and often city-centric projects get done and regional communities miss out.

We have had incredible homegrown Olympic, Australian and world sport champions from my electorate. Cyclist Brett Lancaster, an Olympic gold medallist, has recently returned to live in Shepparton, paving the way for future sporting champions. Just this past week an exhibition was launched celebrating our local sporting heroes by the Greater Shepparton Sporting Hall of Fame, and it includes Brett's Olympic gold medal. As you can imagine, it is very exciting for people to see a real gold medal firsthand, particularly children. My daughter Emma is also a world aerobics champion and a sporting hall of fame recipient – she gets her sporting talent from her father, obviously. This weekend her football team, Shepparton United, play in the footy grand final. I have seen firsthand the dedication and commitment of an elite athlete as well as at grassroots clubs and the need to ensure they are provided with the right infrastructure for their sport. So much sporting talent comes from regional communities, and as I have mentioned, regional communities need support and investment to provide adequate fit-for-purpose facilities, something that is significantly neglected. We also want sporting facilities that we are really proud of when we host sporting events.

Finally, I would like to wish all of our Aussie sporting champions all the best in Paris. As mentioned, this side of the house will not be opposing the bill.

Alison MARCHANT (Bellarine) (18:50): It is a pleasure to rise and make a contribution to the State Sporting Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. This amendment bill makes some important administrative changes across several different acts. It includes the Kardinia Park Stadium Act 2016, the Melbourne and Olympic Parks Act 1985, the Melbourne Cricket Ground Act 2009, the Professional Boxing and Combat Sports Act 1985 and the State Sport Centres Act 1994. As we do in this place many a time, it is a pretty straightforward administration-type amendment, but it is important that we continue in this place to fine-tune all these acts as we go along and make sure that these acts are modern and fit for purpose. Essentially, by doing this we are making sure that there is effective governance in this state. In this case we are looking at our sporting assets and the regulation of professional boxing and combat sport, as I have said. In terms of trusts that we have across our state, together they manage in excess of \$4.1 billion worth of significant state assets spread across a number of major and complex sporting venues. It is an absolutely incredible investment that we have. But what is incredible, I suppose, about that investment that we are delivering are the events that we host in these facilities and these sporting venues.

We like to say we are the sporting capital of the world. We have had that title officially for the last decade, from 2016, when we were crowned the SportBusiness Ultimate Sports City for the decade at the 10-year anniversary awards in Switzerland, which was confirmation of our claim as the world's best city for sport. That award is the longest running rankings of the world's top sporting hosts, and we took that gong off cities such as Berlin, London, New York and of course Sydney as well. We always like to do well and do better than Sydney. We know that these types of accolades and awards

are lovely to have and we can claim them, but it does not happen by accident. These are dedicated investments that we have made as a state government.

In May of this year our Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events said in this place in a ministers statement that we can think of the Melbourne and Olympic Parks precinct as really the jewel in the crown of our events calendar. On the back of more than a billion dollars invested across the precinct over the years, it has generated more than \$740 million in economic activity in one year alone. In just one year that economic activity was \$740 million. That precinct welcomed over 3 million visitors and also contributed to 1.2 million bed nights across our hotels in Victoria. That is what these investments are about as a driver of our economic activity.

I just wanted to relate this bill to my own electorate back in the Bellarine and our Geelong region, because we have the Kardinia Park stadium, which this bill also speaks to. Kardinia Park stadium is the biggest and best stadium in regional Victoria. It is a place where I have grown up. I have grown up born and bred in Geelong. I have seen that stadium transform in front of my eyes. I used to go and watch the football in the outer, and we would stand there and watch the mighty Cats play. Over the years I have seen that transform into an absolutely world-class stadium, which we can enjoy. It still has a section where over 2000 people can go to the footy and stand in the outer; they can watch the footy and have that same experience, which is fantastic. When I say it is the best, it literally is. This stadium has been awarded, over several years now, an official title as the best regional stadium. After a landmark hosting of major events, such as the Foo Fighters and the 2022 T20 World Cup, that stadium was awarded Australia's best regional stadium in the annual Austadiums awards. Like I said, that won it, really, from a fan base. It is voted by fans, and it is determined across Australia over seven different categories. It was followed up again last year but announced earlier this year. That regional stadium is a key part also of our regional events calendar and plays a key part in Victoria's \$36.9 billion visitor economy, which also continues to grow.

I have talked a little bit about Kardinia Park, but it also has a trust that works under the act. It was delivered after an election commitment by the then Andrews Labor government, which delivered on that election commitment to establish the Kardinia Park Stadium Trust. Really, to establish that trust was to give the iconic Geelong venue that safe and exciting future and would give responsibility for the oversight of that stadium – which is really in charge of attracting those world-class events – to the Geelong region.

With the different redevelopments that have happened over the years, we have had the last stage, stage 5, open earlier this year – the Joel Selwood Stand and also other facilities in that stadium, which I will talk to in just a moment. It is an incredible investment that we have made to ensure that this is a rare asset for regional Victoria and to have events and major events, not just AFL, coming to our region. It is really a source of pride for our communities, this stadium. It does enable those major events, and with that comes that sizeable economic benefit. The economic opportunities at that stadium other than AFL include other things that we have seen there already. We have had monster trucks and motocross events. Soccer has been played there and cricket, as I have said. We have had science exhibitions and even a *Jurassic World* movie day at the stadium. It really allows now for some world-class events to come there.

As I have mentioned, who could forget the incredible Foo Fighters concert when they came to Geelong. I was lucky to have seats in the nosebleeds up the very top, but it was an absolutely incredible event to see the region rocking out with the Foo Fighters. But from that, an additional \$1.3 million was injected into the Geelong hospitality sector. Our hotels were chockers, our bars and our restaurants were filled and the visitor spend in the inner city jumped 75 per cent from one event, which was fantastic. There is a little bit of a cliché in Geelong that when the footy club is winning so is the city. But really I think this stadium – as I said, over the years since growing up there I have seen it develop in its different stages – has indicated and is a symbol of how Geelong has matured and grown up as well. It really is a uniquely Geelong- and community-focused stadium.

Just on a couple of other things I wanted to touch on about that redevelopment, a really important part was telling our First Nations stories. Our First Nations people would gather at Kardinia Park, and there is now Djilang Plaza as part of that stadium, which is – I encourage people to go there – an absolutely amazing installation of art telling the traditional owners' stories. Every time there is an event there or a sporting event there, people will go gather there and they will be able to also learn and experience some of the First Nations stories at this really important place for our traditional Wadawurrung people. Also part of that redevelopment was a cricket centre. It is also an indoor cricket hub for the region's community with year-round access. This bill is a really important part of modernising our state's sporting assets but also ensuring – *(Time expired)*

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

Adjournment

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

Portland bus services

Roma BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (19:00): (731) My adjournment matter is to the Minister for Public and Active Transport, and the action I seek is for the minister to add an extra stop to the bus route so that seniors in the Portland independent living lifestyle estate can travel to the town centre. The lack of public transport access for Portland residents living in the new independent living lifestyle estate on Derril Road needs changing. The estate, designed for those 55 years and older, has an average resident age of 72 to 75. These residents face mobility challenges and have limited access to essential services because the nearest bus stop is nearly a kilometre away.

The manager of the independent living lifestyle estate has contacted my office numerous times, as have other members of the community, reporting that many residents have complained about the lack of public transport. Many residents no longer hold a drivers licence or will soon be stopping driving. They currently rely on friends, family or expensive private transport, which is neither practical nor sustainable. The estate is projected to expand to 119 homes, accommodating over 200 residents in the near future. With more older people moving in the demand for public transport will rise, and ignoring this issue now sets us up for bigger problems later. Already six prospective residents have decided against relocating to the estate due to the lack of public transport nearby. Of course this would free up more housing, which is desperately needed in the regions.

Public transport needs to be adaptive and evolve to the needs of a community. As the geographic and demographic landscape changes so too should public transport routes and stops. Expecting elderly residents with mobility issues to walk nearly a kilometre to the nearest bus stop is impractical and unacceptable. Derril Road is not just home to a retirement village; many other residents live here too, and the lack of conveniently located bus stops impacts the entire community. This is not a 'nice to have', it is a necessity. Our seniors deserve the dignity of accessible transportation, and the country should have it just as much as the city. Minister, it is time to take action and make this right. Let us not wait until more residents are left stranded or forced to consider moving elsewhere due to the inadequate transport options.

Warringa Park School

Dylan WIGHT (Tarneit) (19:02): (732) My adjournment this evening is directed to the Minister for Education, and the action I seek is for the minister to update my constituents on the progress of the building projects underway at Warringa Park School in Hoppers Crossing. Warringa Park School is a specialist school in Hoppers Crossing, and it is undergoing a significant modernisation aimed at enhancing learning opportunities for our students. This includes the construction of new classrooms and the development of modern learning spaces. Victoria prides itself on having a robust and inclusive education system that celebrates diversity and supports the achievements of all students. As a member

of a progressive government committed to embedding inclusive education in all school environments, I am proud of our efforts to ensure that every student irrespective of their circumstances has access to high-quality education. Our goal is to create school environments where all students feel welcomed, accepted and engaged, enabling them to fully participate, achieve and thrive in their educational journey. This project is not just about constructing physical infrastructure; it symbolises the Allan Labor government's commitment to providing the best possible education opportunities for our children and to preparing them for a successful future. I look forward to hearing more about this project in my electorate from the minister.

Mitchell shire ambulance services

Annabelle CLEELAND (Euroa) (19:04): (733) My adjournment tonight is for the Minister for Ambulance Services, and the action I seek is the establishment of a MICA unit within the Mitchell shire local government area. Recently I met with several paramedics from within Mitchell shire in my electorate, and some of the stories they shared were both shocking and heartbreaking. I want to thank Corey, Natasha, Siobhan, Amelia, Anthony, Marcus, Denise and Jayda, who all took time out of their incredibly busy life schedules to meet with me and share their stories, courageously advocating for a stronger and healthier community. They told me that many of our dedicated paramedics were working at least 16-hour shifts, rosters were understaffed, culture issues prevented them from speaking out against difficult conditions and that patient transport had taken over from emergency response as a major part of their role. Ramping issues at our regional hospitals and a failure to reach ambulance time targets have been widely publicised too, with entire fleets of ambulances stuck in hospital car parks for hours as our emergency rooms struggle to handle increased demand.

While all these issues need to be urgently addressed by the Allan Labor government, what stood out to me was the lack of a dedicated, mobile intensive care ambulance unit in the region. MICA paramedics have a higher clinical skill set due to more intensive training and can perform more advanced medical procedures, yet they are not being prioritised for our regional communities. The Mitchell shire, one of the fastest growing regions of our state, does not have a MICA unit to cover a population of more than 50,000 people. A recent incident at a Coles supermarket car park in Seymour required a MICA air unit from Essendon because there were no local options available, leaving the patient at risk for an extended period of time. A clinical manager who was the only one qualified for certain cases was called back for a paediatric resuscitation due to being the only one qualified in the entire Mitchell LGA. This same heroic paramedic single-handedly assisted two cardiac arrests after being pulled from holidays to quite literally save the lives of our community. On their own they are already covering an area from Wallan to Seymour then out to Alex.

The need for local ambulance, health services and patient transport options is critical in our region, our regional communities that have such few public transport options. For some reason this has seemingly been forgotten by Labor as they put together their ad hoc health plans, leaving our community stranded and without transport options that would genuinely save lives. Even the volunteer community options operating in my electorate, like the Royal Flying Doctor Service community transport team, are struggling to acquire funding from this government. All of our paramedics do an incredible job ensuring our loved ones are safe. To all the paramedics and volunteer patient transport drivers, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart. On our side of the house we are committed to backing our ambos, because we know what they do to save lives.

The fOrT

Ella GEORGE (Lara) (19:07): (734) My adjournment matter this evening is for the Minister for Youth, and the action that I seek from the minister is to visit the fOrT youth centre in Corio. My electorate is home to an amazing regional facility, the fOrT youth centre. The fOrT provides free programs and a safe space for young people to relax, socialise and interact with other young people in the community. It is a place where young people can connect and develop their skills and interests. They can initiate new activities, develop their skills in a particular area and socialise in a welcoming

and friendly environment. It would be wonderful to have the minister visit the fOrT and see the great programs young people have developed to support their connection to the community, and I look forward to hosting her.

Albury Wodonga Health

Bill TILLEY (Benambra) (19:07): (735) I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Health, and the action I seek is for the minister to confirm that there will be no helipad atop the announced medical tower at Albury Wodonga Health's Albury campus. Earlier this year and on the eve of a community forum held by the City of Wodonga council, the forum was concerned with the lack of vision of the \$225 million investment from Victoria, jointly with New South Wales bringing it to \$550 million. But the investment at Albury hospital had dropped this – the latest Albury campus redevelopment master plan – the day before this community forum.

Paul Edbrooke interjected.

Bill TILLEY: That is not a prop; they are notes that I have brought into the chamber. The thing about this is that the timing was absolutely curious. This was on 29 February this year, but the master plan was dated back in August 2023, almost six months earlier. It was a rolled-gold PR stunt, talking up the project and promising all sorts of new things, including a multistorey medical tower with a helipad. That plan, and my notes, did not mention the helipad once – it mentioned it 17 times. The only problem now is that the helipad appears to have magically disappeared before the release of the Albury campus redevelopment master plan. So here we are – we have got a mile of paperwork, and it seems to have disappeared before the time of the announcement. I have got copies of emails – more notes – which were provided, which I found from the New South Wales Legislative Council under a standing order of their council.

It is from Helen Riddell, a manager of this and a bit of that in the Victorian Department of Health, dated 23 January 2024. It states:

NSW and Vic ... can confirm neither state have rated Albury as a retrieval hospital ...

Therefore a helicopter retrieval is not seen as a requirement within the current planning timeframe (to 2036/37).

But there are a number of significant documents that give me significant concern that this project as a whole is dysfunctional. It continues to obscure the truth. It is an example of my community's greatest fears. We know that the money that has been committed to this project is not enough. We know the two states are massaging the plans to fit the budget, not the health status of our community. It raises so many questions. What else is this government hiding? What else have you cut from the hospital? The minister has been sold a dud on this project and needs to fix it up.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Wendouree, I would just like to remind members of *Rulings from the Chair, Hansard*, 4 February 2009, Speaker Lindell:

Anything may be considered a prop. Anything can be used as a prop; it depends on the manner in which it is used. For example, when a member deliberately held up a report, the Speaker ruled it was a prop.

I hope the house is reminded by this piece of information.

Wendouree electorate planning

Juliana ADDISON (Wendouree) (19:11): (736) The adjournment matter that I wish to raise is for the Minister for Planning, and the action I seek is for the minister to come to my electorate of Wendouree to meet with stakeholders to discuss our plan for Victoria. The Allan Labor government is preparing a plan for the whole of the state, and I want to ensure that the plan both includes and reflects the voices of the Ballarat community. I would welcome the opportunity for the minister to join me to hear from representative bodies, businesses and community organisations within my electorate about how we can make the Victoria of the future an even better place to live, work and play. Such a

visit to the Wendouree electorate would enable the minister to hear directly from my community about what they love about where they live – which is many, many things, I am sure – and what we need to prioritise when planning for the future. While not wanting to pre-empt this discussion, some ideas may include more diversity in the styles of homes we are building as well as more affordable homes; access to public transport as well as active transport options; the greening of our community spaces; and the creation of vibrant and social places for people to connect and to thrive. I look forward to hearing a response from the minister.

Melbourne City Council

Tim READ (Brunswick) (19:12): (737) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Local Government. One person, one vote: this is the foundation of our modern democracy. That is what you would think, unless you took the time to look into the way council elections are run in the City of Melbourne. Then you might have to amend that catchy slogan to ‘One business, two votes’, or perhaps the less concise but still accurate ‘International business owners have more say in Melbourne’s elected representation than do the people who actually live here, so some well-heeled mayoral candidates have spent more time flying around courting votes overseas than taking the time to find out what really matters to Melburnians’. But I guess that last one would not fit onto a bumper sticker.

In the City of Melbourne both resident and nonresident ratepayers – in other words, landlords – get a vote, and businesses are not just required to vote but in fact get two votes each. According to Ben Rowley, writing in the *Guardian*, the combination of nonresident property owners and double-voting businesses means that local Melbourne residents cast only about 40 per cent of the vote. How is that for representative democracy? As is the case with so many unfortunate quirks in the way Victoria operates today, we have Jeff Kennett to thank for the undemocratic nature of Melbourne City Council elections. An excellent *Inside Story* article describes how John Cain’s Labor government made a weak attempt to democratise the council, but Jeff Kennett came in and not only cemented the ‘Two votes for business’ model we see today but also engaged in some US-style gerrymandering of the Melbourne city boundaries to ensure that council elections were skewed heavily toward said businesses. Melbourne City Council themselves have repeatedly asked the state government to fix their undemocratic elections by reviewing the City of Melbourne Act 2001. Most recently, in 2022, the councillors unanimously passed a motion urging the local government minister to respond to their request.

We often hear that the core business of councils is the three Rs – roads, rates and rubbish – but I would say that misses out on a pretty important R: residents. Residents are the ones who actually live here. They want safer streets for bikes and walking. They want to enjoy green spaces, like parks and gardens and even a greener Melbourne General Cemetery – why not? Residents want to make sure their waste and recycling systems are up to scratch and to generally have a real say in shaping the city where they choose to live, and in a modern democracy it does not seem too much to ask.

Minister, the action I seek is for the government to fix this undemocratic system by returning to the principle of one person, one vote and legislating an end to the practice of businesses and absentee landlords voting in City of Melbourne elections.

Hastings electorate sporting facilities

Paul MERCURIO (Hastings) (19:15): (738) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Community Sport, and the action I seek is for the minister to come down to my electorate to meet with the clubs at the Somerville Recreation Reserve. I am very happy to say and very grateful that in this year’s budget we secured \$300,000 to go towards the clubs at the Somerville Recreation Reserve. The money will be split between four clubs at the reserve, with \$100,000 going to the tennis club for lighting, \$80,000 to the bowls club for upgrades to their all-weather shelters, \$100,000 to the football netball club to upgrade their clubrooms and \$20,000 to the cricket club. The netball courts at Somerville Recreation Reserve have also recently been upgraded, which is fantastic.

Between the netball, football and cricket clubs there are over 50 teams that play out of the recreation reserve, so the upgrade to the clubrooms will make a huge difference to all those that frequent the clubs and will make getting involved in local sports an even better experience for our community. I met with all the club presidents a few weeks ago when the Premier came down to visit, and they are all very grateful and excited to be able to make the improvements to their facilities that this funding will allow. They and I look forward to the minister's visit.

Housing

Tim BULL (Gippsland East) (19:16): (739) My adjournment tonight is for the Minister for Housing, and the action I seek is more timely action to be taken against public housing tenants displaying violent and threatening behaviour. Being allocated a public housing home is something that should be respected, especially with the state of our current public housing waiting list, which is skyrocketing. In a time when we are rightly taking a stand against violence against women, it does not appear to be being applied to the very, very aggressive behaviour being displayed by violent public housing tenants. I have two single female residents in Bairnsdale who have been forced to take out intervention orders against Department of Families, Fairness and Housing tenants after having their lives threatened and being repeatedly abused. Despite calling 000 and having police attend their premises for multiple incidents on a large range of occasions, these victims have been asked to provide housing tenant officers proof of harassment to substantiate the claims. Of course this is hard to do. When you are getting violently abused you do not have your camera on filming, as that will only agitate the matter.

In a time when we often hear people in this chamber saying 'Believe women', this mantra is not being applied to the department of housing. The current Minister for Housing has said publicly she is sick of victim-blaming rather than the focus being on the perpetrator. The Premier has said women should have the right to move safely around their community, and I certainly agree with that, and even the Minister for Housing herself, Ms Shing in the other place, has championed respect for women and said she wants a community where women and girls feel safe. I agree with her there again. However, here we have public housing tenants continually displaying aggressive behaviour, threatening violence and repeatedly verbally abusing female neighbours, who feel they are not being protected and through lack of action are being made to feel that the problem is theirs. So I call on the minister to take stronger action in these instances and apply the mantra that the government has adopted to the department of housing.

Leakes Road–Clearwood Drive, Truganina

Sarah CONNOLLY (Laverton) (19:18): (740) My adjournment is for the Minister for Police, and the action I seek is that the minister update me on the efforts being made to improve driver compliance and pedestrian safety around the intersection of Leakes Road and Clearwood Drive. As the minister knows, this intersection near Truganina P-9 College can be dangerous, especially for our local kids, as some drivers do not slow down despite the traffic signs. Numerous children have been hit by cars at this intersection when travelling to and from their school. As a result, many parents with kids at Trug P-9 College have raised with me their concerns for their children's safety, something that any parent would do. As a parent myself, I would not want either of my kids to be at risk while travelling to or from school, and I share this worry with them.

Truganina local Nick Ladbrooke has also led community members in calling for action on this very issue. I know that safety on our roads is a key priority of this government, and I am pleased to see that due to this advocacy a range of actions have been taken to improve safety in and around this intersection. This includes increasing the signalisation times at the intersection – rates to help pedestrians cross – from 8 seconds to 21 seconds; that actually does make a big difference, and the red time for both right-turning lanes.

On top of this, we have also installed 40-kilometre-per-hour road signs, and we are working with the Department of Transport and Planning on a speed review and with Victoria Police to improve driver

compliance. VicPol has also tasked regular patrols to the area and increased the deployment of local mobile camera sites. Since then, local residents have noticed a decrease in accidents at this intersection and safer driving overall. This is great news for Truganina and particularly for the community at Truganina P-9 College. As a member of Parliament and a parent of school-age children, the safety of our kids is a top priority for me, and I know it is for the minister. That is why I would appreciate an update on the positive impact these efforts are having on compliance and safety for my local community.

Responses

Anthony CARBINES (Ivanhoe – Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Racing) (19:21): I note that there was a matter raised by the member for South-West Coast for the Minister for Public and Active Transport to add extra stops in the Portland estate for the community in the Portland estate to travel to the town centre. The member for Tarneit raised a matter for the Minister for Education to update him and his community with regard to the progress of the Warringa Park specialist school. Of course the Allan Labor government has committed to upgrading all special development schools across Victoria and has made significant contributions. I am sure there will be an update there for the member for Tarneit with regard to Warringa Park School.

The member for Euroa raised a matter for the Minister for Ambulance Services seeking the establishment of MICA services in the Mitchell shire. The member for Lara raised a matter for the Minister for Youth to visit particular youth centres in her electorate in the suburb of Corio. The member for Benambra raised a matter for the Minister for Health seeking confirmation that a helipad will be built at the new Albury Wodonga Health campus, the Albury campus, and the master plan where the government is contributing some \$225 million. The member for Wendouree raised a matter for the Minister for Planning to visit Wendouree and outline how the plan for Victoria will deliver for the local stakeholders and represent those voices in Ballarat.

The member for Brunswick raised a matter for the Minister for Local Government about one person, one vote – well, one vote, one value. He discussed and outlined his concerns in regard to that in the business community. We might need to channel a little bit of Gough Whitlam there – only one value, one vote. But I know that the matters that the member for Brunswick has raised will be passed on to the Minister for Local Government. While we are on the City of Melbourne, can I just thank the work of Nicholas Reece, the mayor of the City of Melbourne, for the great work that he is doing. He has outlined several policies, unlike the Greens candidate who has outlined no policies in their candidacy in the City of Melbourne. I commend the Lord Mayor of Melbourne Nick Reece for the activism and the work that he is doing leading the City of Melbourne.

The member for Hastings raised a matter for the Minister for Community Sport. He is keen to have her meet the Somerville Recreation Reserve tenants. Three hundred thousand dollars in funding was secured from the Allan Labor government by the member for Hastings in his hard work for the football, netball and cricket clubs. So he is pretty keen to have the Minister for Community Sport out there, and I will pass that on. The member for Gippsland East raised a matter for the Minister for Housing around timely and stronger advocacy and action against housing tenants who exhibit violent and disrespectful behaviour when they have the privilege of living in taxpayer-funded accommodation. I will be sure to pass on those concerns about behaviour that is not appropriate to the Minister for Housing.

The member for Laverton raised a matter for my good self, and I do look forward to catching up with her with her local community and local stakeholders in Truganina, particularly around P-9 College and the local community, to make sure that with Victoria Police we continue our work together with the local community to make sure that people are safe. Particularly when we have returned to school after the winter break, we need to make sure that communities are safe and that people can allow their kids to travel to and from school within local communities that are very busy, particularly out in the west where there is significant congestion at times, to make sure that those at our schools and those

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picking them up and taking them home are also looked after and treated safely. In my conversations with colleagues across the west, particularly around traffic safety cameras, there is an opportunity for us to make sure that all those decisions are made independently and that the applications that are being put forward are being scrutinised, because we could certainly grow the capacity around our traffic safety cameras across the western suburbs. I look forward to catching up with the member for Laverton with her local community to discuss those priorities and to make sure that we can deliver some positive outcomes around road safety for the community in Trug and certainly for the people of Laverton.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The house stands adjourned until tomorrow morning.

House adjourned 7:25 pm.