

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FIFTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION**

TUESDAY, 2 AUGUST 2022

hansard.parliament.vic.gov.au

By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU AC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable JAMES ANGUS AO

The ministry

Premier	The Hon. DM Andrews MP
Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport Infrastructure, Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop and Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery	The Hon. JM Allan MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Emergency Services	The Hon. J Symes MLC
Minister for Training and Skills, Minister for Higher Education and Minister for Agriculture	The Hon. GA Tierney MLC
Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Trade	The Hon. TH Pallas MP
Minister for Planning	The Hon. EA Blandthorn MP
Minister for Child Protection and Family Services and Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers	The Hon. CW Brooks MP
Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention and Minister for Racing	The Hon. AR Carbines MP
Minister for Public Transport, Minister for Roads and Road Safety, Minister for Industry Support and Recovery and Minister for Business Precincts	The Hon. BA Carroll MP
Minister for Energy, Minister for Environment and Climate Action and Minister for Solar Homes	The Hon. L D’Ambrosio MP
Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events and Minister for Creative Industries	The Hon. S Dimopoulos MP
Minister for Ports and Freight, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, Minister for Local Government and Minister for Suburban Development	The Hon. MM Horne MP
Minister for Education and Minister for Women	The Hon. NM Hutchins MP
Minister for Corrections, Minister for Youth Justice, Minister for Victim Support and Minister for Fishing and Boating	The Hon. S Kilkenny MP
Minister for Commonwealth Games Legacy and Minister for Veterans ..	The Hon. SL Leane MLC
Assistant Treasurer, Minister for Regulatory Reform, Minister for Government Services and Minister for Housing	The Hon. DJ Pearson MP
Minister for Employment, Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy, Minister for Small Business and Minister for Resources	The Hon. JL Pulford MLC
Minister for Water, Minister for Regional Development and Minister for Equality	The Hon. H Shing MLC
Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Prevention of Family Violence, Minister for Community Sport and Minister for Youth	The Hon. RL Spence MP
Minister for Workplace Safety and Minister for Early Childhood and Pre-Prep	The Hon. I Stitt MLC
Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services	The Hon. M Thomas MP
Minister for Mental Health and Minister for Treaty and First Peoples ...	The Hon. G Williams MP
Cabinet Secretary	Mr SJ McGhie MP

**OFFICE-HOLDERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FIFTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT—FIRST SESSION**

Speaker

The Hon. JM EDWARDS

Deputy Speaker

Ms N SULEYMAN

Acting Speakers

Mr Blackwood, Mr J Bull, Ms Connolly, Ms Couzens, Ms Crugnale, Mr Edbrooke, Ms Halfpenny, Mr McCurdy, Mr McGuire, Mr Morris, Ms Richards, Mr Richardson, Mr Taylor and Ms Ward

Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Premier

The Hon. DM ANDREWS

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Deputy Premier

The Hon. JM ALLAN

Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and Leader of the Opposition

The Hon. MJ GUY

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party

Mr DJ SOUTHWICK

Leader of The Nationals and Deputy Leader of the Opposition

The Hon. PL WALSH

Deputy Leader of The Nationals

Ms E KEALY

Leader of the House

Ms EA BLANDTHORN

Manager of Opposition Business

Ms LE STALEY

Heads of parliamentary departments

Assembly: Clerk of the Legislative Assembly: Ms B Noonan

Council: Clerk of the Parliaments and Clerk of the Legislative Council: Mr A Young

Parliamentary Services: Secretary: Ms T Burrows

MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FIFTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT—FIRST SESSION

Member	District	Party	Member	District	Party
Addison, Ms Juliana	Wendouree	ALP	Maas, Mr Gary	Narre Warren South	ALP
Allan, Ms Jacinta Marie	Bendigo East	ALP	McCurdy, Mr Timothy Logan	Ovens Valley	Nats
Andrews, Mr Daniel Michael	Mulgrave	ALP	McGhie, Mr Stephen John	Melton	ALP
Angus, Mr Neil Andrew Warwick	Forest Hill	LP	McGuire, Mr Frank	Broadmeadows	ALP
Battin, Mr Bradley William	Gembrook	LP	McLeish, Ms Lucinda Gaye	Eildon	LP
Blackwood, Mr Gary John	Narracan	LP	Merlino, Mr James Anthony	Monbulk	ALP
Blandthorn, Ms Elizabeth Anne	Pascoe Vale	ALP	Morris, Mr David Charles	Mornington	LP
Brayne, Mr Chris	Nepean	ALP	Neville, Ms Lisa Mary	Bellarine	ALP
Britnell, Ms Roma	South-West Coast	LP	Newbury, Mr James	Brighton	LP
Brooks, Mr Colin William	Bundoora	ALP	Northe, Mr Russell John	Morwell	Ind
Bull, Mr Joshua Michael	Sunbury	ALP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David	Gippsland South	Nats
Bull, Mr Timothy Owen	Gippsland East	Nats	O'Brien, Mr Michael Anthony	Malvern	LP
Burgess, Mr Neale Ronald	Hastings	LP	Pakula, Mr Martin Philip	Keysborough	ALP
Carbines, Mr Anthony Richard	Ivanhoe	ALP	Pallas, Mr Timothy Hugh	Werribee	ALP
Carroll, Mr Benjamin Alan	Niddrie	ALP	Pearson, Mr Daniel James	Essendon	ALP
Cheeseman, Mr Darren Leicester	South Barwon	ALP	Read, Dr Tim	Brunswick	Greens
Connolly, Ms Sarah	Tarneit	ALP	Richardson, Ms Pauline	Cranbourne	ALP
Couzens, Ms Christine Anne	Geelong	ALP	Richardson, Mr Timothy Noel	Mordialloc	ALP
Crugnale, Ms Jordan Alessandra	Bass	ALP	Riordan, Mr Richard Vincent	Polwarth	LP
Cupper, Ms Ali	Mildura	Ind	Rowswell, Mr Brad	Sandringham	LP
D'Ambrosio, Ms Liliana	Mill Park	ALP	Ryan, Stephanie Maureen	Euroa	Nats
Dimopoulos, Mr Stephen	Oakleigh	ALP	Sandell, Ms Ellen	Melbourne	Greens
Donnellan, Mr Luke Anthony	Narre Warren North	ALP	Scott, Mr Robin David	Preston	ALP
Edbrooke, Mr Paul Andrew	Frankston	ALP	Settle, Ms Michaela	Buninyong	ALP
Edwards, Ms Janice Maree	Bendigo West	ALP	Sheed, Ms Suzanna	Shepparton	Ind
Eren, Mr John Hamdi	Lara	ALP	Smith, Mr Ryan	Warrandyte	LP
Foley, Mr Martin Peter	Albert Park	ALP	Smith, Mr Timothy Colin	Kew	LP
Fowles, Mr Will	Burwood	ALP	Southwick, Mr David James	Caulfield	LP
Fregon, Mr Matt	Mount Waverley	ALP	Spence, Ms Rosalind Louise	Yuroke	ALP
Green, Ms Danielle Louise	Yan Yean	ALP	Staikos, Mr Nicholas	Bentleigh	ALP
Guy, Mr Matthew Jason	Bulleen	LP	Staley, Ms Louise Eileen	Ripon	LP
Halfpenny, Ms Bronwyn	Thomastown	ALP	Suleyman, Ms Natalie	St Albans	ALP
Hall, Ms Katie	Footscray	ALP	Tak, Mr Meng Heang	Clarinda	ALP
Halse, Mr Dustin	Ringwood	ALP	Taylor, Mr Jackson	Bayswater	ALP
Hamer, Mr Paul	Box Hill	ALP	Theophanous, Ms Katerina	Northcote	ALP
Hennessy, Ms Jill	Altona	ALP	Thomas, Ms Mary-Anne	Macedon	ALP
Hibbins, Mr Samuel Peter	Prahran	Greens	Tilley, Mr William John	Benambra	LP
Hodgett, Mr David John	Croydon	LP	Vallence, Ms Bridget	Evelyn	LP
Horne, Ms Melissa Margaret	Williamstown	ALP	Wakeling, Mr Nicholas	Ferntree Gully	LP
Hutchins, Ms Natalie Maree Sykes	Sydenham	ALP	Walsh, Mr Peter Lindsay	Murray Plains	Nats
Kairouz, Ms Marlene	Kororoit	ALP	Ward, Ms Vicki	Eltham	ALP
Kealy, Ms Emma Jayne	Lowan	Nats	Wells, Mr Kimberley Arthur	Rowville	LP
Kennedy, Mr John Ormond	Hawthorn	ALP	Williams, Ms Gabrielle	Dandenong	ALP
Kilkenny, Ms Sonya	Carrum	ALP	Wynne, Mr Richard William	Richmond	ALP

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

ALP—Labor Party; Greens—The Greens;
Ind—Independent; LP—Liberal Party; Nats—The Nationals.

Legislative Assembly committees

Economy and Infrastructure Standing Committee

Ms Addison, Mr Blackwood, Ms Couzens, Mr Eren, Ms Ryan, Ms Theophanous and Mr Wakeling.

Environment and Planning Standing Committee

Ms Addison, Mr Fowles, Ms Green, Mr Hamer, Mr McCurdy, Ms McLeish and Mr Morris.

Legal and Social Issues Standing Committee

Mr Angus, Mr Battin, Ms Couzens, Ms Kealy, Ms Settle, Ms Theophanous and Mr Tak.

Privileges Committee

Mr Allan, Mr Carroll, Ms Hennessy, Mr McGuire, Mr Morris, Mr Pakula, Ms Ryan, Ms Staley and Mr Wells.

Standing Orders Committee

The Speaker, Ms Blandthorn, Mr Fregon, Ms McLeish, Ms Settle, Ms Sheed, Ms Staley, Ms Suleyman and Mr Walsh.

Joint committees

Dispute Resolution Committee

Assembly: Ms Allan, Ms Hennessy, Mr Merlino, Mr Pakula, Mr R Smith, Mr Walsh and Mr Wells.

Council: Mr Bourman, Ms Crozier, Mr Davis, Ms Symes and Ms Tierney.

Electoral Matters Committee

Assembly: Ms Hall, Dr Read and Mr Rowswell.

Council: Mr Erdogan, Mrs McArthur, Mr Meddick, Mr Melhem, Ms Lovell, Mr Quilty and Mr Tarlamis.

House Committee

Assembly: The Speaker (*ex officio*), Mr T Bull, Ms Crugnale, Mr Fregon, Ms Sandell, Ms Staley and Ms Suleyman.

Council: The President (*ex officio*), Mr Bourman, Mr Davis, Mr Leane, Ms Lovell and Ms Stitt.

Integrity and Oversight Committee

Assembly: Mr Halse, Mr Maas, Mr Rowswell, Mr Taylor, Ms Ward and Mr Wells.

Council: Mr Grimley.

Pandemic Declaration Accountability and Oversight Committee

Assembly: Mr J Bull, Mr Eren, Ms Kealy, Mr Sheed, Ms Ward and Mr Wells.

Council: Ms Crozier and Mr Erdogan.

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee

Assembly: Ms Connolly, Mr Hibbins, Mr Maas, Mr Newbury, Mr D O'Brien, Ms Richards and Mr Richardson.

Council: Mrs McArthur and Ms Taylor.

Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee

Assembly: Mr Burgess, Ms Connolly and Mr Morris.

Council: Ms Patten and Ms Watt.

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Tuesday, 2 August 2022

The mace was brought into the house by the Serjeant-at-Arms and laid under table.

Members

SPEAKER

Resignation

The Clerk: Members, I wish to advise that I have received the following letter from the Honourable Colin Brooks:

Dear Bridget,

I hereby resign as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your wonderful team for all your support and advice throughout my time as Speaker.

It has been an honour to serve the Parliament and the people of our state and it heartens me to know that there are such incredible people working for the Parliament who are so passionate about this democratic institution.

And it is signed and dated, Colin Brooks, 27 June.

Election

The Clerk: Accordingly, the house now proceeds to the election of a Speaker. Are there any nominations?

Mr ANDREWS (Mulgrave—Premier) (12:03): I propose that the member for Bendigo West, Ms Maree Edwards, be Speaker. I move:

That the member for Bendigo West do take the chair.

The Clerk: Who seconds this motion?

Ms ALLAN (Bendigo East—Minister for Transport Infrastructure, Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop, Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery) (12:04): I am delighted to support the nomination of my friend and colleague the member for Bendigo West as the Speaker of the house.

The Clerk: Member for Bendigo West, do you accept the nomination?

Ms EDWARDS (Bendigo West) (12:04): I am honoured to accept the nomination.

Motion agreed to.

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

Ms Edwards conducted to chair by proposer and seconder.

The mace was placed on table.

The SPEAKER (12:05): I express my sincere thanks to the house for the great honour conferred on me by electing me as Speaker.

Mr ANDREWS (Mulgrave—Premier) (12:06): Speaker, if I might offer, on behalf of the parliamentary Labor Party, our deepest congratulations on the honour that the house has just bestowed on you. During your time in this place you have been a great champion not only for the people of Bendigo West but for regional Victoria more broadly and for all of those across our community who without strong advocacy and without a champion do not have a voice.

I could give a long speech in relation to all the different projects, all the different matters of policy and all the different causes that you have been a great champion for, but I want to focus on just one. In my time as the leader of our party and in my time working alongside you, I have always been deeply

impressed by your passion for and commitment to those in our community who have special needs and those who are the parents of particularly children who have special needs. I know it is a great point of pride for you, and by extension is a great point of pride for me and our entire government, the work that we have been able to do side by side with you as the member for Bendigo West in relation to Kalianna special school, the full redevelopment of which would not have occurred without your passionate advocacy. On the many occasions that I have visited that fine facility, now fully upgraded and open, to speak with students, to speak with staff and to speak with parents, I have seen the joy in the eyes of the students from knowing now beyond any question or any doubt that they are worth it and that they have the facilities that match the quality of the teaching and learning that they are fundamentally entitled to. None of that would have occurred without your advocacy, without your determination and without your will to make that project a reality. And of course, always with an eye to the future, Bendigo Special Developmental School has now been fully funded as part of this year's budget to complete that important work right across your proud city.

Your own personal journey is one of adversity but purpose, and that does you great credit as well. I cannot think of a better person to sit in that chair and preside over the business of this house than you, Speaker. I wholeheartedly congratulate you on this great honour. I know that you will bring that same passion, your sense of fairness, your sense of inclusion and equality and your deep respect to this as an institution and to the significant responsibility that you have just been chosen to administer. Well done from all of us. We know you will do this Parliament proud.

Mr GUY (Bulleen—Leader of the Opposition) (12:09): Speaker, can I just, on behalf of the opposition, pass our congratulations to you on achieving such a wonderful position—the Speaker of the chamber of the Legislative Assembly. Can I also pass some comments to the outgoing Speaker, the member for Bundoora, on the fine work he did as Speaker managing many in this Parliament—indeed the member for Warrandyte amongst others.

I understand, Speaker, you—like every person who has occupied that chair—no doubt will bring your own flavour to that chair and your own management style and your own inclusiveness to the chamber. We on this side of the house, obviously from opposition, have a more vocal presence in places like question time, which we hope all Speakers understand. We hope that it does not last forever—maybe only four months—but we do congratulate you. It is a wonderful honour.

On a personal note, I am full of admiration for the many people in this chamber who rise to executive positions, both in the Parliament and in government, who are from outside of Melbourne, who spend time away from their family and who spend a lot of time away from their own constituency. It is a taxing time for many. I know on my side there are many members from outside of Melbourne and obviously there are in the government as well, and certainly including you, and no doubt having this position will mean that you personally will be away for more time than, say, a sitting MP. I think that is a great strength to be admired of those who fill those roles and who do that. We offer our congratulations to you and our participation throughout the good workings of the Parliament during your tenure as Speaker. So, congratulations.

Dr READ (Brunswick) (12:10): Speaker, on behalf of the Greens I too would like to extend our congratulations. We have seen your calm and measured demeanour as Deputy Speaker and look forward to working with you and having you see out the remaining weeks of this Parliament. I also want to pass on our thanks to the former Speaker, the member for Bundoora. Congratulations.

The SPEAKER (12:11): Can I thank the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Brunswick for their kind words. With the indulgence of the house, I would like to say a few brief words. I firstly want to thank members for their support and for electing me to be Speaker. I would also like to acknowledge and thank our previous Speaker, the honourable member for Bundoora, for the great job he has done, particularly for his integrity in the role and for his support while I have been his deputy for the past five years. A former member once said to me that it is a great honour to be

elected as a member of Parliament and anything that comes after that is a privilege. So I am both honoured and privileged to be here in the Speaker's chair.

I want to acknowledge and thank my four children, their partners, my two stepsons and—for those who are keeping up—my eight, soon to be nine, grandchildren and my extended family and friends, some of whom are here today, for their unwavering love and support and for keeping me grounded. My electorate office staff, Martyn, Lynda, Pam and Sam, are the backbone of the work we do in the electorate of Bendigo West, and I am extremely grateful for all that they do. Thank you.

To the communities across Bendigo West, I am truly honoured that I was elected to represent you almost 12 years ago. I pledge to continue to work hard to deliver great outcomes for all. As only the fourth woman to take the Speaker's chair in the long history of this Parliament, I am reminded that although significant progress has been made, we still have some way to go to achieve gender equity. To the women who came before me and to the first woman Speaker of this place, the Honourable Judy Maddigan—who I acknowledge is in the gallery today—thank you for trailblazing opportunities for women in this role. As mentioned, there is only a short time left before the dissolution of this 59th Parliament, and I would like to encourage all members over the coming weeks to embrace respect for each other, for the communities they represent and for the outstanding clerks and staff who keep this place a successful working environment.

I would also encourage respect for the Chair always and adherence to the rules of the house. Standing orders, as we know, are there for a reason, and it is imperative to the smooth operation of the house that they are followed. To all, I say my door will always be open and I look forward to engaging with you. I also encourage you to raise matters that are of interest or concern to you. I am always open to new ideas and new suggestions. When I told my husband, Steve, that I was likely to be Speaker of the house I think he was pretty chuffed. Thank you, Steve, for all you do and for your love and support, and I promise not to call you to order too often. I cannot promise the same to members. However, in fairness and with impartiality I will be respectful and endeavour to always be kind and empathetic. As is past practice, I ask members to refer to the Chair as 'Speaker', and no prefix is required.

Now it is time to move on to the business of the house, starting with the Lord's Prayer, and I ask members to rise in their seats.

The SPEAKER (Ms JM Edwards) read the prayer.

Announcements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The SPEAKER (12:14): We acknowledge the traditional Aboriginal owners of the land on which we are meeting. We pay our respects to them, their culture, their elders past, present and future, and elders from other communities who may be here today.

Members

MINISTRY

Mr ANDREWS (Mulgrave—Premier) (12:15): I wish to provide a comprehensive list of changes to the ministry.

SHADOW MINISTRY

Ms STALEY (Ripon) (12:15): On behalf of the Leader of the Opposition, I advise that the member for Caulfield has added energy and renewables to his shadow ministerial responsibilities and the member for Gippsland South has taken on the portfolios of water; public transport and roads; and gaming and liquor regulation.

Announcements**ACTING PUBLIC ADVOCATE**

The SPEAKER (12:15): I advise the house that on 6 July 2022 I administered to Sonia Melee Law, the acting public advocate from 18 July 2022 to 5 August 2022, the affirmation required by section 14 of the Guardianship and Administration Act 2019.

Bills**LAND AMENDMENT (ACCESSING LICENSED WATER FRONTAGES) BILL 2022***Introduction*

Mr WALSH (Murray Plains) (12:16): I move:

That I introduce a bill for an act to amend the Land Act 1958 to control access to and camping on licensed waterfrontages in response to potential foot-and-mouth disease outbreaks or other biosecurity, public safety or animal welfare risks and to amend the Livestock Management Act 2010 in relation to licensed riverfrontages and for other purposes.

House divided on motion:*Ayes, 27*

Angus, Mr
Battin, Mr
Britnell, Ms
Bull, Mr T
Cupper, Ms
Guy, Mr
Hibbins, Mr
Hodgett, Mr
Kealy, Ms

McCurdy, Mr
McLeish, Ms
Morris, Mr
Newbury, Mr
O'Brien, Mr D
O'Brien, Mr M
Read, Dr
Riordan, Mr
Rowswell, Mr

Sheed, Ms
Smith, Mr R
Southwick, Mr
Staley, Ms
Tilley, Mr
Vallence, Ms
Wakeling, Mr
Walsh, Mr
Wells, Mr

Noes, 49

Addison, Ms
Allan, Ms
Andrews, Mr
Blandthorn, Ms
Brayne, Mr
Brooks, Mr
Bull, Mr J
Carbines, Mr
Carroll, Mr
Cheeseman, Mr
Connolly, Ms
Crugnale, Ms
D'Ambrosio, Ms
Dimopoulos, Mr
Edbrooke, Mr
Eren, Mr
Foley, Mr

Fowles, Mr
Fregon, Mr
Green, Ms
Hall, Ms
Halse, Mr
Hamer, Mr
Hennessy, Ms
Horne, Ms
Hutchins, Ms
Kennedy, Mr
Kilkenny, Ms
Maas, Mr
McGhie, Mr
McGuire, Mr
Merlino, Mr
Neville, Ms

Pakula, Mr
Pallas, Mr
Pearson, Mr
Richards, Ms
Richardson, Mr
Settle, Ms
Spence, Ms
Staikos, Mr
Suleyman, Ms
Tak, Mr
Taylor, Mr
Theophanous, Ms
Thomas, Ms
Ward, Ms
Williams, Ms
Wynne, Mr

Motion defeated.

RACING AMENDMENT (UNAUTHORISED ACCESS) BILL 2022*Introduction and first reading*

Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe—Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Racing) (12:23): Congratulations to you, Speaker. I move:

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

Motion agreed to.

Mr T BULL (Gippsland East) (12:23): May I request a brief explanation of the bill.

Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe—Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Racing) (12:23): The bill will amend the Racing Act 1958 to keep participants and spectators at Victorian racing events safe by introducing offence and penalty provisions for unauthorised access to restricted areas of racecourses and other disruptive conduct at race and official trial meetings.

Read first time.**Ordered to be read second time tomorrow.****EARLY CHILDHOOD LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022***Introduction and first reading*

Ms HUTCHINS (Sydenham—Minister for Education, Minister for Women) (12:24): I move:

That I introduce a bill for an act to amend the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010, the Children's Services Act 1996, the Child Wellbeing and Safety (Child Safe Standards Compliance and Enforcement) Amendment Act 2021, the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

Mr HODGETT (Croydon) (12:25): I request a brief explanation of the bill from the minister, please.

Ms HUTCHINS (Sydenham—Minister for Education, Minister for Women) (12:25): Speaker, congratulations on your new role.

The bill will amend the Education and Care Services National Law (Victoria). It will be amended to incorporate the national law that arose from the 2019 national quality framework review. The Children's Services Act 1996 will be amended to maintain an alignment with the national laws and also the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005, to incorporate further regulation-making powers to prescribe prescriptions for maternal and child health nurses and to incorporate documents into the maternal and child health nurses service guidelines of 2019.

Read first time.**Ordered to be read second time tomorrow.****MAJOR CRIME AND COMMUNITY SAFETY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL
2022***Introduction and first reading*

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Youth Justice, Minister for Victim Support, Minister for Fishing and Boating) (12:26): Speaker, congratulations on your role. I move:

That I introduce a bill for an act to amend the Confiscation Act 1997, the Crimes Act 1958, the Crimes (Assumed Identities) Act 2004, the Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981 and the Sex Work Decriminalisation Act 2022 and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

Mr M O'BRIEN (Malvern) (12:27): Congratulations to you, Speaker. I would ask the minister for a brief explanation of the bill.

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Youth Justice, Minister for Victim Support, Minister for Fishing and Boating) (12:27): The bill will deliver *Community Safety Statement 2018–19* commitments to strengthen Victoria's asset confiscation scheme and improve search warrant and crime scene processes. It will also streamline, clarify and modernise fingerprint and search warrant powers and the use of assumed identities in criminal investigations and create operational efficiencies for police and courts.

Read first time.

Ordered to be read second time tomorrow.

MONITORING OF PLACES OF DETENTION BY THE UNITED NATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON PREVENTION OF TORTURE (OPCAT) BILL 2022

Introduction and first reading

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Youth Justice, Minister for Victim Support, Minister for Fishing and Boating) (12:27): I move:

That I introduce a bill for an act to facilitate visits to places of detention and access to information by the United Nations Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in accordance with the subcommittee's mandate under the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

Mr BATTIN (Gembrook) (12:28): Congratulations on your role, Speaker.

Could I please ask for a brief explanation of the bill.

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Youth Justice, Minister for Victim Support, Minister for Fishing and Boating) (12:28): The bill defines places of detention in scope for subcommittee inspections across corrections, youth justice, secure welfare services, court services, Victoria Police and the health and disability sectors. It specifies the state's obligations to ensure the subcommittee's unrestricted access to a place of detention, unrestricted access to relevant information required by the subcommittee to perform its inspection mandate and ability to interview detained persons and employees in a place of detention and to create a system to support the subcommittee's access to places and people, including consistent entry and information-sharing requirements, the nomination of accompanying officials to a visit and the issuing of ministerial guidelines to assist and facilitate inspections operationally in places of detention.

Read first time.

Ordered to be read second time tomorrow.

DISABILITY AMENDMENT BILL 2022

Introduction and first reading

Mr BROOKS (Bundoora—Minister for Child Protection and Family Services, Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers) (12:29): Congratulations on your role, Speaker. I move:

That I introduce a bill for an act to amend the Disability Act 2006 in relation to the Secretary's functions, the sharing of information, residential services, restrictive practices, compulsory treatment and other related matters, to amend the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 in relation to SDA enrolled dwellings, to amend the Disability Service Safeguards Act 2018 in relation to registration requirements, to make consequential amendments to other acts, and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

Mr T BULL (Gippsland East) (12:30): May I ask the minister for a brief explanation of the bill.

Mr BROOKS (Bundoora—Minister for Child Protection and Family Services, Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers) (12:30): The Disability Amendment Bill 2022 will increase residential protections for Victorians in disability accommodation and strengthen quality and safeguards and services for people with disability. The bill also improves service coordination, improves services, manages NDIS transitional issues, clarifies the role of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing secretary and reduces duplication in the sector.

Read first time.

Ordered to be read second time tomorrow.

CASINO LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (ROYAL COMMISSION IMPLEMENTATION AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2022

Introduction and first reading

Ms HORNE (Williamstown—Minister for Ports and Freight, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, Minister for Local Government, Minister for Suburban Development) (12:31): I move:

That I introduce a bill for an act to amend the Casino Control Act 1991, the Casino (Management Agreement) Act 1993, the Gambling Regulation Act 2003 and the Tobacco Act 1987 to implement recommendations of the Royal Commission into the Casino Operator and Licence and other gambling reforms and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

Mr D O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) (12:31): Speaker, congratulations on your election. I ask the minister for a brief explanation of the bill.

Ms HORNE (Williamstown—Minister for Ports and Freight, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, Minister for Local Government, Minister for Suburban Development) (12:32): The bill will respond to 12 recommendations of the Royal Commission into the Casino Operator and Licence by establishing the legislative framework for harm minimisation and anti-money laundering measures, as well as corporate reforms at the Melbourne casino. The bill also includes complementary reforms such as banning smoking in the high roller rooms and introducing a casino supervision charge.

Read first time.

Ordered to be read second time tomorrow.

STATE SPORT CENTRES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022

Introduction and first reading

Mr DIMOPOULOS (Oakleigh—Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events, Minister for Creative Industries) (12:32): Congratulations, Speaker, on your elevation. I move:

That I introduce a bill for an act to amend the State Sport Centres Act 1994, the Melbourne and Olympic Parks Act 1985, the Australian Grands Prix Act 1994, the Albert Park Land Act 1972, the Major Events Act 2009 and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

Ms McLEISH (Eildon) (12:33): Speaker, congratulations on your appointment. Can I please request a brief explanation of the bill.

Mr DIMOPOULOS (Oakleigh—Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events, Minister for Creative Industries) (12:33): The bill amends the State Sport Centres Act 1994 to make the State Sports Centres Trust responsible for the Knox Regional Sports Park, including the newly redeveloped

State Basketball Centre, and make the State Sports Centres Trust directly responsible for Lakeside Stadium and the Lakeside Oval reserve under the SSCA rather than as a committee of management under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978. The bill will mean that sports clubs and associations will get better access to better facilities, and it will reduce the regulatory burden on both those community clubs and the internals of government.

Read first time.

Ordered to be read a second time tomorrow.

Business of the house

NOTICES OF MOTION

The SPEAKER (12:34): General business, notices of motion 26 to 28 and 34, will be removed from the notice paper unless members wishing their matters to remain advise the Clerk in writing before 5.00 pm today.

Petitions

Following petitions presented to house by Clerk:

LEONGATHA ROAD SAFETY

This petition of residents in Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly the dangerous and confusing state of the main South Gippsland Highway intersection in Leongatha.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly calls on the Andrew's Labor Government to fund design and construction of stage two of the Leongatha Heavy Vehicle Alternative Route as soon as possible.

By Mr D O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) (83 signatures).

MARYBOROUGH TENNIS CENTRE

We, the undersigned residents of Victoria, ask the Legislative Assembly of Victoria to note:

1. That several tennis courts, the netball court, and court lighting at Maryborough Tennis Centre, 8 Lake Road Maryborough, are in unacceptably poor condition.
2. That the courts are in need of substantial investment to make them fit for purpose to serve the community into the future.
3. That the state government needs to assist the Central Goldfields Shire with funding to bring these much-used sporting facilities back to a useable condition.

By Ms STALEY (Ripon) (179 signatures).

LUCAS MOBILE PHONE SERVICES

We, the undersigned residents of Victoria, ask the Legislative Assembly of Victoria to note:

1. The mobile phone service in Lucas is completely inadequate to meet the needs of residents
2. Telstra and Optus must invest in the necessary infrastructure to improve mobile service in Lucas
3. The City of Ballarat must expedite planning approval for mobile phone infrastructure in Lucas
4. The Victorian Government must ensure that all new estates are required to provide good mobile phone and internet coverage

By Ms STALEY (Ripon) (607 signatures).

WESTERN VICTORIA TRANSMISSION NETWORK PROJECT

The petition of

NO AUSNET TOWERS PUT THEM UNDERGROUND DOWN THE WESTERN HIGHWAY

Draws to the attention of the House

We are against the infrastructure of the proposed Ausnet towers going through the countryside.

The value of productive Farmland and keeping our foodbowl. The effects of infrastructure on our Underground Waterways. The contribution of undergrounding to Bushfire Safety. How it will affect our Tourism Industry. Liveability and land value for the people of the region and surrounds. The effect on natural habitats, biodiversity and wildlife safety. Mental Health and the effects on people from this project.

The Petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria

Totally support sustainability not stupidity, we suggest it going down the Western Highway, Underground because we want to have a future for our next generation of farmers and our children.

Make National Infrastructure projects ethical now!

By Ms STALEY (Ripon) (2052 signatures).

Tabled.

Ordered that petitions lodged by member for Ripon be considered next day on motion of Ms STALEY (Ripon).

Ordered that petition lodged by member for Gippsland South be considered next day on motion of Mr O'BRIEN (Gippsland South).

Documents

VICTORIAN HEALTH BUILDING AUTHORITY

Frankston Hospital Redevelopment Project: Project Summary

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (12:36): Congratulations, Speaker, on your election to that role today. I table, by leave, the *Frankston Hospital Redevelopment Project: Project Summary*.

Committees

LEGAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

Inquiry into Support for Older Victorians from Migrant and Refugee Backgrounds

Ms SULEYMAN (St Albans) (12:36): I have the honour to present to the house a report from the Legal and Social Issues Committee on the inquiry into support for older Victorians from migrant and refugee backgrounds together with the appendix and transcripts of evidence.

Ordered that report and appendix be published.

ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Inquiry into Apartment Design Standards

SCRUTINY OF ACTS AND REGULATIONS COMMITTEE

Alert Digest No. 10

Ms CONNOLLY (Tarneit) (12:37): I have the honour to present to the house a report from the Environment and Planning Committee on the inquiry into apartment design standards together with appendices and transcripts of evidence, and a report from the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee, *Alert Digest* No. 10 of 2022, on the following bills:

Building, Planning and Heritage Legislation Amendment (Administration and Other Matters) Bill 2022

Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill 2022

Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other Matters) Bill 2022

Firearms Amendment Bill 2022

Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Amendment (Facilitating Timely Reporting) Bill 2022

Mental Health and Wellbeing Bill 2022

Residential Tenancies, Housing and Social Services Regulation Amendment (Administration and Other Matters) Bill 2022

Victorian Energy Efficiency Target Amendment Bill 2022

together with appendices.

Ordered that reports and appendices be published.

Documents

DOCUMENTS

Incorporated list as follows:

DOCUMENTS TABLED UNDER ACTS OF PARLIAMENT—The Clerk tabled the following documents under Acts of Parliament:

Auditor-General:

Responses to Performance Engagement Recommendations: Annual Status Update—Ordered to be published

Results of 2021 Audits: Technical and Further Education Institutes—Ordered to be published

Results of 2021 Audits: Universities—Ordered to be published

Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987:

Code of Practice for Bushfire Management on Public Land (2012) (amended 2022)

Variation of the Code of Practice for Bushfire Management on Public Land (2012) (No 1/2022)

Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978:

Orders under s 17B granting licences over:

Alexandra Park Reserve

Yarra Valley Parklands

Orders under ss 17B and 17D granting licences and leases over Albert Park (two orders)

Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission and Ombudsman—Operation Watts—Investigation into allegations of misuse of electorate office and ministerial office staff and resources for branch stacking and other party-related activities—Ordered to be published

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004:

Order approving the Communicating occupational health and safety across languages compliance code

Order revoking the approval of the Communicating occupational health and safety across languages compliance code

Ombudsman:

Annual Plan 2022–23—Ordered to be published

Investigation into complaint handling in the Victorian social housing sector—Ordered to be published

Investigation of a matter referred from the Legislative Council on 9 February 2022—Part 1—Ordered to be published

Pandemic Declaration Accountability and Oversight Committee:

Review of the Pandemic (Visitors to Hospitals and Care Facilities) Orders, together with appendices and transcripts of evidence—Report and appendices ordered to be published

Review of the Pandemic (Quarantine, Isolation and Testing) Orders, together with appendices and transcripts of evidence—Report and appendices ordered to be published

Parliamentary Budget Officer—Operational Plan 2022–23

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

Bayside—C190

Boroondara—C313, C337, C366, C384

Casey—C273, C290
Colac Otway—C118
Corangamite—GC201
Glen Eira—C204
Golden Plains—C92
Greater Dandenong—C234
Greater Geelong—C417
Kingston—C200, C201
Macedon Ranges—GC201
Mansfield—C44
Melbourne—C380, C396, C407, C421, C429, C430
Melton—C229
Mildura—C106
Mornington Peninsula—C269, C275
Moyne—C76
Nillumbik—C118, C138
Port Phillip—C205
Stonnington—C321
Surf Coast—C134, C139
Victoria Planning Provisions—VC213, VC217, VC230
Whitehorse—C222
Whittlesea—C247
Wyndham—C261
Yarra—C263, C300
Yarra Ranges—C200, C209

Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008—Report to Parliament on the extension of the pandemic declaration

Rail Safety National Law Application Act 2013—Rail Safety National Law National Regulations (Fees and FOI) Amendment Regulations 2022

Road Safety Act 1986—Guidelines for Assessing Fitness to Drive under ss 96 and 96B (*Gazette S309, 22 June 2022*)

Statutory Rules under the following Acts:

Borrowing and Investment Powers Act 1987—SR 52

Building Act 1993—SR 50

Criminal Procedure Act 2009—SR 57

Electricity Industry Act 2000—SR 55

Firearms Act 1996—SR 58

Gas Industry Act 2001—SR 56

Magistrates' Court Act 1989—SR 54

Mental Health Act 2014—SR 46

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004—SR 53

Road Safety Act 1986—SRs 47, 51

Spent Convictions Act 2021—SR 49

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994—SR 45

Water Act 1989—SR 48

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994:

Documents under s 15 in relation to:

Statutory Rules 43, 45, 46, 47, 50, 51, 53, 54

Documents under s 16B in relation to the:

Education and Training Reform Act 2006—Ministerial Order No 1387—Order amending Ministerial Orders 1038 and 1039—School Council Employees and Teaching Service (Vaccination Requirements for Specialist School Facilities)

Gambling Regulation Act 2003:

Gaming Machine Entitlement Allocation and Transfer Rules

Ministerial Direction under s 4.8A.2

Road Safety Act 1986—Order Declaring Certain Motor Vehicles Not To Be Motor Vehicles

Victorian Energy Efficiency Target Act 2007—Notice of Declaration of a Discount Factor

Water Act 1989—Order for Amendment of the Trading Rules for Declared Water Systems (Revised Goulburn to Murray Trade Rule)

Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal—Members of Parliament (Victoria) Annual Adjustment Determination 2022

Victorian Inspectorate—Inspection Report 2020–21 on controlled operations records and reports under the *Crimes (Controlled Operations) Act 2004*, *Wildlife Act 1975* and *Fisheries Act 1995*

Wrongs Act 1958—Notice of Scale of Fees and Costs for Referrals of Medical Questions to Medical Panels under Part VBA (*Gazette S327, 29 June 2022*)

Yoorrook Justice Commission—Yoorrook with Purpose—Interim Report—Ordered to be published.

PROCLAMATIONS—Under Standing Order 177A, the Clerk tabled the following proclamations fixing operative dates:

Alpine Resorts Legislation Amendment Act 2022—Whole Act—1 October 2022 (*Gazette S371, 26 July 2022*)

Casino and Liquor Legislation Amendment Act 2022—Whole Act (other than ss 8 and 18)—1 July 2022; s 18—25 August 2022; s 8—1 October 2022 (*Gazette S336, 30 June 2022*)

Justice Legislation Amendment Act 2022—Section 7—19 July 2022 (*Gazette S365, 19 July 2022*)

Justice Legislation Amendment (Fines Reform and Other Matters) Act 2022—Division 2 of Part 2 (other than ss 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 37A, 38, 39, 40, 41 and 42), ss 74 and 82—18 July 2022 (*Gazette S346, 5 July 2022*)

Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Amendment Act 2019—Remaining provisions—1 July 2022 (*Gazette S336, 30 June 2022*)

Road Safety Legislation Amendment Act 2022—Parts 1, 3 and 4 and ss 18 and 19—6 July 2022 (*Gazette S346, 5 July 2022*).

Bills

CASINO AND LIQUOR LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022

CHILD EMPLOYMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2022

Council's agreement

The SPEAKER (12:41): I have received messages from the Legislative Council agreeing to the following bills without amendment: the Casino and Liquor Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 and the Child Employment Amendment Bill 2022.

CASINO AND LIQUOR LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022**CHILD EMPLOYMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2022****GAMBLING AND LIQUOR LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022****SUMMARY OFFENCES AMENDMENT (NAZI SYMBOL PROHIBITION) BILL 2022***Royal assent*

The SPEAKER (12:42): I inform the house that the Governor has given royal assent to the Casino and Liquor Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, the Child Employment Amendment Bill 2022, the Gambling and Liquor Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 and the Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Bill 2022.

**BUILDING, PLANNING AND HERITAGE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT
(ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2022****MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING BILL 2022****RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES, HOUSING AND SOCIAL SERVICES REGULATION
AMENDMENT (ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2022***Appropriation*

The SPEAKER (12:42): I have received messages from the Governor recommending appropriations for the purposes of the Building, Planning and Heritage Legislation Amendment (Administration and Other Matters) Bill 2022, the Mental Health and Wellbeing Bill 2022 and the Residential Tenancies, Housing and Social Services Regulation Amendment (Administration and Other Matters) Bill 2022.

Committees**PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES***Membership*

The SPEAKER (12:42): I have received the resignations, effective from today, of Ms Blandthorn from the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, Ms Shing from the Pandemic Declaration Accountability and Oversight Committee and Ms Shing from the Integrity and Oversight Committee.

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale—Leader of the House, Minister for Planning) (12:43): I move, by leave:

- (1) That Ms Connolly be discharged from the Environment and Planning Standing Committee and that Ms Addison be a member in her place;
- (2) That Mr Maas be a member of the Integrity and Oversight Committee;
- (3) That Ms Suleyman be discharged from the Legal and Social Issues Standing Committee and that Ms Theophanous be a member in her place;
- (4) That Mr Eren be a member of the Pandemic Declaration Accountability and Oversight Committee; and
- (5) That Ms Connolly be a member of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee.

Motion agreed to.

Business of the house**STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS**

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale—Leader of the House, Minister for Planning) (12:43): I move, by leave:

That so much of standing and sessional orders be suspended to allow the following arrangements to come into effect immediately:

(1) The order of business for Tuesday, 2 August 2022, to be:

Formal business

Statements by members

Government business

Question time (at 2.00 pm)

Government business *continued*

Grievance debate (at 4.00 pm)

Government business *continued*.

(2) Condolences to be given precedence on Wednesday, 3 August 2022.

Motion agreed to.

Committees**ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE***Reporting dates*

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale—Leader of the House, Minister for Planning) (12:44): I move, by leave:

That the reporting date for the Economy and Infrastructure Standing Committee's inquiry into Victorian universities' investment in skills be extended to no later than 28 October 2022.

Motion agreed to.

Business of the house**STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS**

Ms SHEED (Shepparton) (12:45): Congratulations on your election as Speaker today. I desire to move, by leave:

That so much of standing and sessional orders be suspended to allow general business, notice of motion 37 relating to the reintroduction of non-government business into this house, to be moved immediately.

Leave refused.

Ms STALEY (Ripon) (12:45): On behalf of the Liberals and Nationals, I desire to move, by leave:

That so much of standing and sessional orders be suspended so that general business, notice of motion 37, in the name of the member for Shepparton, be debated immediately.

Leave refused.

Members**DEPUTY SPEAKER***Election*

The SPEAKER: Are there any nominations?

Mr ANDREWS (Mulgrave—Premier) (12:45): I propose that the member for St Albans, Ms Natalie Suleyman, be Deputy Speaker. I move:

That the member for St Albans be appointed Deputy Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Who seconds the motion?

Ms ALLAN (Bendigo East—Minister for Transport Infrastructure, Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop, Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery) (12:46): I am very pleased to second the motion.

The SPEAKER: Does the member for St Albans accept the nomination?

Ms SULEYMAN (St Albans) (12:46): I am honoured to accept the nomination.

The SPEAKER: Are there any further nominations? The time for nominations has closed. I declare that the member for St Albans, being the only member nominated, has been elected Deputy Speaker.

Members applauded.

Mr ANDREWS (Mulgrave—Premier) (12:47): Speaker, if I might make some brief remarks in congratulating the Deputy Speaker on her elevation to that high office, the member for St Albans is a proud advocate and champion on behalf of Melbourne's western suburbs, someone who has served this Parliament with great distinction since arriving here in 2014. She is unique in many respects—not least of which, I am reliably informed, is being the very first person of Cypriot Turkish heritage to be elected to any Parliament in our nation—and someone who is very passionate and very effective when it comes to advocating on behalf of the diverse communities that make up Melbourne and Victoria and particularly Melbourne's west. She is a great champion for multiculturalism, for equality, for inclusion and for economic and educational opportunities. She will serve this place with great distinction, and I offer her, on behalf of the parliamentary Labor Party, our wholehearted congratulations on her elevation to such high office.

Ms STALEY (Ripon) (12:48): On behalf of the Liberals and Nationals, I also offer our congratulations to the new Deputy Speaker. We look forward to working with her in the way we worked previously with you, Speaker, before you were elevated to your high office, and we congratulate her on assuming that position.

ACTING SPEAKERS

The SPEAKER (12:48): Under standing order 20 I have tabled my warrant appointing the following members to preside as acting speakers: Gary Blackwood, Josh Bull, Sarah Connolly, Christine Couzens, Jordan Crugnale, Paul Edbrooke, Bronwyn Halfpenny, Tim McCurdy, Frank McGuire, David Morris, Pauline Richards, Tim Richardson, Jackson Taylor and Vicki Ward.

Business of the house**PROGRAM**

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale—Leader of the House, Minister for Planning) (12:49): 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 5.00 pm on Thursday, 4 August 2022:

Building, Planning and Heritage Legislation Amendment (Administration and Other Matters) Bill 2022

Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill 2022

Mental Health and Wellbeing Bill 2022

Victorian Energy Efficiency Target Amendment Bill 2022.

Speaker, can I begin my remarks by congratulating you on your appointment to this role. Your commitment, as the Premier indicated, to your community of Bendigo and to the broader state of Victoria and your passion for issues such as students of all abilities have stood you in good stead. I know that your personal journey to this role has been a long one, and I congratulate you and your family. I actually remember first meeting your now husband when I was campaigning one day in Merlynston. I knew then—I think you yourself said how chuffed he is about your role now—how chuffed he was about your achievements along the way, so congratulations to you, your family and your community of Bendigo.

Can I also thank the Premier and the caucus for the privilege of being able to serve as Leader of the House and pay tribute to my good friend and colleague the Deputy Premier, the member for Bendigo East. The Deputy Premier has certainly left some big shoes to fill over the next four weeks, but I thank her as well for her help and support over the winter break. I look forward to working alongside the Manager of Opposition Business and my crossbench colleagues as we deliver four great last weeks of debate in this Parliament.

Can I also thank the Manager of Opposition Business and the crossbench for their support for the condolence motion tomorrow for the late Jane Garrett, a former member of this house, a member of the other place and a former minister in this government. When the late Jane Garrett was the member for Brunswick my electorate of Pascoe Vale bordered her electorate, and I know right across our shared communities of the inner north of Melbourne people thought very highly of Jane and her commitment to working people in our communities and also across this state. I certainly pass on my condolences to her family.

In presenting the government business program I commend each of the bills to the house for debate and consideration this week. With the Mental Health and Wellbeing Bill 2022 we see the next steps in the delivery of the government's commitment to the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System. We all remember the historic sitting of the Parliament at the historic exhibition building last year, and this bill certainly fulfils the next steps in the government's important agenda in relation to mental health. As we have all indicated in this chamber many a time over the journey and the conversation around these issues, everyone is touched by good mental health and poor mental health, and we all have a commitment to do better. This bill is part of that.

We will also debate the Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, creating a new offence of engaging in conduct that is grossly offensive to community standards of acceptable conduct. The importance of this reform was highlighted in the aftermath of the Eastern Freeway tragedy where four officers of Victoria Police, sadly, lost their lives and we saw the very distressing conduct of an individual during that tragedy.

We will also debate the Victorian Energy Efficiency Target Amendment Bill 2022, which will improve the Victorian energy upgrades program, continuing to reinforce our government as a leader in taking strong action on climate change while saving Victorian households and businesses money.

And one close to me, the Building, Planning and Heritage Legislation Amendment (Administration and Other Matters) Bill 2022, makes a series of legislative amendments that will implement important reforms and important consumer protections, reshaping the regulatory landscape in Victoria.

I look forward to the government business program being supported across the house and us being able to move forward together and debate these important issues and of course consider the important condolence motion tomorrow for the late Jane Garrett. I commend the business program.

Ms STALEY (Ripon) (12:53): Speaker, I also begin by congratulating you on your election as Speaker. I do hope that there is one prefix that you will continue to allow us to use, and that is that of 'honourable Speaker'—perhaps one that we do not use enough these days. I do congratulate you on

your election. I also thank the previous Speaker, the member for Bundoora, with whom I had I believe an excellent working relationship and who I hold in high regard.

While I am on congratulations I also welcome the new Leader of the House to her role. So far we have made a start, and I hope we can continue in a collegiate fashion. With that of course we have the elevation of the previous Leader of the House to Deputy Premier, and I congratulate her on achieving that high honour of Deputy Premier of Victoria.

This week we have a structure to the week that is different to what would normally be expected from the standing orders. We have moved the condolence to tomorrow, which I understand will take the whole of tomorrow, for Jane Garrett, and as such we have a very truncated time for debate. Through what we have left we will be doing four bills, and we on this side of the house look forward to the debates on those four bills.

I am not going to speak much more, and we will in fact not be opposing the government business program this week, because we do understand that the time for debate is truncated. We also understand that we have had grievances, which would have been tomorrow, moved to today. We appreciate that, and as a result we will not be putting up all our speakers and we believe this debate can be brought to a close.

Ms SHEED (Shepparton) (12:55): I would like to just make a brief contribution on the issue of the government business program. There are a number of important bills today. I do not have the Mental Health and Wellbeing Bill 2022 in front of me, but it is huge. I think that while we all respect the fact that there is a condolence motion tomorrow, and that must happen, it does bring to mind, though, the issue of really important bills simply going to a guillotine on a Thursday night and not enough time being provided throughout the course of a week in some circumstances for bills to be debated.

I think it is fair to say that on this side of the house we respect the government business program, but I would like to just note that on this side of the house we do not have a non-government business program. That is a real disappointment, and it is an issue that I have tried to raise on a number of occasions. Leave is constantly refused for me to be able to have that matter raised and debated. We now have an e-petition before this house seeking that a non-government business program be reintroduced into this house of Parliament. I am sure that the people of Victoria will come out and support that e-petition because if this house will not hear it, the people of Victoria will have their say about whether they think people on the opposition benches and on the crossbenches should be able to have some say for even a limited time on what the non-government business is to enable representatives to truly represent their electorates.

We just saw today the Leader of the National Party trying to introduce a bill and being shut down—not even given leave to read it a first time. If we had a non-government business program, that would have been debated, as would my motion where I seek leave to have a motion debated. These are all denied to us constantly in this place, and as we come to the end of the 59th Parliament I urge everyone in this place—and the government in particular—to consider the sorts of reforms that are needed in this place for the efficient running of the house and for the proper operation of democracy in this house. It happens in the other place, but it does not happen in here.

In concluding speaking on this issue, I just cannot stress enough how important these issues are, because they are fundamental to democracy, and this is the only house in the Westminster system in Australia that does not give those on this side of the house an opportunity to raise matters by having a non-government business program.

Motion agreed to.

Members statements**STEVE GIBBONS**

Ms ALLAN (Bendigo East—Minister for Transport Infrastructure, Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop, Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery) (12:59): I rise today to pay tribute to the life of Steve Gibbons. Steve lived his life true to his strong labour movement values, firstly as a unionist and then as the federal member for Bendigo from 1998 until his retirement in 2013. Steve was a fighter for working people. Indeed Steve's 1998 campaign slogan 'Fighting for Bendigo' epitomised his approach to his role as Bendigo's representative in Canberra. Steve did not only take up the fight, he won many battles that saved local jobs. He fought for the printing industry in Maryborough and the retention of Telstra jobs in Bendigo and convinced the then Liberal government to keep the Fortuna defence mapping facility in Bendigo. In particular Steve was a champion for ADI, now Thales, and this included the Bushmaster vehicle. Today a legacy of Steve's work is the deployment of Bushmasters to Ukraine at the direct request of the Ukrainian President.

Physical reminders of Steve's legacy are from the time he fought for and won the duplication of the Calder Highway to Bendigo—an epic battle that saw Steve run a relentless campaign against the Liberal government, another one he won for Bendigo, and we have now have a modern, safe duplicated highway between Bendigo and Melbourne—and our magnificent Ulumbarra Theatre, which simply could not have been built without the substantial funding Steve secured from the then Gillard government.

My deepest sympathy to Steve's wife, Diane, and the wider Gibbons family at this sad time. Vale, Steve Gibbons—a true Labor fighter for Bendigo.

LYNDOCH LIVING

Ms BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (13:00): Lyndoch Living is in crisis. The aged care provider has had more than 200 staff leave over the past couple of years amid claims of bullying and intimidation from upper management that has created a toxic workplace. These are allegations I believe. Lyndoch Living has failed numerous safety standards in three consecutive commission audits. The latest audit found non-compliance in areas including falls, choking and unexplained weight loss. There have been more than 40 complaints made to the commission about Lyndoch Living over the past couple of years. Our community has lost faith in the Lyndoch Living board, with more than 100 applications for memberships denied last year with no explanation. I have had many former staff, family members of residents and residents themselves, healthcare workers and other constituents raise these issues with me.

Despite the damning and concerning issues that have been consistently raised, Lyndoch Living CEO Doreen Power's subterfuge and arrogance remains on display for all to see. I believe Ms Power is the source of many of these problems, especially the toxic workplace environment. Her position as CEO is no longer tenable. She must resign, and if she will not resign, the board must remove her. I fear residents' wellbeing is now at risk, through no fault of the dedicated and brilliant staff but because of the environment created by Ms Power. The Warrnambool community wants action to ensure Lyndoch Living thrives. The only way to change the toxic workplace culture is to remove the source.

WILLIAMSTOWN MARITIME PRECINCT

Ms HORNE (Williamstown—Minister for Ports and Freight, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, Minister for Local Government, Minister for Suburban Development) (13:02): I rise to update the house on a comprehensive plan about the future of Williamstown's vibrant maritime precinct that is underway with support from the Andrews Labor government. The Williamstown local port area plan will set out priorities for future investment that will help the port continue to be a jewel in the crown for its community and deliver economic and environmental outcomes. This will include ways to address issues and challenges in the area, including access channel sedimentation, the condition of the Seaworks piers and jetty and provision for large vessels. Parks

Victoria will soon seek stakeholder and community ideas on the current facilities and future activities they would like to see at Williamstown's maritime precinct. This early input will help develop a plan that best meets the needs of the existing and future users of the port.

Williamstown is one of the five priority areas receiving a local port area plan through the Victorian government's Sustainable Local Ports Framework committed to in last year's budget. This local port area plan builds on the recently finalised *Williamstown Maritime Precinct Framework* and the Williamstown wave surge study—two complementary reports that provide a clear direction on improving public spaces and enhancing the local economy, with a focus on the area's maritime history. I would like to thank the Port of Williamstown Action Group, Seaworks and the tireless Geoff Dougall for their continued advocacy in this space.

CR TONY DRISCOLL

Ms KEALY (Lowan) (13:03): I would like to acknowledge the sad passing of Northern Grampians Shire Council mayor and councillor Tony Driscoll. Tony's passing is a huge loss for our region. His passionate advocacy and contributions over his lifetime will leave an indelible mark on our community for many, many years to come. I extend my heartfelt condolences to Cr Driscoll's wife, Annette, and his family, friends and colleagues at Northern Grampians Shire Council. Vale, Tony Driscoll.

GLENELG SHIRE COUNCIL RATES

Ms KEALY: Ratepayers in the Glenelg shire are nervously awaiting their rates notices for the upcoming year after a shift from a rebate system to a differential system was adopted, with significant rate rises expected. It is disappointing that the council did not apply a transition period to roll into the new differential system or apply a 0.55 differential rate to primary producers that would deliver a fairer deal for ratepayers in the region. I urge the Minister for Local Government to support my calls for the Essential Services Commission to urgently review the validity of Glenelg Shire Council's decision to include the rebate value when determining the capped average rate for the 2021–22 year, and, given the increase in net rate revenue is well above 1.75 per cent, to ensure that the net rate revenue is compliant with the Fair Go Rates system. If it is compliant, it is clear that Labor's so-called Fair Go Rates system is a catastrophic misnomer. Labor must get on with implementing recommendations of the Local Government Rating System Review or propose a significant reform to Victoria's rating system that would finally deliver a true fair go for country ratepayers.

GLENELG HIGHWAY, HAMILTON

Ms KEALY: The Glenelg Highway near Waltanna Farms near Hamilton is in a disgraceful state. I urge the government to urgently fund and repair this section of road.

MORE TREES FOR A COOLER, GREENER WEST

Mr CARROLL (Niddrie—Minister for Public Transport, Minister for Roads and Road Safety, Minister for Industry Support and Recovery, Minister for Business Precincts) (13:05): Deputy Speaker, congratulations on your elevation to the role. On Sunday I joined committed environmental custodians in my local community at Canning Reserve, Avondale Heights, to celebrate National Tree Day. National Tree Day is all about inspiring, educating and recruiting future custodians for this one planet we have.

I joined keen volunteers who braved the freezing cold and the freezing wind to plant 3000 trees at Canning Reserve, Avondale Heights. Most importantly we are not stopping there, because we are planning to do 500 000 trees across our western suburbs as part of a \$5 million commitment from the Andrews government for the cooler, greener west initiative. Why are we doing this in Melbourne's west, you may ask. Well, Melbourne's west has far less tree canopy cover than the east and the south-east. Because of this, the western suburbs experience the greatest urban heat island across metropolitan Melbourne. With our initiative and our \$5 million investment we are going to change that, and one of the best methods is what we did on Sunday with the local community—planting more trees.

I want to thank Planet Ark. I want to thank the Rotarians from Keilor East and Flemington. I want to thank the mayor of Moonee Valley. I also want to thank the member for Essendon for coming and also the Rotarians that supplied all the hungry planters with all the sausages and the barbecue that were so well deserved by everyone. The local community members came out last Sunday and gave their time, and I am truly grateful for their planting of trees for future generations.

GOVERNMENT INTEGRITY

Mr R SMITH (Warrandyte) (13:06): I would like to draw the house's attention to another in a number of investigations currently being undertaken by the Victorian Ombudsman into this government. The Victorian Ombudsman's investigation into the politicisation of the Victorian public service (VPS) should be alarming to every Victorian. This investigation speaks to the heart of the culture of corruption and nepotism which this government has become known for and highlights the cheapening of core public service functions in favour of centralised power and control.

The Victorian public service should be staffed by public servants who give government frank and fearless advice and they should earn promotion up the bureaucratic tree because of merit. Importantly their focus should be on serving the Victorian people. Increasingly through this government's term this well-observed practice has been eroded. Long-term and very capable members of the VPS are being pushed aside for promotion in lieu of political appointees. Decisions have been taken away from the experienced in various departments, bypassing ministers, only to have those decisions made almost exclusively from the Premier's private office. If I can quote an *Age* article regarding the so-called red wedding public service purge of the Department of Justice and Community Safety:

The result was a bureaucracy less capable and willing to offer fearless and frank advice ...

This produced a \$4 million spike in redundancy payments—over \$4 million of unneeded redundancies funded by the taxpayer just so Labor mates could have jobs which other decent public servants had earned. If I could speak to any former or current VPS staff listening, we on this side of the house value you and the work that you do, and when there is a change of government— (*Time expired*)

NAIDOC WEEK

Ms RICHARDS (Cranbourne) (13:08): Deputy Speaker, congratulations on your elevation and your role.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank Cranbourne Primary School for inviting me to their NAIDOC Week welcome to country and smoking ceremony recently. The students and the school community came together to observe a traditional welcome to country and smoking ceremony that was performed beautifully by father-and-son team Josh and Danny from the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation. As always it was wonderful to see the way Marnebek School and Cranbourne Primary are working together, and this was particularly evident at this moving event, with the brilliant school captains both performing moving renditions of the acknowledgement to country and the voices of Marnebek's gifted musicians an absolute highlight.

The event taught students of the significance and meaning of the smoking ceremony as a traditional Aboriginal custom and the importance of NAIDOC Week as a celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' history, culture and achievements. NAIDOC Week is always a great opportunity for us to amplify and champion the contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our communities and in this context to share the knowledge with young people. Students learned of the history behind the theme 'Get up! Stand up! Show up!' and how it pays respect to the long and proud history of resistance, activism and advocacy led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. I would also like to acknowledge that Cranbourne always was and always will be on the land of the Boon Wurrung people and say how proud I was to be with principal Lachlan Yeates, the students and the school community and thank them for their hospitality.

PAUL ALGIE

Mr BATTIN (Gembrook) (13:09): Today I rise with a story that many would have heard about a person, Sergeant Paul ‘Blue Green’ Algie, who lost his life just recently parachuting down in Morwell. Paul Algie, police number 32761—many would have heard me talk about the importance of that number as a Victorian police officer. There was none better than Paul Algie. He was a member at Dandenong. I know he ended up in prosecutions at Frankston. He was 45 years young, just 45 years old, when he lost his life. He was doing what he loved. He was out there. He loved his scuba diving. He loved parachuting. He literally just loved life. He was a person that was as genuine as you would ever find in Victoria Police.

I worked with Paul for four years. Doing night shift with Paul was an experience that everybody will always talk about. If you hopped in the van with Paul, it generally started with, ‘Good evening, Paul’, and your next words were, ‘See you later, mate. I hope you had a good night’. Paul would fill in the entire conversation for 8 hours, starting with how important his family was, going through the adventures he had had during that week and finishing up with some philosophy that you had to learn before you got back to the next night shift with Paul. He was an amazing person, an amazing police officer and an amazing asset to Victoria. Paul ‘Blue Green’ Algie, 32761—we will miss you, mate.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr FREGON (Mount Waverley) (13:11): Deputy Speaker, I congratulate you on your elevation to the lofty heights.

I rise today with a bit of pride to acknowledge the first sitting week of the Albanese Labor government up in Canberra, and what a joy it was to see a Labor government on the right side of the bench. I was fortunate enough to be there for the inaugural speech of our new Victorian Labor senator Jana Stewart, and what a speech it was. As the youngest First Nation woman elected to federal Parliament, there is no denying the significance her seat in the Senate chamber holds. Senator Stewart’s inaugural speech struck at the core of what it means to be a Labor person. Whether it is committing to a voice to Parliament, treaty, truth telling, supporting our country’s most vulnerable people or improving our present for the next generation and future, Labor governments deliver on that vision.

I would also like to extend my respect to our newly elected local members: the member for Chisholm, Carina Garland, and the member for Higgins, Michelle Ananda-Rajah. Congratulations to both these phenomenal leaders and women, who I have no doubt will deliver for our east.

ARCHIE ROACH

Mr FREGON: On another matter, I want to commemorate the life of Archie Roach. Uncle Archie Roach was an artist, but he was a man who told us his truth, and that truth is our truth. I had the honour of seeing him only last year at the Share the Spirit festival. While he was not well, he really wanted to make sure that he performed for all of his fans. Vale, Archie Roach.

LAKE KNOX

Mr WAKELING (Ferntree Gully) (13:12): I wish to again raise the concerns of Knox residents about this government’s forging ahead with the demolition of Lake Knox at the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning site in Knoxfield. This is being done against the wishes of Knox residents and against the wishes of local environment groups. This government is not listening to the concerns of local residents, this government is not willing to engage with the local community on this important issue and this government is still forging ahead with the demolition of this lake. They are now proceeding to have this approved by Knox council. Again I call on the government to pull the application, to work with the local community and to ensure that local residents and local environment groups are heard on this important issue. The Liberal Party has committed that it will save the lake. The Liberal Party has committed that it will work with the local environment groups and the local community to find a solution to ensure that this lake can be retained.

This government is unwilling to listen. This government is unwilling to work with local residents. This government is not willing to listen to local environment groups and is forging ahead with the demolition of this lake. I do not know what else this government needs to do in terms of listening to this local community. They are constantly rejecting the views of local residents, and I call again on this government to listen to the concerns of the Knox community.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Ms THEOPHANOUS (Northcote) (13:14): Recently I was immensely proud to welcome the Premier to the electorate of Northcote, where we announced a once-in-a-generation reform to Victoria's kinder and childcare system. At Alfred Nuttall kindergarten in Fairfield we gathered to outline the details of this transformational policy, which will deliver free kinder to every Victorian three- and four-year-old from 2023. As well as this we are introducing a universal pre-prep year, which will see our four-year-olds having access to 30 hours of play-based learning before they start school; we are opening 50 new low-cost government-run childcare centres; and we are attracting and retaining highly skilled educators. My daughters are three and four and attend a local kinder in Northcote. They absolutely adore their teachers and friends, and every day their little minds are exploding with new concepts and skills. Our Labor government sees the value of investing in early education, and these reforms are elevating it to a whole new level.

Of course this reform is not only about giving our kids the best start in life, this is truly groundbreaking economic reform as well. Childcare fees take a huge chunk out of household budgets, in some cases up to 25 per cent. Our reforms will save families up to \$2500 per child per year, but critically they mean more parents are able to make the choice to go back to work after having a child. Parents should not be worse off after childcare costs are weighed up against extra wages, and we know that it is women who feel this impact most acutely. If we are serious about gender equality in our state, we need to make sure women have economic power and autonomy.

BAIRNSDALE SECONDARY COLLEGE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Mr T BULL (Gippsland East) (13:15): Deputy Speaker, congratulations on your elevation to your high office.

Bairnsdale Secondary College has for several years been lobbying for a school crossing on McKean Street. In 2019 there were traffic surveys undertaken that I believe met the measures that have been set to qualify for a school crossing. School numbers have increased since then. Earlier this year we had a student struck by a vehicle in the vicinity of where that school crossing should go. There is an application that has been pending for a little while with the TAC through the local government grants program. I urge the minister to pursue this and ensure that it is approved—this is critical for the safety of the students at that school—and also to ensure that funding is provided for a school crossing supervisor, because the crossing without a supervisor will not have the required impact.

GIPPSLAND EAST ELECTORATE ROADS

Mr T BULL: I also want to talk for a few short moments again about the parlous state of our roads and the need for repairs to be undertaken that are more permanent than this little hotchpotch we see of filling in potholes willy-nilly that return to potholes again. The best example of this is on Paynesville Road, just adjacent to the 14th fairway on the golf course actually. It has been filled in six times. Cars are still hitting it. This causes thousands of dollars worth of damage. We need more permanent repairs for our road problems.

VANASSA GERDES

Mr MAAS (Narre Warren South) (13:17): I rise today to speak on the very sad and recent passing of Hampton Park resident Vanassa Gerdes. Vanassa was heavily involved in our community through the Hampton Park Progress Association. She always advocated for the community, delivered for those in need and wanted to make sure that Hampton Park became an even better place to live, work and

raise a family. She was also instrumental in the Hampton Park Networking Group, which connects our local businesses together.

From the 4½ years that I knew Vanassa I can say with great certainty that she was a powerful force. Some would go further and say she was not backward in coming forward. Indeed I always knew where she stood on an issue. But Vanassa was always welcoming and passionate. She would advocate on issues such as disability access, school education, pandemic support, local amenity and mental health and wellbeing. She always wanted what was best for Hampton Park. Vanassa was instrumental in paving the way for a new pavilion at Robert Booth Reserve to be delivered, and her involvement in Anzac Day, Remembrance Day and Australia Day ceremonies and other local events will always be remembered—events which she ran with precision, spirit and great pride.

Vanassa had been in remission from cancer for some eight years but had been quite unwell for the last few. My deepest sympathies go to Vanassa's husband, Jason; her children, David and Stephanie; family and friends; and all those affected by her passing. Vale, Vanassa Gerdes.

CHAPEL STREET REVITALISATION

Mr HIBBINS (Pahran) (13:19): I want to thank members of the Pahran community who attended my round table to share ideas on how best to revive Chapel Street. Chapel Street is the social and economic heart of our community. It is a Victorian icon, and constituents have made it clear to me that reviving Chapel Street is one of the top priorities for our local community. There is no doubt the impact of the last few years has been really tough on local traders, but there is also the potential to recover better than ever. I am really heartened by the enthusiasm in our community for a thriving Chapel Street and reinvigorating our much-loved main street. There is some real strength in the diversity of our area and some real opportunities with the creative industries, with the potential of bringing back the Chapel Street Festival and with pop-up shops. This will require some vision and leadership from the state government, council, traders and landlords coming to the table and even potentially new forms of governance and funding to bring it all together.

ST KILDA HEBREW CONGREGATION

Mr HIBBINS: I attended the St Kilda Hebrew congregation multifaith and multicultural Shabbat and Kaddish. I was really impressed by the engagement with many members of various multicultural and faith groups and the strong message of unity by Rabbi Glasman, as well as what must be one of the best choirs going round in the city. Thanks to executive director, David Marlow, for the invitation and members of the congregation who I was able to have a chat with.

MORDIALLOC ELECTORATE EMERGENCY SERVICES

Mr RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) (13:20): It was a privilege to visit Keysborough CFA recently and join volunteer members of the Springvale and Keysborough CFA brigades—wonderful, dedicated volunteers led by Keysborough CFA captain, Paul Townsend, and Springvale CFA captain, Daniel Petrovic—to hear about the incredible service that they provide to not only the City of Greater Dandenong region but also outside their areas in times of need.

It is fitting to pay tribute to our CFA at this time because it is nearly four years to the day that we celebrated the completion of the Edithvale CFA station redevelopment. Of course it was John Hennessy who gave his land next door on a long-term lease—and then gave up his house—to secure the future of the Edithvale CFA. The four-bay fire station led by volunteers has an innovative business hub and an emergency medical response vehicle. The professionalism there is outstanding. John is no longer with us, but his dedication to this project and his legacy will live on forever through those volunteers and the values of our local firefighters in the City of Kingston and particularly at the Edithvale CFA brigade. I want to give a big shout-out to Captain Graham Fountain, who is an outstanding leader in our community across a number of different areas but whose leadership at the CFA is really important. It goes with all of our work to support volunteer emergency services—whether it is the redevelopment of

the Chelsea SES, the Mentone Life Saving Club, the Edithvale Life Saving Club or the Aspendale Life Saving Club, we are supporting our emergency services for the future.

HAMPTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (13:21): It is time to put children first and invest fairly. An elected Liberal government will provide \$7.7 million to Hampton Primary School to develop a master plan and build brand new multipurpose facilities. The facilities will include an indoor sports area with a netball court, specialist teaching rooms, change rooms and a canteen. Labor has forgotten my community. The Liberal Party is a champion of Brighton.

BRIGHTON ELECTORATE CHILDCARE CENTRES

Mr NEWBURY: Investing in our kids sets them up for life. An elected Liberal government will provide \$5 million to three Port Phillip childcare centres that need refurbishment. Council is being forced to close three centres, including one in my Elwood community. The centres are aged and need significant upgrades, which council cannot afford. The Liberal commitment will save the three local childcare centres.

BLUFF ROAD, HAMPTON, SAFETY

Mr NEWBURY: The Hampton community is deeply concerned about the safety of children. Following a serious incident, parents and educators at the Bambini childcare centre on Bluff Road have put together a petition to voice their safety concerns. The petition has already gained almost 400 signatures. Safety near the centre is a serious concern, and we cannot afford to see another accident. Labor must stop ignoring Hampton.

BRIGHTON ELECTORATE CRIME

Mr NEWBURY: The streets across Brighton, Elwood and Hampton are regularly targeted by thieves who break into cars. Over the weekend a Brighton family was hit not just on Saturday but thieves returned on Sunday and broke into a second car owned by the family. Police privately report car theft being a big part of their local work. Labor cannot keep ignoring my community.

BIG HOUSING BUILD

Mr KENNEDY (Hawthorn) (13:23): Deputy Speaker, I congratulate you on your well-earned new responsibility.

Last Wednesday I was pleased to meet the Minister for Housing at Bills Street in Hawthorn, where we took in the progress of the 206 social and affordable housing units being built there, which will no doubt improve the lives of many Victorians. It was a great experience to see this part of the Andrews government's Big Housing Build, a project which is on track to deliver 16 000 new affordable homes to Victorians, changing their lives by providing them with secure and quality homes. They can build upon this foundation to create a life that they value and pursue their goals. We have just hit the halfway milestone in this landmark policy: 6000 new homes have already been built or are underway and 1400 households are either living in or preparing to move into their new homes. The importance of this project cannot be understated, as the assurance of having a secure roof over your head is something that every human being should have, and the Big Housing Build will deliver this assurance to tens of thousands of Victorians.

ELTHAM WILDCATS BASKETBALL CLUB

Ms WARD (Eltham) (13:24): Congratulations, Deputy Speaker.

The Eltham Wildcats and Keilor Thunder had their Pride round in July, which was not only great basketball but a wonderful celebration of our important rainbow community. Thank you to NBL1 player Korinne Campbell, who spoke about the importance of inclusivity in sport as well as acknowledging and celebrating the experiences of the Victorian LGBTIQ community. I also want to

extend my thanks to the Eltham Wildcats, especially CEO Connor Amey-Matthews and wellbeing coordinator Sophie Foote, for their leadership and commitment to equality in sport not only in our community but beyond.

WOODRIDGE PRE-SCHOOL

Ms WARD: Congratulations to Woodridge Pre-school for the grand opening during NAIDOC celebrations of their beautiful new Indigenous wall mural and garden created by local Yorta Yorta and Wurundjeri woman Simone Thomson and Woodridge children. The children have worked over two years with Simone to determine the focus of their artwork and help paint the stones to create the rainbow creator in their garden. Thank you, Woodridge, for your leadership in engaging with Kulin nations people to help maintain and teach Indigenous knowledge and history.

DIAMOND CREEK FOOTBALL AND NETBALL CLUB

Ms WARD: A massive congratulations to the Diamond Creek Football and Netball Club for their fantastic Ladies Day lunch last month. I want to say a special thanks to Denise Moloney and the team for organising such an amazing afternoon and to our emergency comedians, who came to support the club. The Diamond Creek Football and Netball Club is an important fixture of our community, providing teamwork and leadership skills to youth in our area. This Ladies Day was an important event to celebrate the club's successes and raise money to support events and games in the future.

LIONS CLUB OF ELTHAM

Ms WARD: Congratulations to the Lions Club of Eltham on their annual changeover dinner. This fantastic Lions Club is made up of passionate community members who are dedicated to helping the community thrive, with a focus on philanthropy. My thanks to president Peter Talbot for his and the Eltham Lions' hard work for the community and this wonderful event, providing an opportunity for members of our community to engage with one another and build important relationships, which form the heart and soul of our community.

BAYSWATER ELECTORATE EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr TAYLOR (Bayswater) (13:26): I would not be where I am today without the great gift of public education that I received when growing up. It is the great leveller in our society, and I am proud that the state Labor government have made our state the best in the nation when it comes to giving kids and students the best start in life, with record investment into education. Locally I make no apologies for education being one of my biggest priorities, and since being elected in 2018 we have gotten so much done.

Here are a few examples: \$11.2 million for Wantirna College, \$8.1 million for Fairhills High, new ovals and outdoor spaces at Boronia Heights Primary and The Basin Primary, \$4.3 million for Boronia West Primary, a new learning hub for Bayswater Primary, \$9.2 million for Templeton Primary, \$1.56 million for Our Lady of Lourdes Primary, \$1.65 million for St Bernadette's Primary, new playgrounds at Bayswater West Primary and The Basin Primary, \$12.43 million for Bayswater Secondary, over \$8 million for Heathmont College, new toilet facilities at Regency Park Primary and Bayswater West Primary, major upgrades at Eastern Ranges School, major works at Bayswater South Primary, a new running track at Boronia K-12, accessibility upgrades at Wantirna Primary, a new outdoor space at Fairhills Primary, a minor upgrade at Knox Central Primary—and much, much more. In total now there has been over \$70 million in local school upgrades to make sure kids learn in the very best facilities they deserve.

We are also putting mental health workers into every single government and low-fee non-gov primary school. We not only saved TAFE from the cuts of the last lot, we have reimagined it now with over 60 free TAFE courses to make sure people get the skills they need for the jobs they want. And do not forget our massive reform to early years education, with free kinder starting next year and three-year-old kinder already being delivered. Good governments value education and invest in it because it is

the right thing to do. There is so much more work to do, and I look forward to continuing to deliver for my community and making sure kids get the very best start in life.

KURUNJANG SECONDARY COLLEGE

Mr McGHIE (Melton) (13:27): Congratulations, Deputy Speaker. Kurunjang Secondary College has been awarded the inaugural Hands on Learning community projects award. The college received this exceptional acknowledgement at the Hands on Learning conference last month. From 130 Hands on Learning partner schools covering most of Australia, Kurunjang Secondary College has been honoured with this outstanding achievement.

The Hands on Learning program works to facilitate practical, hands-on learning opportunities in schools. The program focuses on building a sense of wellbeing and involvement by introducing opportunities for students to find their personal strengths, gain experience and succeed. The program covers many partner schools and regional networks. The Andrews Labor government has funded this program at the school for five years. Only three Hands on Learning partner schools were offered special recognition. Kurunjang Secondary College was honoured with receiving the very first Sowinski Community Projects Award. This is exclusively offered to schools that supply and issue students with the best Hands on Learning program in Australia, with an emphasis on providing community projects that assist the community. They have been awarded with this tremendous honour, a reflection of the devotion of the students to give back to their community and offer their assistance to their local area.

I want to congratulate the principal of Kurunjang Secondary, John Mitsinikos, and the Hands on Learning staff, Rebecca Morrith and Rohan Butler. I give special recognition and congratulations to the hardworking, persistent and dedicated Hands on Learning students. I want to acknowledge and thank Sarah McPartland, my work experience student from Melton Christian College, for writing this statement.

Bills

JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (POLICE AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2022

Statement of compatibility

Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe—Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Racing) (13:30): Deputy Speaker, I congratulate you on your new role. In accordance with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 I table a statement of compatibility in relation to the Justice Legislation Amendment (Police and Other Matters) Bill 2022.

Opening paragraphs

In accordance with section 28 of the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*, (the Charter), I make this Statement of Compatibility with respect to the Justice Legislation Amendment (Police and Other Matters) Bill 2022.

In my opinion, the Justice Legislation Amendment (Police and Other Matters) Bill 2022, as introduced to the Legislative Assembly, is compatible with human rights as set out in the Charter. I base my opinion on the reasons outlined in this statement.

Overview

The Bill makes amendments to a range of Acts, including to the:

1. *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*
2. *Victoria Police Act 2013*
3. *Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004*.

Human Rights Issues

The Bill engages the following human rights under the Charter:

- the right to freedom of movement (section 12)

- the right to privacy and reputation (section 13)
- the right to freedom of expression (section 15)
- the right to peaceful assembly and freedom of association (section 16)
- cultural rights (section 19)
- the right to a fair hearing (section 24).

For the reasons outlined below, I am of the view that the Bill is compatible with each of these human rights.

The right to freedom of movement

Section 12 of the Charter provides that every person lawfully within Victoria has the right to move freely within Victoria, to enter and leave Victoria, and choose where to live in Victoria. The right extends, generally, to movement without unnecessary impediment throughout the state, and a right of access to places and services used by members of the public. The right is directed at restrictions that fall short of physical detention (restrictions amounting to physical detention fall within the right to liberty, protected under section 21 of the Charter).

Security powers on police premises

Clauses 10, 12, 14 and 15 of the Bill amend the Victoria Police Act to establish new powers to assist Victoria Police to maintain the security of police premises. Clause 10 of the Bill defines police premises as any premises occupied or used by Victoria Police, on a permanent or temporary basis, for any purpose related to the functions, duties, or powers of Victoria Police. The definition provides an inclusive list of police premises, and explicitly excludes PSO pods.

New section 59A authorises police officers and PSOs to request that a person on or in the vicinity of police premises provide their reason for being there. If the person provides a reason that the police officer or PSO considers is not a legitimate reason, the police officer or PSO may request that a person provide their name and address. A police officer or PSO may direct a person to leave or not enter premises if they believe on reasonable grounds that the person does not have a legitimate reason for being on or in the vicinity of police premises, and the direction is necessary to preserve the peace or maintain the security of police premises. This may include a direction not to return to police premises for a period of up to 7 days without the permission of a police officer or PSO, unless the person has a legitimate reason to return, or it is not practicable to first request permission.

New section 59B further authorises a police officer or PSO to remove a person from the premises if they: fail to comply with a direction to leave the premises; obstruct an entry to or exit from, or access to the premises; or if the police officer or PSO believes on reasonable grounds that the person has committed an offence.

These powers may limit the right to freedom of movement to the extent that they interfere with the right to access places that members of the public ordinarily have access to, such as a police station. However, the exercise of these powers in relation to places where members of the public do not ordinarily have access, such as a private office building or carpark occupied by Victoria Police, will be beyond the scope of the right. In my view, any limit of this right is reasonable, necessary, justified and proportionate in all the circumstances. The purpose of these powers is to protect the security of police premises. Victoria Police premises may present security risks due to the sensitive information held at the premises and the nature of work undertaken by Victoria Police. There have been numerous security incidents at a number of police premises over the past four years, including antagonistic persons attending police premises in the absence of a legitimate reason and harassing police officers and other employees. Exchanges with police officers, photographs of them or their vehicles are frequently uploaded onto social media. This creates a risk for police employees seeking to peacefully enter and leave police premises. New sections 59A and 59B will enable Victoria Police to better respond to and mitigate risks to safety and privacy for police members, other employees and community members in attendance at police premises.

The limitations new sections 59A and 59B place on the right to freedom of movement are proportionate to the identified risks to safety and security at police premises, and include appropriate exceptions. For example, a police officer or PSO may direct a person not to return to police premises for a period of up to 7 days, however the person is not prevented from returning to the premises during that time for a legitimate purpose, for example to report a crime or comply with a court order or conditions of their bail.

New section 59A distinguishes between police premises and the surrounding area, as a person may not be directed to refrain from returning to the vicinity of police premises. Section 59A ensures police officers and PSOs can respond to any immediate security risks in the vicinity, while recognising that individuals may need to attend the surrounding area for purposes unrelated to policing once the immediate risk has been addressed.

In my opinion, any limitation on the right to movement occasioned by these amendments are reasonable and proportionate in all the circumstances, and therefore compatible with the right to freedom of movement under the Charter.

The right to privacy and reputation

Section 13(a) of the Charter provides that a person has the right not to have their privacy, family, home or correspondence unlawfully or arbitrarily interfered with. Section 13(b) states that a person has the right not to have their reputation unlawfully attacked. A number of amendments in the Bill may engage this right.

An interference with the right to privacy and reputation is justified if it is both lawful and not arbitrary. An interference will be lawful if it is permitted by law which is precise and appropriately circumscribed and will be arbitrary only if it is capricious, unpredictable, unjust or unreasonable, in the sense of being disproportionate to the legitimate aim sought.

Security powers at police premises

Clauses 10, 12, 14 and 15 of the Bill engage the right to privacy as this reform allows police officers and PSOs to request that a person provide personal information. The security powers at police premises enable police officers and PSOs to request that a person provide their name and address. The power to request personal information aims to support police officers and PSOs to keep good order and maintain security at or near police premises.

The power to request a person to provide their name and address is not arbitrary as new section 59A makes it clear that police officers or PSOs may only request this information if the police officer or PSO considers that a person has failed to provide a legitimate reason for being on or in the vicinity of police premises.

The power is proportionate to the need to protect the security of police premises as new sections 59A and 59B allow Victoria Police to inquire about information which may assist them to understand the security risk, for example if the person is of interest to police, or to follow up with the person if a security risk eventuates. However, the new sections do not allow a police officer or PSO to direct a person to leave police premises, remove the person or arrest the person if they do not share their personal information.

In my opinion this amendment is therefore consistent with the right to privacy and reputation.

Amendments to the Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004

The Bill amends the Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004 to support Victoria Police to continue to actively monitor registrable sex offenders and to reduce the risk of reoffending. Clauses 3 and 4 make amendments to clarify a registrable offender's existing reporting requirements, and to reduce the period a registrable offender may drive a vehicle before being required to report the details of the vehicle to the Chief Commissioner of Police.

Clauses 3 and 4 engage the right to privacy of a registrable offender to the extent that it expands a registrable offender's existing duty to report personal details to the Chief Commissioner of Police. Whilst the Bill provides greater clarity and precision to registrable offenders regarding their reporting obligations, it is possible that these amendments may lead to an increase in the number of reportable incidents when a registrable offender drives a vehicle more than seven days but less 14 days in any twelve month period, and in relation to a child with whom a registrable offender maintains a personal relationship. However, I am of the view that any interference with a registrable offender's right to privacy will be neither unlawful nor arbitrary and therefore does not limit the right to privacy protected by the Charter. Accordingly, I am satisfied that these amendments are compatible with the right to privacy in the Charter.

Establishing a legislative framework for the Victoria Police Restorative Engagement and Redress Scheme

Clause 20 of the Bill inserts new Part 9A into the Victoria Police Act to establish a legislative framework for the Victoria Police Restorative Engagement and Redress Scheme. The Scheme has been operating administratively since December 2019. New Part 9A outlines the objectives of the Scheme, the functions of the Secretary of the Department of Justice and Community Safety in administering the Scheme, and establishes a framework for participation in the Scheme, the application and assessment process, and the types of redress which may be provided to an applicant who is found suitable to participate in the Scheme.

The legislative framework for the Scheme engages the right to privacy and reputation; however, in my view it does not limit the right as none of the relevant amendments are unlawful or arbitrary.

New section 174Q provides that some material prepared or provided as part of a person's participation in the Scheme may be admissible in future court proceedings, and that other material will not be. Admissibility of this material may interfere with the right to privacy, whereas inadmissibility may interfere with the right to fair hearing (discussed below).

New section 174Q provides that the following documents are not admissible in any civil or criminal proceedings:

- documents prepared by the Secretary in connection with the administration of the scheme or an application to the scheme

- documents prepared by a person (other than the applicant) in connection with an action to give effect to a scheme determination (such as the records of a restorative engagement facilitator)
- anything disclosed or received by a person in connection with an application, or the provision of redress to the applicant. This includes any records of discussions with or about the applicant or the redress they are receiving.

The following documents are admissible in criminal proceedings, but not admissible in civil proceedings unless the applicant consents to their disclosure:

- a written application
- statutory declaration
- any application for an internal review; and
- any document prepared by an applicant in response to a request for further information are admissible in criminal proceedings.

New section 174Q promotes the right to privacy and reputation by ensuring, to the extent appropriate, that participants can describe their experiences openly to ensure they can be assessed for the provision of suitable redress and participate freely in any restorative engagement conference. Material that may be admissible may interfere with the right to privacy and reputation of both the applicant and the alleged perpetrator; however, if the information is materially relevant to the proceedings at hand, this will be appropriate. The legislative framework for the Scheme aims to ensure that any victims of sexual harassment or sex discrimination have the ability to elect to take one or more actions as a result of their experience. For example, they may wish to apply to the Scheme and also commence related proceedings about the same conduct. New section 174Q ensures applicants are not limited in their participation in other proceedings because they disclosed information to the Scheme, which is also relevant to other proceedings.

As noted above, new section 174Q does, however, provide that statutory declarations and any other documents prepared in the context of a redress application are admissible in criminal proceedings. This balances the participant's right to privacy, with an alleged perpetrator's right to a fair hearing (discussed further below). A participant in the Scheme may also elect to make a criminal complaint relating to the same conduct. New section 174Q ensures that a defendant in any criminal complaint about conduct for which a person also applied to the Scheme, can consider all evidence available, including a statutory declaration detailing the complainant's experience, to assist them to prepare their defence.

In my opinion these amendments are consistent with the right to privacy and reputation.

Establishing a clear obligation for police personnel to only access, make use of, or disclose police information if connected to their current duties

Clause 21 substitutes section 226 of the Victoria Police Act to provide further clarity about the circumstances in which Victoria Police personnel can access, use or disclose police information. Such information can include highly sensitive information about members of the community including their personal details, their location, information about alleged criminal activity and information about the experiences of witnesses and victims of crime.

In its 2016 report on *Operation Dawson—An investigation into alleged misconduct by a former Victoria Police Superintendent*, the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC) recommended that section 226 be amended to clarify its intention. IBAC considered that it is a common assumption that police officers have the authority to access sensitive information which is not connected to their current duties, by virtue of their general duty to prevent and detect crime. IBAC determined that this assumption is held in circumstances where accessing the information is motivated by private interests rather than official police duties.

Amended section 226 provides that a current or former member of Victoria Police personnel must not, without reasonable excuse, access, use or disclose police information unless it is directly related to their current functions or duties, or is otherwise authorised under provision of the Act. In determining whether access, use or disclosure is directly related to a member's current functions or duties, regard may be had to the Chief Commissioner's instructions.

This amendment promotes the right to privacy and reputation by ensuring highly sensitive information is kept confidential. However, to ensure police personnel can perform their law enforcement functions and duties, the access, use and disclosure of information will be permitted where required to support the performance of relevant functions and duties. To the extent that such access, use and disclosure interferes with the right to privacy, in my view any such interference is neither unlawful nor arbitrary. New section 226 provides clarity about the circumstances in which information may be accessed, used and disclosed, and these circumstances are clearly and appropriately confined. It is therefore compatible with the right to privacy.

The right to freedom of expression

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

Security powers at police premises

This reform may engage the right to freedom of expression as the powers to direct a person to leave or not enter police premises, leave the vicinity of police premises and remove a person for failing to comply with a direction, may limit a person's ability to express their opinions freely in or around the vicinity of police premises.

However, police officers and PSOs will only be authorised to direct a person to leave or not enter police premises if they are satisfied on reasonable grounds that a person does not have a legitimate reason for being there, and the direction is necessary to preserve the peace or protect the security of the premises. The exercise of these powers does not prevent a person from expressing their views in the vicinity of police premises on any matter including criticism of police.

This reform prioritises the safety and security of police premises, employees of Victoria Police and any members of the community in attendance at police premises, over an individual's freedom of expression. I am of the view that this is a lawful restriction reasonably necessary to protect the rights of others, and for the protection of public order. Any interferences with the right to freedom of expression therefore fall within the scope of the internal qualifications on this right as contained in section 15(3) of the Charter.

The right to peaceful assembly and freedom of association

Section 16 of the Charter provides for the right to peaceful assembly and freedom of association. The right to peaceful assembly is considered essential for the public expression of a person's views and opinions.

Security powers at police premises

The powers to direct a person to leave or not re-enter police premises, leave the vicinity of police premises, and to remove a person for failing to comply with a direction, may limit a person's right to peaceful assembly in or around the vicinity of police premises. In my view, any such limits are reasonable and justified for the same reasons as set out above in relation to freedom of expression.

Further, new section 59C of the Bill clarifies that it is not intended that the powers established by new sections 59A and 59B of the Victoria Police Act limit the right of peaceful assembly or the right to take part in public life by means of lawful protest, advocacy or industrial action.

Cultural rights

Clause 25 of the Bill amends the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* at section 156(2)(b) to clarify that "administration" is not "special administration" as described in the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006*. The clause may engage the Charter rights to culture (s 19). For the reasons set out below, however, it is my opinion that this Charter right is not limited.

Section 19(2) of the Charter states that Aboriginal persons hold distinct cultural rights and must not be denied the right, with other members of their community—

- (a) to enjoy their identity and culture; and
- (b) to maintain and use their language; and
- (c) to maintain their kinship ties; and
- (d) to maintain their distinctive spiritual, material and economic relationship with the land and waters and other resources with which they have a connection under traditional laws and customs.

Insofar as the clause engages this right, it does so in a positive way, by clarifying for Traditional Owners that when their representative Registered Aboriginal Party is placed under special administration by the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations for the purpose of assisting that Party, that that Party's registration under the Principal Act will not be automatically revoked. This creates certainty for Traditional Owners that, at the end of the period of special administration, their representative Registered Aboriginal Party will be able to continue to work to maintain the enjoyment of their identity and culture, and their distinctive spiritual, material and economic relationship with the land and waters and other resources.

The right to a fair hearing

Section 24(1) of the Charter provides that a person charged with a criminal offence or a party to a civil proceeding has the right to have the charge or proceeding decided by a competent, independent and impartial court or tribunal after a fair and public hearing.

As set out above, clause 20 of the Bill establishes a legislative framework for the Victoria Police Restorative Engagement and Redress Scheme and limit the admissibility of some information disclosed for the purposes of the Scheme.

New section 174Q provides that documents prepared by the Secretary in the administration of the scheme or an application for a scheme determination; anything disclosed or received by a person (other than the applicant) in connection with an action to give effect to a scheme determination; and anything disclosed or received by a person in connection with an application or the provision of redress; are inadmissible in any proceedings, civil or criminal. This includes any records of discussions about the applicant or the redress they are receiving. Further, a participant's application for a redress determination, any statutory declaration accompanying an application, any application for an internal review of the Secretary's determination and any document prepared by the applicant following a request from the Secretary for further information are inadmissible in civil proceedings, without the applicant's consent. However, these documents are admissible in criminal proceedings. New section 174Q provides that a person cannot be required by subpoena, summons or otherwise, to produce a protected document, or a copy of or extract from that document, or to give evidence that is inadmissible under this section.

New section 174Q may interfere with the right to a fair hearing, insofar as it may limit the requirements of discovery and production of documents for inspection in a civil proceeding related to the same conduct which an applicant in the Scheme referred to in their application or discussed as part of their participation the Scheme. This may limit the ability of a civil litigant to obtain or rely on information or documents material to issues in dispute. New section 174Q may also limit the requirements of discovery and production of any documents which were prepared by the Secretary or others in the administration of the Scheme, including any records of verbal discussions with or about the applicant. However, this limitation is balanced against the need to protect the right to privacy of applicants to the Scheme in relation to material they have produced for the purpose of their application, and any discussions during the provision of redress, including about their health needs, to ensure the Scheme remains therapeutic and victim focused. It is considered that the documents which are inadmissible in any proceedings are likely to be of less relevance to parties in any proceedings related to the same conduct than other documents, as the documents inadmissible in any proceedings cover the department's internal records.

The scheme was established to provide current and former members of police personnel who have experienced sexual harassment or sex discrimination in connection with being a current or former member, to apply to the Scheme to obtain a therapeutic outcome. This provision aims to allow current and former members to document their experience without fear that they will not have control over whether their record of their experience will be disclosed in any related proceedings which are commenced for a different purpose.

New section 174Q distinguishes between the admissibility of this information in civil and criminal proceedings, however, to ensure a defendant in a related criminal proceeding can access this information to assist with the preparation of their defence, given the nature of criminal proceedings (namely, the significance to a defendant of an adverse decision).

In my opinion these amendments are therefore compatible with the right to a fair hearing.

The Hon Anthony Carbines MP—Minister for Police

Second reading

Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe—Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Racing) (13:31): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

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

Incorporated speech as follows:

The Bill before the House introduces a range of policing reforms which are aimed at keeping the community safe and protecting the privacy of applicants to the Victoria Police Restorative Engagement and Redress Scheme. The policing reforms include amendments to the *Victoria Police Act 2013* and the *Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004*. I will outline each of the main reforms.

1. Productivity and revenue initiatives related to event cost recovery

The Victoria Police Act 2013 (VPA) authorises Victoria Police to impose costs on event organisers for the deployment of police officers and protective services officers (PSOs) at large commercial events, where Victoria Police determines that policing services are necessary to maintain community safety. However, Victoria Police can only recover costs for services provided inside the venue or event area. Victoria Police

cannot recover costs for the services provided outside the event area. These services may be required to manage the general traffic build up and maintenance of good order as a result of the event.

The Bill amends the VPA to allow Victoria Police to prescribe fees or charges for the provision of services outside a venue or event area and in the nearby area or community affected by the event, from the promoter of the event or the person or body conducting it. This will only include charges necessitated by the event. For example, if additional officers need to be deployed to respond to an unforeseen emergency at an event, the amendment will not allow Victoria Police to recover the cost of these services from an event organiser, as these services would fall within the ordinary obligations of the police force.

Victoria Police has established a clear process for determining the level of resourcing needed to support the safe operation of an event, and for discussing the amount and type of resources with an event organiser. Costs are agreed in advance and are not altered in response to any conduct or incident which occurs at the event.

The Bill also amends the VPA to provide Victoria Police with the power to waive all or part of the fees where appropriate.

The Bill will amend the VPA to authorise Victoria Police to enter into agreements with commercial enterprise operators, such as shopping centre operators, to provide policing services beyond regular policing services at certain venues, if a venue operator considers this useful. Notwithstanding an agreement having been entered into, the Bill confirms that the Chief Commissioner is authorised to redeploy police services and goods for any purpose that the Chief Commissioner considers necessary.

2. Enhancing the powers of police officers and protective services officers (PSOs) to protect the security of police premises

Victoria Police premises can present security risks due to the sensitive information held at the premises and the nature of the work undertaken by Victoria Police. A number of incidents of concern have occurred at police premises in the past five years including:

- a. persons antagonising police officers entering or leaving a police station while an accomplice filmed the encounter
- b. a person filming a regional police station and the car park where police officers' private vehicles are parked and "baiting" police officers nearby
- c. a person following a police vehicle into the Victoria Police Centre car park on the premise of inspecting the retractable bollards at the entrance and exit points
- d. a person regularly entering the foyer of a police station with a recording device although claiming to have no business there.

Exchanges with police officers, and photographs of them or their vehicles are frequently uploaded onto social media. This creates a risk for police personnel seeking to peacefully enter and leave police premises.

Currently there are no specific powers for police officers and PSOs to protect the security of police premises. They do not have the power to stop individuals filming police personnel or their vehicles, or parts of police premises, or to remove antagonistic persons from police premises. Due to the risks to safety and privacy for police personnel and community members in attendance at police premises, the VPA will be amended to provide police officers and PSOs with powers to:

- a. request a person on or in the vicinity of police premises, or about to enter police premises, to provide their reason for being there, and if they do not provide a reason, to provide their name and address
- b. direct a person to leave or not enter police premises if the police officer or PSO reasonably believes that they do not have a legitimate reason for being there, and the direction is necessary to keep the peace or maintain the security of the premises
- c. direct a person not to return to police premises for up to seven days, without the permission of a police officer or PSO, unless they have a legitimate reason to return or it is not feasible to seek permission in the circumstances
- d. remove a person from police premises or the vicinity of the premises if the person has failed to comply with a direction to leave, not enter or not return hindered or obstructed police officers or PSOs, or committed an offence under the VPA or
- e. arrest a person on, or in the vicinity of, police premises, or attempting to re-enter police premises, who has not complied with directions to leave or not enter, hindered or obstructed police officers or PSOs exercising powers under those provisions, or committed an offence under the VPA.

Police officers and PSOs will exercise their discretion in determining whether it is necessary to remove or arrest a person, balancing the need to maintain the security of police premises and the need to keep the peace, with the need to ensure police premises are accessible to the public for legitimate reasons.

The Bill also establishes offences for failing to comply with a request to provide a reason for being on or in the vicinity of police premises or to provide a name and address, providing false or misleading information to police officers or PSOs, failing to comply with a direction to leave or not enter police premises, or hindering or obstructing a police officer or PSO in exercising these powers. The powers are confined to security risks and the Bill confirms that it is not intended that the powers limit the right of peaceful assembly or the right to take part in public life by means of lawful protest, advocacy or industrial action.

In exercising the power to direct a person to leave police premises, not enter police premises or not return to police premises without the permission of a police officer or PSO, police officers and PSOs will apply their discretion to ensure a person is allowed to attend police premises for a lawful reason, such as to report a crime, to comply with a court order or comply with bail conditions. Further, a person will be authorised to return to police premises if they have a legitimate reason to return and it is not feasible to seek permission before returning.

3. Clarifying the places where PSOs may exercise special powers under Part 3A of the *Terrorism (Community Protection) Act 2003* (TCPA)

The TCPA allows PSOs to exercise special police powers within the target area specified in an authorisation under the TCPA. The *Review of the Terrorism (Community Protection) Act 2003* recommended that legislative amendments should be made to clarify that PSOs may exercise special police powers anywhere within authorised areas, consistent with the broader role of PSOs and subject to the provision of appropriate training (Recommendation 12). This recommendation reflects concern that the VPA may limit the use of special police powers by PSOs to designated places prescribed by regulation, so that where an authorisation under the TCPA does not overlap with a designated place (such as a train station) PSOs cannot exercise the special powers.

The Bill amends the VPA to clarify that PSOs are authorised to exercise the special police powers at any authorised targeted location across Victoria, regardless of whether a PSO is at, or in the vicinity of, a designated place.

4. Establishing a legislative framework for the Restorative Engagement and Redress Scheme (the Redress Scheme) to support current and former Victoria Police employees who have experienced workplace sex discrimination or sexual harassment

In 2015 the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC) released the *Independent Review into sex discrimination and sexual harassment, including predatory behaviour within Victoria Police* which recommended that Victoria Police and government undertake work to deliver an independent redress scheme for Victoria Police employees who have experienced past workplace sex discrimination and sexual harassment.

Redress schemes are a way to acknowledge past harm and to provide support to eligible applicants without the requirement of a high evidentiary threshold or other legal requirements. The focus of redress is on healing and recovery for the person harmed, through access to counselling and therapeutic services and an opportunity to participate in a restorative engagement conference.

The Redress Scheme was established by Government and has been operating under an administrative model since 12 December 2019. The Redress Scheme acknowledges the experiences, and associated impact and harm, of current or former members of Victoria Police personnel who have encountered workplace sex discrimination and sexual harassment. It provides eligible participants assistance and support to recover from these experiences through access to redress in the form of financial redress, access to counselling and therapeutic services and the opportunity to participate in a restorative engagement process where they can share their experiences and the associated impact and harm with senior Victoria Police representatives in a safe and supportive environment. Some of the guiding principles of the Redress Scheme are to minimise further harm as a result of participation in the Redress Scheme, to be independent from Victoria Police, to keep participant information confidential and to protect participant privacy, and to provide support and assistance that is victim-centred, trauma-informed and accessible.

The Bill amends the VPA to establish a legislative framework for the Redress Scheme to:

- a. vest key functions and decision-making powers related to eligibility requirements, the application process and redress determinations and reviews in the Secretary of the Department of Justice and Community Safety and
- b. strengthen protections for the privacy and confidentiality of highly sensitive and personal information that is provided by participants and in internal documents, to ensure the Scheme is victim focused and reduce the potential for re-traumatisation.

The proposed reforms will provide greater protection for the personal and sensitive information shared by participants (including health information) and protect privacy and autonomy in the reporting of their experiences. A key finding of the VEOHRC Review was that there was significant underreporting of sexual harassment and sex discrimination within Victoria Police due to lack of trust in that organisation to respond in a sensitive and trauma-informed way to reports of such conduct. The Redress Scheme provides a safe and supported environment to enable eligible victims to share their experiences of harm and seek support. If not for the existence of the Redress Scheme, many participants would not come forward to seek support and acknowledgement of their experiences. Redress Scheme participants retain their existing legal rights to voluntarily report wrongdoing within Victoria Police or to IBAC, or take other legal action as appropriate.

5. Amendments to the drug and alcohol testing program for Victoria Police personnel

The VPA establishes a drug and alcohol testing regime for Victoria Police personnel. This includes random drug and alcohol testing. The current provisions create operational challenges for Victoria Police in conducting random testing, as when randomly selecting people to participate in random testing, all personnel rostered on across Victoria at that time are eligible for selection. This can result in participants who are located across the state being randomly chosen, and testing staff needed to visit all of those locations on the same day to conduct the testing.

For drug testing to be an effective deterrent, the chances of being randomly tested must be increased. The VPA will be amended to allow Victoria Police to select a Victoria Police workplace or work unit from within which a random sample can be drawn. Selecting the random sample from a narrower portion of the organisation will increase a person's chances of being randomly tested when their workplace or work unit is chosen, and will encourage Victoria Police to increase the frequency of testing across the organisation as the current operational barriers to testing will be removed. This amendment will be supported by operational instructions about the process by which a workplace or work unit can be chosen, to ensure the process remains random.

The VPA allows the Chief Commissioner to consider positive results of drug and alcohol tests in certain circumstances. The VPA will be amended to allow the Chief Commissioner to consider a positive test result returned by a police recruit who has participated in designated work unit testing, designated work function testing or targeted testing, when determining whether to terminate the recruit's employment under section 36 (5) of the VPA. Similarly, the Chief Commissioner will be authorised to consider a positive result when determining whether to terminate the appointment of a PSO under section 38 (6) of the VPA, at any time before the PSO takes the oath or affirmation of office.

6. Providing a clear obligation for police personnel to only access, make use of, or disclose police information if required by their current duties

The Bill amends section 226 of the VPA to impose a clear, standalone obligation on police personnel to maintain the confidentiality of police information, without reference to separate policy documents, and with a clear instruction that access must be directly related to their current duties and functions. This will clarify the legislative requirement to provide certainty about the limits of an employee's authorisation to access and use information.

7. Other miscellaneous amendments to the VPA

The Bill also amends the VPA to address inconsistencies between sections 32 41 and 146 relating to the process for promoting police members and PSOs. The Bill will enable the Chief Commissioner to take more than one disciplinary action to a police officer or PSO who is found guilty of a criminal offence. This will align the approach to criminal offences with the approach to a breach of discipline, by ensuring the Chief Commissioner can take all actions considered appropriate.

8. Amendments to the *Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004* (SOR Act)

The Bill amends the SOR Act to support Victoria Police to continue to actively monitor registerable sex offenders and to reduce the risk of reoffending.

The SOR Act requires registrable offenders to report to Victoria Police at the commencement of their registration period, and periodically over that time to allow Victoria Police to record the personal details of a registrable offender. This includes information such as a registrable offender's primary place of residence, the place where the person usually sleeps, any vehicle the registrable offender usually drives, and the details of any children with whom a registrable offender has a personal relationship.

The SOR Act requires registerable offenders to make certain reports in person. The 2019-2020 Victorian Bushfires and COVID-19 pandemic have demonstrated that there are exceptional circumstances where in-person reporting by registrable offenders presents a health or safety risk to the registrable offender and to Victoria Police employees. The SOR Act will be amended to allow the Chief Commissioner of Police to direct or permit a registrable offender to report by audio link, audio visual link or electronic communication during a state of emergency, a state of disaster or where a pandemic declaration is in force.

The Bill also amends the personal details that a registrable offender is required to provide in their initial report, to improve the quality of up-to-date information received by Victoria Police. The amendments clarify that a registrable offender is only required to provide information sufficient to identify where the person sleeps on a regular basis if the person has no fixed address. The period of time that a registrable offender may drive a vehicle before reporting it as a vehicle that the person usually drives will be reduced from 14 days to seven days in any 12-month period. This will bring the 'usually drives' period in line with other seven day reporting periods in the SOR Act and reporting periods in other Australian jurisdictions.

The Bill amends the SOR Act to clarify that a registrable offender must report the details of any child with whom they engage in any form of actual physical contact, or oral or written communication for the purpose of maintaining a personal relationship at initial report, annual report, and if the registrable offender ceases to maintain a personal relationship with the child. The proposed amendment specifies the mode of contact (physical contact, or oral or written communication) and the circumstances in which that contact occurs (for the purposes of maintaining a personal relationship) to be reported. The design of the amended definition of child contact is consistent with the VLRC recommendations in chapter 7 of the 2012 Final Report on Sex Offenders Registration. Consistent with current reporting obligations, a registrable offender will not have to report the details of each and every occasion on which the offender has contact with each of those children for the purpose of maintaining a relationship. This reform clarifies that a registrable offender who has formed a personal relationship with a child before being registered must report that relationship to Victoria Police. These amendments support Victoria Police to reduce the risk of reoffending and to facilitate the investigation and prosecution of any offences that a registrable offender may subsequently commit.

The Bill makes amendments to improve the operation of the SOR Act in respect of the classification of certain offences under that Act. The SOR Act prescribes four classes of offences for the purposes of the Act. A Class 2 offence is committed against a child, whereas a Class 4 offence is committed against an adult. A person sentenced for a Class 2 offence is automatically registered as a registrable offender and must comply with the reporting requirements under the SOR Act. By contrast, a court has a discretion to make a sex offender registration order against a person sentenced for a Class 4 offence committed against an adult.

The offence of 'sexual assault of a person with a cognitive impairment or mental illness' is currently listed as both a Class 2 and a Class 4 offence. The Bill amends the SOR Act to clarify that the offence of 'sexual assault of a person with a cognitive impairment or mental illness' is a Class 2 offence if it is committed against a child. An appropriate transitional provision is included to provide for a registrable offender who has been found guilty of committing an offence against an adult to apply to the sentencing court for an order to consider whether it would have made a sex offender registration order if the offence committed against an adult were a Class 4 offence. It is estimated that less than three people could be eligible to apply for an order under this transitional provision.

The Bill also lists as a Class 2 offence the Commonwealth offence of using a carriage service to prepare or plan to cause harm to, engage in sexual activity with, or procure for sexual activity, persons under 16 except if the offence does not involve an act in preparing or planning to engage in sexual activity with a person under 16 years of age or an act in preparing or planning to procure a person under 16 years of age to engage in sexual activity. This offence is established by section 474.25C of the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth). In practice, the Bill excludes conduct constituting an offence against paragraph 474.25C(a)(i) of the Criminal Code Act of the Commonwealth as this conduct is not sexual in nature.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Ms KEALY (Lowan) (13:31): I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

Motion agreed to and debate adjourned.

Ordered that debate be adjourned for two weeks. Debate adjourned until Tuesday, 16 August

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING BILL 2022

Second reading

Debate resumed on motion of Mr MERLINO:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Ms KEALY (Lowan) (13:32): Deputy Speaker, congratulations on your elevation to the role.

It is an honour today to be the lead speaker for the Liberals and Nationals on the Mental Health and Wellbeing Bill 2022. The reforms that are ahead for Victoria are significant in the mental health space. We know that for many years, if not decades, the mental health system in Victoria has been in gradual decline from being deemed one of the world's best mental health systems, where people from all over the world would come and see how we do it, to now being in a state of absolute disaster, where it is becoming more and more difficult for people to get the support that they need when they need it.

The failure of this government to put relevant supports in place in the community and to keep people well has meant that there has been a catastrophic amount of pressure put on our hospital system, with waitlists at emergency departments growing. For a number of people who are in emergency departments in psychological distress or psychological crisis the wait is not just for a few hours but extending out to a number of days—and this is not just for adults, it is for children as well.

The workforce is entirely fatigued. There were warnings in the government's own reports in 2015 that the government must urgently act to recruit more workers in the mental health sector to ensure that we have enough people to provide the support that Victorians need and to make sure we have enough mental health practitioners in the state. However, the government failed to act, and as a result the state was completely underprepared when it came to dealing with the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, lockdowns and restrictions.

The workforce issues were emphasised again by the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System through its interim report, which was handed down in 2019, where five of the nine recommendations were very explicit about the desperate need to invest in building Victoria's mental health workforce so that the state would be prepared for the vast reforms that are set down and that will take place in the state of Victoria in the years ahead. This failure of the government to invest in the workforce has meant that so many Victorians over the past three years simply were not able to get the mental health support that they needed when they needed it. And this crisis is not yet over. We see an escalation in demand for mental health services that has been sustained even though our measures to lock down and restrict the state have been eased to the point where only children who are at school have a surrogate mandate to wear masks at school—no other Victorians are mandated to wear masks.

If Victoria is going to rebuild and reform our mental health system, we need to have the workers to support that important work. It is not bricks and mortar that provide mental health support and consultations to people. It is not the legislation or the papers that are before us today that will change the number of workers in the system to provide mental health support to Victorians. It is simply down to training more workers, and that is where people are looking for the light at the end of the tunnel. Mental health workers are absolutely fatigued. They have done an outstanding job over the pandemic, but they need to see that light at the end of the tunnel and to know that more workers are on their way.

In many ways, because of the workforce challenges, the timing of this legislation—while absolutely necessary as part of implementing the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System's recommendations—has severely limited the ability of and the availability of time for workers in the sector to fully apply themselves to all of the recommendations as they have been put forward by the royal commission. However, I think there has also been a failure of the government in terms of consultation and being fully open about the legislation that was going to be put before the house and that would define very important limitations and obligations upon the sector, particularly when it comes to decision-making around compulsory treatment, restraint and seclusion. I will go more to those elements later, as I realise that this is something that is under review and will be reformed as part of a future iteration of this legislation.

It is important at the outset to note that the Liberals and Nationals are fully supportive of the royal commission's findings and recommendations. We know that significant reform must take place in order to shift the standard, the expectation and the supports that are available to Victorians when they are at that point of need. This goes far beyond the proverbial ambulance at the bottom of the cliff of ensuring there are more mental health beds in hospitals. We need to make sure that people are able to

look after their mental health and retain their mental health in the community and can avoid having to go to an emergency department or rely on a hospital in order to get any level of mental health support.

In terms of process, there was some disappointment from the sector in terms of not seeing a full version of the legislation that is before us today prior to this document being tabled in Parliament on the last sitting day before the winter break. It is certainly seen by many people in the sector as something that should have taken place. It would have given them the opportunity to further digest and understand what the limitations were of the document, of the bill, but also where the opportunities were for small improvements that would make a big difference to the outcomes of the legislation and how it will impact and reshape Victoria's mental health system.

There are other elements around the specific content of the legislation and some recommendations that have been put to me over the past few weeks for simple changes that may assist to improve the legislation and make sure that no Victorian misses out as part of the review of the Mental Health Act 2014 and the inclusion of a number of recommendations from the royal commission's final report. I would like to go into further detail around that now; however, I realise that in having only 30 minutes to debate such a substantial bill, which is over 750 pages long, I will have to give a short nod to some of the many organisations that have taken the time to not just review the legislation over this past month but also put their thoughts together in a cohesive way and provide those recommendations to me.

I am hopeful that these thoughts put forward today will be taken on board by the minister and that if any of these changes are seen as a good idea those amendments will be made to the bill prior to it being circulated in the Legislative Council, because in no way do the Liberals or Nationals want to impede or block the bill. We understand that there is a great desire within the mental health sector to have a governing framework that will ensure we have got the foundations to rebuild Victoria's mental health system, and in no way is it the intention, nor will our actions require, to deliberately, or non-deliberately and inadvertently, destroy the bill that has been put forward. We are simply seeking to put forward amendments that we think are quite constructive, that are well supported by the community and that we believe would make for a stronger legislative framework for Victoria's mental health system going forward.

The first point that I would like to go to is around Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing Victoria. This is obviously a very important entity to be established as part of the legislative framework, and in no way is there any intention to detract from that. However, there are a number of organisations across the mental health sector who have flagged that it is equally important that we establish a similar entity in relation to older Victorians. That might look like an 'Older Adult Mental Health and Wellbeing Victoria' organisation which has a similar structure and function to the Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing Victoria. I think it would define a really important place in the Victorian policy framework. All too often older Victorians are forgotten. This is through the entirety of the policy framework but never more so than when it comes to mental health, particularly around the area of aged psychiatry, supporting people with dementia and Alzheimer's and also making sure we have important mental health support around some of those changes you have in your life as you age—whether it is about loss of ability, which could be about not being able to be as physically active as you used to be or, for some people, disengaging from the workforce and not having that understanding of where they fit in the world and how they contribute, and getting value from those changes as to where they fit. Also it is about loss of partners, loss of friends and loss of family and the isolation that can be very, very damaging and harmful to older Victorians.

I would have loved to have put forward an amendment today to establish a new entity of this type. However, the limitations of the house mean that I cannot put forward an amendment which requires an appropriation. Obviously establishing a new entity would require a number of appropriations of a similar amount as for the Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing Victoria. However, I would like to put on the record that I strongly recommend that people in the later stages of life should have an equal focus, particularly around policy development, to ensure their mental health and wellbeing is not

forgotten just because the peak of their life is behind them and not in front of them. I think that is very, very important.

There are other specifics that I would like to raise, which may be given some consideration by the minister, in terms of revisions to the legislation and improving the legislation. Again this is intended to be constructive as opposed to destructive. I note feedback from DPV Health in regard to the language used around supported decision-making principles, and this refers to part 1.5 of the legislation:

We acknowledge the definition of this principle and advocate that 'supported' should be substituted with 'enabled' decision making to define that the power sits with the consumer.

Given this is in line with many of the recommendations of the royal commission and it is aligned with the intention of the legislation and what I am hearing from people with lived and living experience of mental ill health and illness, I think that this is worthy of consideration. Further, DPV Health have recommended a revision to part 1.5, clause 20, and alike language, so it is clear that the principle applies to enabling the family or carer to make decisions impacting their caring role at the point of assessment, treatment and recovery, rather than making decisions about the person's assessment, treatment and recovery. That is supported by the carers that they consulted with.

I would also like to raise the concerns of a registered paramedic with HMS Collective in regard to the specification within the legislation that registered paramedics must be employed by an ambulance service as defined by in section 3(1) of the Ambulance Services Act 1986. There is concern that a registered paramedic who is employed by the ambulance service would not be able to perform their full scope of work if they were not employed with Ambulance Victoria. So if they were employed through a service like HMS Collective, a community paramedic service, on a part-time, full-time or casual basis, whether they were employed by AV or not, they would no longer be able to practise to their full scope but they could do some of their practise while working outside the ambulance service. There is concern that that could actually limit the work of paramedics within certain sectors, and so they have recommended in part 1.2, 'Interpretation', to add 'registered paramedic' to the definition in clause 3, 'authorised mental health practitioner means', and to remove the following words after 'registered paramedic':

... employed by an ambulance service as defined in section 3(1) of the **Ambulance Services Act 1986** ... completely from the bill.

I also note comments from the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation, who are largely supportive of the legislation as it sits. However, they do have some further questions in relation to the responsibilities and roles. I think this is specifically in relation to a health-led response rather than a police-led response, and this is a theme that was raised a number of times by particularly people who work on the front lines and also mental health practitioners who highlighted those powers, which are seen I guess as the equivalent of police powers, to enter into a building to seize items and the like. They are in the 2014 iteration of the mental health legislation. However, the shift in focus to a health-led response may require a significant amount of education, training and perhaps additional funding as well to ensure that we have enough people on the front line in the health sector to be able to meet those requirements. I therefore urge the government to ensure that all elements of the mental health sector are appropriately funded to be able to deliver the services they need to make this pivot and switch from a police-led response to health-led response and ensure that there is sufficient time and funding for education and development of the supporting policies and procedures and other training requirements that may be required.

I would also like to refer to some of the recommendations which were received from PANDA, Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Australia. They are a fantastic organisation. I cannot speak highly enough of them. They really are the peak body when it comes to providing that important support for women throughout their pregnancy and once the baby is in the room. They note that there is no mention of pregnancy or care or pregnant persons at all in the bill, and given it is a bill that governs all

restraint and seclusion practices it would be good to articulate the special circumstances of restraining or using physical restraint or chemical restraint on persons who are pregnant. I hope that this element of the legislation, particularly in regard to restraint, may be considered in the upcoming review over the coming year. They also make note that there is no principle of mental health related to age or state of development in the outline of the principles. Age and state underpin a significant amount of the mental health structure in Australia; however, it is not articulated and made explicit in this legislation. This is an opportunity to improve the legislation, and I think it should definitely be considered in terms of reviewing the bill before it goes to the Legislative Council.

The last piece of feedback that I would like to share is from the Australian Medical Association. They have some concerns which have been aired through the media, and I understand that they have been in contact with the previous Minister for Mental Health, particularly around the elimination of restrictive interventions within 10 years. I understand that this is a very difficult line to get right, because I have also heard from the Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council, the lead body for people with lived experience and living with mental ill health and illness. There is a feeling from them that the government did not go far enough when it came to being specific and being more explicit and detailed in regard to elimination of these restrictive interventions within 10 years. I understand the concerns of the mental health workforce, because they go back to my comments when I opened the debate around the significant shortfall of workers which means so often there is no choice about whether restrictive practices are used because there simply are not enough workers available to provide that support to Victorians when they need it. That is absolutely critical. We see more and more use of restrictive practices and restraint in emergency departments because they have been completely overwhelmed by demand over the pandemic. I am very sympathetic to those views; however, I completely understand and support the view that restrictive practices should be ended within 10 years.

We certainly should have the aspiration to do so, but in order to do that we must be able to deliver an enhanced workforce so that every Victorian has that critical care circle around them and so that we can ensure that people do not get to that point of crisis in the first instance and that is the first point of care that they are able to access when they are in mental health crisis. But we also need to make sure we are supporting the workers to make sure they are safe, that there is not an increase in violence in the workplace and that they have enough workers so they can apply that support they want to deliver for an individual who is in mental health crisis. There is no clinician I have spoken to who wants to use that as a first port of call; however, the extreme limitation in the workforce means that is their only option. It is not supportive of the workforce. It is not supportive of people who are in mental health crisis. It is not supportive of their friends and family. I absolutely see that there is much more work that needs to be done in that area, and I encourage the government to ensure that that work is completed as quickly as possible because I am concerned that there is a window of opportunity where there is a mandate under the recommendations of the royal commission to take action in this critical area, particularly around restraint and seclusion but also compulsory treatment. We need to make sure we use this window of opportunity wisely and respond quickly. Otherwise I fear that window may close and the mental health sector, including the lived experience and carer sector, will not be able to see the outcomes that they so strongly desire in the near future. I urge the government to take immediate action on that to ensure that we do continue the momentum of the royal commission and see some real change for Victorians who need mental health support around those sensitive areas.

There is one further element which I would like to reference, and this is something that has been a gradual shift in terms of where the alcohol and other drug sector fits in terms of mental health. Traditionally alcohol and other drug support services and treatment have sat within the portfolio of mental health. In the change during the pandemic, where the former Minister for Health was previously the Minister for Mental Health, they took the AOD portfolio with them and the Minister for Mental Health did not continue with that element. The member for Monbulk did not have responsibility for the alcohol and other drug sector; it was just mental health. The member for Albert Park, just for clarity, had responsibility for AOD, including health. This has led to the alcohol and other drug sector feeling like they have been left out of the room when it comes to mental health reform

discussions. We know of the close correlation between the work that the AOD sector does and people with mental ill health and mental illness and, vice versa, the cross-correlation, I guess, the dual diagnosis of people with mental ill health and illness who in many instances are self-medicating with alcohol and other drugs, which can lead to very, very harmful behaviours and exacerbate existing underlying mental illness. Therefore, under standing orders, I wish to advise the house of an amendment to this bill and request that it be circulated.

Opposition amendment circulated by Ms KEALY under standing orders.

Ms KEALY: This is a very simple amendment which will insert ‘including alcohol and other drug support services and treatment’ into clause 12, page 36, line 9, after the term ‘wellbeing’. This is a very important shift in the legislation. It is intended to be constructive rather than destructive and will ensure that the alcohol and other drugs sector is explicitly defined as part of the mental health and wellbeing sector. This is something, as I said, that is strongly supported by the alcohol and other drugs sector and builds upon other work that the Liberals and Nationals have been doing to ensure that the alcohol and other drugs sector, including support services and treatment, is not forgotten as we go forward in implementing the royal commission’s reforms. Importantly, by including a specific reference to the alcohol and other drugs sector within the objectives of the bill it will enable the alcohol and other drugs sector to be seen as an acceptable entity to be funded as part of the expenditure of the mental health surcharge.

Now, this is not intended to take a big bite out of that cherry, but the alcohol and other drugs sector at the moment is floundering. It is sitting between this large sum of money which is going to be raised and allocated to the mental health sector as part of the mental health levy and the funding behemoth of health, and it is being squeezed out. We are seeing that have a devastating impact on alcohol and other drugs services across the state. This year was the first year in over 17 years when there has been a net funding cut to the alcohol and other drugs segment. We also know that there has been a significant cut in support of their workforce, with 100 FTE alcohol and other drugs workers cut from the budget as part of this year’s vast series of cuts to various services across the state. We have also seen a \$40 million cut this year to the alcohol and other drugs sector.

As was found in the Pandemic Declaration Accountability and Oversight Committee hearings, there has been an escalation in demand for alcohol and other drugs support services right across the state. That is why the Liberals and Nationals last week committed to an additional 180 alcohol and other drugs treatment beds right across the state. This is treatment, and it covers off on withdrawal services as well—because we know there is a critical gap when it comes to accessing detox, which is the first step towards being able to secure a residential rehabilitation bed. This will meet many of the requirements that have been set out by Infrastructure Victoria and fill the gaps across the state, particularly in areas like Mildura, Warrnambool and Shepparton; the Latrobe Valley, where they have not got access to adult alcohol and other drugs services; and also Frankston, where they have missed out for such a long time on access to critical residential rehabilitation services. We will also establish a 30-bed withdrawal facility here in Melbourne, which will end the bottleneck. We know that this is desperately needed. There are now over 4000 Victorians on the waitlist for alcohol and other drugs treatment services, and yet we have seen cuts by the Andrews Labor government. This is such an important element of the mental health sector and of overall treatment.

It is essential that the alcohol and other drugs sector is not forgotten as part of these important mental health reforms. It is something that has been highlighted through the royal commission—the importance of dealing with alcohol and other drugs as a dual diagnosis as part of the mental health sector—and so that is why the Liberal-Nationals today will put forward this amendment that I urge the government to support, and the crossbenchers also, to make sure that alcohol and other drugs are explicitly recognised and seen as an important spoke in the mental health sector going forward.

I would like to continue after this; I think I have got about 3 minutes to go but 30 seconds until the break. These are the key elements that I see as important in the bill. We need to make sure we support

these important changes, we support the royal commission's recommendations and we finally rebuild Victoria's mental health system. We need to make sure people can get the mental health support that they need when they need it. But most important is that we include the reference to the alcohol and other drugs sector and we make sure that we rebuild Victoria's mental health workforce so that workers can see the light at the end of the tunnel and know that they have got support on the way.

Business interrupted under resolution of house today.

Questions without notice and ministers statements

HEALTH SYSTEM

Mr GUY (Bulleen—Leader of the Opposition) (14:01): My question is to the Minister for Health. At two days of age Amelia had her first open-heart surgery and her parents were told she would require further surgery within months. Amelia was scheduled for surgery on 17 July, but the day before it was cancelled due to a lack of intensive care beds. Rescheduled for 25 July and having gone through extensive pre-op preparation, an hour prior to surgery it was cancelled again. This young girl's serious health condition is deteriorating. What does the minister have to say to Amelia's parents, who are devastated with having to watch their young daughter's health deteriorate to such an extent that she will become so sick that the only way to get vital surgery is for it to become emergency surgery, when her life is then at risk?

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:02): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. Can I begin by acknowledging how challenging this is for Amelia and her family at this time. Every parent knows how hard it is to see a child that is sick or in pain and in need of health care. But what I want to assure Amelia's parents, and indeed all Victorians, is that decisions about planned surgery are being made and managed every single day in our health system with the care of all patients in mind at all times. I also want to make this point: right now in Victoria—indeed right around our nation and across the globe—health services have been incredibly impacted by the COVID pandemic. Winters are always hard in the health system, but on top of that this year we have had to manage another wave of the coronavirus, and where that has the most significant impact is on the staff that are available on any given day to provide the care that is needed. We know that on any day between 1500 and 2000 of our hardworking healthcare workers are furloughed because they have COVID, and this of course does not take into account the many healthcare workers who are at home on carers leave or sick or on other planned or unplanned leave. This is what is having an impact. Again, I want to assure Amelia's parents that our government absolutely understands their concern and their worry at this time. But I also want to assure her parents that we have one of the best health services here in Victoria, and when it comes to the care of children, here in Victoria we are acknowledged globally for being world leaders.

We know that these challenges are real and that they are being experienced every day. That is why our government has a \$12 billion pandemic repair plan, and we are implementing that plan now. We know that it is healthcare workers that will help get our system back on track. That is why we have got a plan to train and recruit an additional 7000 healthcare workers. That is why in the past two years we have employed 8500 additional healthcare workers. Only a couple of weeks ago, the Premier and I were out announcing some further initiatives that are focused on driving down the demand in our system and ensuring that children like Amelia and indeed all of those on waiting lists can get the care that they need and deserve.

Mr GUY (Bulleen—Leader of the Opposition) (14:05): I do thank the minister for her answer but note that Amelia's surgery has twice been cancelled due to a lack of intensive care beds, so I ask the minister: when will the 4000 intensive care beds that the Premier promised in April 2020 actually be delivered?

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:05): I thank the member for his supplementary question, and I make this point: it is not a bed that cares for children,

it is nurses, doctors and clinicians. Right now more than 1500 hardworking healthcare workers are at home, furloughed with COVID, so we expect as we see the virus plateau and then trend down that we will see more healthcare workers back in the system.

Once again I want to assure Amelia's parents that every child and every person on our planned surgery list is being actively managed by the healthcare service. Amelia's parents can expect to be contacted by the healthcare service, and they will support her and her family through this really difficult time.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS: AMBULANCE SERVICES

Mr ANDREWS (Mulgrave—Premier) (14:06): I am delighted to be able to update the house on the fact that this year alone the government, in partnership with Ambulance Victoria, has recruited some 404 new ambulance paramedics and 157 of those are destined for regional Victoria. This is a very strong recruitment performance and builds on last year, the biggest ever year of paramedic recruitment—more than 700 new ambulance paramedics were recruited last year.

Mr Edbrooke: We're not going to war with them.

Mr ANDREWS: Yes, that is right. As my honourable friend the member for Frankston points out, we are not going to war with our paramedics. We are instead recruiting lots of them, respecting them, listening to them and valuing them, and they in turn are working so very hard for every single Victorian. Last year was the biggest year ever in recruitment; we had more than 700 extra paramedics. This year we are set to, and year to date we project that we will, recruit even more than the biggest ever year, last year—so even more than 700 paramedics.

Speaker, I know you will be pleased to know that 157 of those are going to regional Victoria. For instance, 26 paramedics will be joining the Barwon south-west region; 23 will be in Gippsland; 24 in Grampians Ballarat; 50 in Hume, central and northern regions; and 34 in Loddon, Mallee and Bendigo. So right across regional Victoria there will be more paramedics and right across metropolitan Melbourne there will be more ambulance paramedics with the equipment, with the resources, with the budget and with the support and respect of our government—something that they have not always had from others. We back our paramedics to keep doing the work that they do—saving lives, changing lives—and that is why we are very proud to be able to say we have increased from 43 paramedics per 100 000 Victorians to 56 paramedics per 100 000 Victorians—not by good luck but by strong investment and consistent support and an abiding respect as they are highly skilled and highly effective professionals.

HEALTH SYSTEM

Mr GUY (Bulleen—Leader of the Opposition) (14:08): My question is again to the Minister for Health. Yesterday, Monday evening, at the Royal Children's Hospital they could not manage patient demand, with families forced to wait outside in the rain for up to 9 hours. Some of the children waiting to be seen were as young as nine months old. What immediate action has the minister taken to ensure that kids will not continue to wait outside, particularly in the rain, and that kids who present at the children's hospital will be seen immediately?

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:09): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. During the winter break I had the opportunity to visit many of our healthcare services, and it was fantastic to go and see the children's hospital in action and to understand the way in which they care for the children who present on any given day. What was great to see was how they have their own triaging system in emergency to make sure that they can turn around children as quickly as possible who might present with little cuts and bruises and so on. That was great to see.

But of course when we are talking about children that really need that urgent care, these are decisions—active decisions—that are made by our hardworking healthcare workers. They are being triaged by paramedics, they are being triaged by clinicians—at every step of the way the children that present to the Royal Children's Hospital are being cared for. Now, I want to make the point that I

absolutely understand the discomfort that may be experienced and, once again, how stressful it can be as a parent, because in that situation what you want is for your child to be seen first and foremost. But that is why we have clinicians in place, and their job is to assess every child on their acuity and to deliver care according to that. This is a responsibility that our health services take very, very seriously, and certainly as health minister it is something that I take very seriously.

Ms Staley: On a point of order, Speaker, the question asked what immediate action the minister had taken in relation to the specific instance that was raised, so on relevance I ask you to get her to answer the question.

The SPEAKER: The question related to potential demand for children waiting, and I think the minister is being relevant to the question that was asked.

Ms THOMAS: Thank you, Speaker. I thank the member for their question. I make this point: the caseload at a hospital like the children's varies hour to hour, day to day. Of course it is being impacted right now by the number of staff who are furloughed because they have COVID, and that is before we take account of all of those healthcare workers who are also not able to be at work today because of other planned or unplanned leave. I want to take this opportunity to thank them and to thank all of the workers at the children's hospital who work so hard every day—extra shifts, whatever it takes—to deliver the care that the children of Victoria deserve.

Mr GUY (Bulleen—Leader of the Opposition) (14:12): It is the second time this circumstance has occurred at the Royal Children's with children and their parents waiting outside to be seen because of mismanagement by the government—the second time in just two weeks. One of the doctors present told patients last night the situation was the worst he had seen in 20 years. Can the minister provide a guarantee to parents across Victoria that a situation like this, with children unable to be seen at an emergency department, will not happen again?

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:13): Thank you very much for that question. I will make the point, and I am happy to make it: this is the most challenging circumstance our public health system has found itself in, just like public health systems everywhere in Australia and all around the world. This is a one-in-100-year event. The global pandemic continues. Those on the other side seem to have chosen to neglect that, but we have not. We are acutely aware of the impact. Right now there are more than 800 people in hospital with COVID. There are, as I said, all the staff that are furloughed. Our system is under enormous pressure, but through all of that pressure our government will continue to support our hardworking healthcare workers. We will stand by them, and we will support them.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS: VIRTUAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:14): I rise to update the house on how the Andrews Labor government is expanding our world-leading virtual emergency department to residential aged care facilities right across Victoria. This morning it was great to be with my good friend the Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers and the secretary of the ambulance union, Danny Hill, to hear firsthand how this initiative is ensuring that older Victorians get the care that they need without needing to go to hospital. In doing so this is helping to take the load off our busy emergency departments and freeing up our hardworking ambos so that they can get right back on the road.

Supported by the extraordinary clinicians, including Dr Loren Sher at Northern Health, this service has already supported more than 28 000 Victorians to access the care they need while helping ease the load on our hospitals as they manage unprecedented demand. And now between 80 and 100 aged care residents per day will be eligible to access this service, which means that they will be able to get the care that they need in their home. This will avoid unnecessary transport to emergency departments, which of course is incredibly upsetting and uncomfortable for our older Victorians. We are focused on treating older Victorians with the care, respect and dignity that they deserve. This pathway is just one

of the initiatives that is being delivered under our \$162 million emergency response announcement, which the Premier and I made only last month, which is focused on supporting our emergency response through our ambulances and through our emergency departments. Innovations like this come when you listen to healthcare workers, which is what we have done. These are all initiatives that have been driven by our healthcare workers. Only the Andrews Labor government will back them in.

AMBULANCE SERVICES

Ms KEALY (Lowan) (14:16): My question is to the Minister for Ambulance Services. In round 1 of the Horsham district football league Kaniva Leeor football player Matt Tink suffered a fractured and dislocated hip. Matt was in intense pain. No pain relief was available on the ground, and it was clear urgent medical intervention was required. Despite Matt's critical situation the first two calls to overworked 000 staff were dismissed as non-life-threatening and 'just a football injury', and twice urgent calls for an ambulance to be dispatched were rejected. It was not until a former lead nurse from Kaniva hospital called 000 some time after the first call that an ambulance was finally dispatched—the third call to 000. Why are country ambulance resources so scarce that it takes three calls to 000 to get an ambulance dispatched in country Victoria?

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:17): I thank the member for Lowan for her question. I will make a couple of points just to kind of provide some clarity for the member. ESTA takes the call, and then it is handed to Ambulance Victoria, who will triage the situation and will distribute resources as needed on any given day based on the acuity of the calls that are coming in. These are decisions that are made by qualified clinicians, and they are best placed to make these decisions.

Once again can I acknowledge the discomfort that has been experienced by the person that you have referenced. I want to acknowledge that, but once again, under our government we have invested in our paramedics. Back in 2014 we made a commitment to the people of Victoria that we would end the war on our paramedics. We have subsequently recruited more than 2200 paramedics, and only last week I was out with the Premier welcoming the latest bunch of recruits, 157 of whom will be placed in rural and regional Victoria.

Our ambulance services, just like our healthcare services, are impacted by COVID. So once again, on any given day there are paramedics who are unable to come to work. The call takers in ESTA, our paramedics at secondary triage, the paramedics working now in the virtual ED and the paramedics out on the road are doing a fantastic job. They are working as hard as they can to deliver the emergency life-saving services that Victorians need. But tough decisions have to be made every single day, and they will be based on the acuity of the incident. I want to make the point that our government have continued to invest through the pandemic to ensure that we are giving Ambulance Victoria the resources it needs to deliver the very best care that it can. Of course if the member for Lowan wants to share details with me of the person concerned to enable my department to make contact with that person and seek their permission to find out more details, I am happy for her to do so.

Ms KEALY (Lowan) (14:20): It is now 16 weeks after his injury, yet Matt still does not have feeling or movement in his right foot and does not know if he ever will. Matt will never play football again, and his ability to return to full work capacity is doubtful because of the extended time his nerve was compressed while waiting for 000 to agree to send an urgently required ambulance. Can the minister explain to Matt and other local footballers across the state why scarce resources have led to serious injuries now being assessed as not urgent and not requiring an ambulance if the injury occurs on a football ground?

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:21): I thank the member for Lowan, and I make this point: I am certainly not aware, and I suspect that it is not the case at all, that any such decision is made. That is simply nonsensical. An injury is an injury, and it is assessed by a qualified clinician, who will dispatch the appropriate care at the appropriate time. I am not a clinician nor do I believe is the member for Lowan, so she has got a lot of assumptions in the

question that she asked. But as I said, I extend that offer. If she wants to provide me with the details, I am happy to ask Ambulance Victoria to find out exactly what happened and to talk with Matt and to work with him.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS: LEVEL CROSSING REMOVALS

Ms ALLAN (Bendigo East—Minister for Transport Infrastructure, Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop, Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery) (14:22): Over the winter break there was no break when it came to removing dangerous and congested level crossings around the state. Recently I joined with the members for Tarnait and St Albans to mark the removal of the 65th level crossing at Fitzgerald Road in Ardeer.

Mr Andrews: How many?

Ms ALLAN: I will come back to that number, Premier. In 2014 the house might recall that the Andrews Labor government promised to have 50 level crossings removed by the end of this year, yet here we are and 65 have already gone. Some call doing more a blowout. Well, yes, we have blown out the number of level crossings we committed to removing this year. Not only have we removed them ahead of schedule, we are under budget, with hundreds of millions of dollars being returned to the budget in May of this year.

As work winds down on one level crossing it ramps right back up on another. I was very pleased to be in Croydon yesterday to see another dangerous and congested level crossing that is on its way to being gone at Coolstore Road. We are removing every level crossing on the Lilydale line, and with the recent removal of the nearby level crossing at Manchester Road, Mooroolbark, the local community can see with their own eyes the benefit that it brings. I know that people are looking forward to seeing the level crossing gone in the heart of Croydon.

We get on and do the hard work of planning and delivering projects. Victorians know that when we say we will do something we do it. Others take a different approach. On Sunday morning we opened our newspapers to read that some had just proclaimed the east–west link dead. By 6 o’clock that night, though, it had been resuscitated. It feels like we are watching a re-run of *Weekend at Bernie’s* with this project and with the Liberal Party, who just cannot quite let it go while we get on and deliver the projects we are committed to.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: The member for Frankston is warned.

SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr HIBBINS (Prahran) (14:24): My question is for the Minister for Planning. Minister, this week is Homelessness Week. Victoria is in a housing crisis. There are around 25 000 Victorians that are homeless on any given night and 120 000 people on the public housing waiting list, yet last week the government finalised the planning scheme for the Arden precinct, which provides only an unenforceable, non-binding 6 per cent target for affordable housing—despite the planning panel recommending it be mandatory—and no requirement for public housing to be built. Minister, given the housing and homelessness crisis Victoria is facing, why is there no requirement for affordable or public housing to be built in such a significant development area?

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! I will call the Minister for Planning when the house comes to order.

Mr Wynne interjected.

The SPEAKER: The member for Richmond is warned.

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale—Leader of the House, Minister for Planning) (14:25): I thank the member for Prahran for his question, and I thank him for his interest in social and affordable housing, certainly something that is very dear to my heart when my own mother grew up in housing commission accommodation in West Heidelberg. I absolutely understand the importance of social housing and community housing and ensuring that across our communities and across the precincts that we develop we have opportunities for social and affordable housing for our communities. It is disappointing that those opposite have not put their name to some of the reforms that we have sought to put forward to this end.

I do thank the member for Prahran for his question. It is important that in all of our planning framework, in all our decisions around planning strategy across our communities and across our projects that we do make provision for housing that suits the demographics, the needs and the various interests of communities, and we look forward to continuing to do that in the future.

Mr HIBBINS (Prahran) (14:26): The only people who benefited from the decision not to have mandatory affordable housing or public housing in this development are the property developers who are not required to give back to the community. Given that there are major developments right across the city, when will the government stop siding with the interests of property developers over people in need of a home and introduce mandatory requirements for affordable and social housing?

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale—Leader of the House, Minister for Planning) (14:27): I again thank the member for Prahran for his question and for his interest in affordable housing. It is a shame that he is ill informed and simply wrong. There is a requirement for social housing, and it will continue to be an important aspect of all decisions in relation to planning of new precincts around our community.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Ms HUTCHINS (Sydenham—Minister for Education, Minister for Women) (14:27): I rise to update the house on my attendance at the recent meeting of ministers from around Australia responsible for women and women's safety that was convened by the national Minister for Women, Katy Gallagher. At the meeting I outlined for my federal and state counterparts the Andrews Labor government's commitment to addressing women's equality through economic and workforce participation. I am extremely proud of this government's commitment to support women and our nation-leading Best Start, Best Life initiative, backed in by a \$9 billion commitment. I have to share with the house that there was a lot of interest in this initiative at the meeting, including how we are working with the New South Wales government.

The Andrews Labor government will deliver landmark reform to childhood education and care, with a massive \$9 billion investment over the next decade to save families money and to support women in returning to the workforce. Whilst more dads are staying at home with the kids, it is still the mums who do the lion's share of work with child care. This initiative will make kinder free for every Victorian family and deliver a new year of universal pre-prep for four-year-olds across the state. It means next year a family with a three-year-old or a four-year-old—in the case of the member for Northcote, she has both a three-year-old and a four-year-old—will pay nothing for kinder, saving them thousands, and we are building 50 new low-cost, government-operated childcare centres in childcare deserts across the state to ensure that regional parents do not have to travel long distances for a great start to their kids' lives. It is about creating opportunity and giving women the time and the freedom to pursue their own goals and their own ambitions.

And speaking of giving women choices, this side of the house supports women being able to access safe, legal and dignified reproductive choices, including abortion.

HEALTH SYSTEM

Ms KEALY (Lowan) (14:30): My question is to the Minister for Health, and it is wonderful to be here to ask this question to the Minister for Health. The elective surgery waiting list for last quarter was around 90 000. Reporting of this quarter's waiting list is now overdue for release. Why won't the minister release the latest figures? Is it because the elective surgery waiting list now exceeds 100 000 Victorians?

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:31): I thank the member for Lowan for her question. Let us be clear: when the quarterly data is ready, when it has been collated and when it has been validated it will be released, as is our normal practice. And it is this government and this government only that sought to introduce and has introduced regular quarterly reporting, and we have provided real transparency when it comes to the performance of our health and ambulance systems. This of course is in complete contrast to those on the other side, who have always worked to try and hide the information that is available. We in contrast work to make as much information as transparent as possible. That is what we will do; the quarterly data will be reported when it is complete and ready to be made public.

Ms KEALY (Lowan) (14:32): Can the minister advise why the elective surgery waiting list, now at record levels, omits waiting list figures at some regional hospitals, such as Mildura and Bairnsdale, despite Bairnsdale alone having a local waitlist of around 1400 people?

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:32): I thank the member for Lowan for her question. The planned surgery waitlists across Victoria are being actively managed every single day by our healthcare services, and indeed we are doing what we can to spread the load around the state and make sure that we can get as many additional category 2 and category 3 surgeries done as possible. It is important to point out at this stage that every category 1 surgery is being delivered within clinically approved guidelines, so that is a very important fact that people need to know.

Once again I will make the point that the impact on elective surgeries is a consequence of the unprecedented demand on our system caused by COVID. If you want to do something to help our health workers, put a mask on in an indoor environment—that is what our health workers would ask that you do. That is one simple action you can take.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS: POLITICAL DONATIONS

Mr PEARSON (Essendon—Assistant Treasurer, Minister for Regulatory Reform, Minister for Government Services, Minister for Housing) (14:33): I rise to remind this chamber that Victoria's donation laws are the strictest and most transparent political donation and disclosure laws in Australia. Reforms made to the Electoral Act 2002 back in 2018 ensure Victorians know who makes and receives political donations in real time. The Andrews Labor government effectively put an end to individuals' and corporations' attempts to buy influence in Victorian politics. It was our government that championed these laws to ensure their passage, while the coalition opposed them at every turn.

I can tell you with great confidence that the reforms of 2018 have enhanced the integrity of the Victorian electoral system and established a new, strict regime to regulate political expenditure and donations. The measures in these reforms are many: a disclosure and reporting scheme, a cap on donations, a ban on foreign donations, a cap on anonymous donations, annual returns required to the Victorian Electoral Commission and anti-avoidance offences carrying prison terms. The ultimate effect of these reforms is to improve transparency. Victorians know who is donating what to whom, and these reforms severely restrict the influence of private money in the political process, and that is how it should be. At every single step of the way on this reform path those opposite have opposed transparency and they have opposed integrity, and we certainly know why they did so. What has been revealed this morning is the involvement of the Leader of the Opposition in a brazen attempt to

circumvent the country's strictest donations laws to get an advantage at the next election. This person cannot be trusted. His whatever-it-takes approach to politics is a warning to all—

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Member for Gembrook is warned.

Ms Staley: On a point of order, Speaker, question time is not an opportunity to attack the opposition, and that includes ministers statements.

The SPEAKER: I ask the minister to come back to his ministers statement.

Mr PEARSON: What has been revealed this morning is the involvement of the Leader of the Opposition in a brazen attempt to circumvent the country's strictest donations laws to get an advantage at the next election. This person cannot be trusted. His whatever-it-takes approach to politics is a warning to all to question his judgement and his ethics. What we have here is evidence of a scheme designed to donate to the Liberals through sham contracts. How many other sham contracts has the Leader of the Opposition procured to circumvent— *(Time expired)*

Constituency questions

CROYDON ELECTORATE

Mr HODGETT (Croydon) (14:36): (6446) My question is for the Minister for Energy, and it relates to the \$250 power saving bonus. Minister, my office has been approached by a couple of constituents who are having difficulty in applying for this payment. One constituent has made multiple attempts to apply online only to find that his street does not seem to exist on the Victorian Energy Compare database. I can assure the minister that Long View Road, Croydon South, is in fact a street, it does exist and it is home to approximately 130 residents. Why then when my constituent attempts to enter his street name when requested in the application process is he only presented with Longview Road, Balwyn, as an option? After many phone calls to the Energy Compare hotline he was told that as they did not establish the database they cannot amend it, and as a result he was unable to apply for this amount when it was only available to concession card holders last financial year. He is determined to apply for the \$250 bonus this financial year, but no-one has been able to assist him to date. Minister, please advise my constituent how he can process his power saving bonus application with a street address that does not exist.

SUNBURY ELECTORATE

Mr J BULL (Sunbury) (14:37): (6447) My question is to the Minister for Public Transport. Minister, what is the latest information on the planning, design and construction time lines for the delivery of the new Sunbury multideck car park? As the minister is well aware, this is a terrific local project within my community, a project that many within the community are very passionate and excited about. It builds upon the Andrews Labor government's more than \$2 billion investment in transport projects within my electorate. This includes the important removal of the Gap Road level crossing, the duplication and upgrade of Sunbury Road and a whole range of other projects, including the bus interchange upgrade locally. Again, I ask the Minister for Public Transport for the latest information on the design and construction of the new Sunbury multideck car park.

GIPPSLAND EAST ELECTORATE

Mr T BULL (Gippsland East) (14:38): (6448) My question is to the Minister for Agriculture in the other place, and it relates to the threat of foot-and-mouth disease in Victoria. The information I seek is what is being done by the department of agriculture to ensure that our local governments are prepared for a potential outbreak? I am advised that if an outbreak occurs, council saleyards will instantly become quarantine centres for all cattle that are on the road at that particular time, and if there is an outbreak, they must go straight there. We need to be prepared at our regional saleyards with facilities like foot washers but also other important infrastructure. I ask the minister to advise what is being done

to bring the regional saleyards that will act as quarantine centres up to standard so that they can fill that role in the highly unfortunate circumstance that an outbreak of foot-and-mouth occurs.

TARNEIT ELECTORATE

Ms CONNOLLY (Tarneit) (14:39): (6449) My question is for the Minister for Housing. Our communities in the western suburbs of Melbourne know the difference that social housing can make to change lives for the better. Everybody deserves to sleep with a roof over their head and the warm comforts of safe and secure housing, and I am pleased to know that this is something reflected by our government in its commitment to build new social housing infrastructure right across Victoria. In 2020 our government's budget allocated \$5.3 billion towards a historic spend on building over 12 000 new social housing units across Victoria. For vulnerable people in communities like mine this news is extremely welcome. Having worked with many of my colleagues in the west on the issues of homelessness and housing affordability, it was wonderful news when we announced that Wyndham would be a priority build area for these new houses. Just last week in metro Melbourne we hit our halfway milestone, with more than 6800 homes built across our wonderful city. So my question for the minister is this: how many new social housing units have been built in the Wyndham municipality as part of this investment?

ROWVILLE ELECTORATE

Mr WELLS (Rowville) (14:40): (6450) My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, why is the Victorian government forcing Rowville residents to pay excessive prices to park when visiting Monash Health? Adam, when consoling his wife as she succumbed to ovarian cancer, was forced to pay nearly \$500 just to park at the hospital, coming and going over one week. However, the hospital car park rip-off is not isolated to Adam. It also affects the 276 000 patients Monash Medical Centre admits every year and the 13 000 overworked staff that are employed at the hospital. The Andrews government cannot seriously expect taxpayers to shell out excessive money for hospital car parking they have already paid for. It is time we gave the workers and the patients in the struggling health system a break.

BAYSWATER ELECTORATE

Mr TAYLOR (Bayswater) (14:41): (6451) Our healthcare workers are true heroes, so it was great to head out to the Angliss Hospital recently with the Minister for Health to say a massive thankyou to them and talk up the major upgrade we are delivering at this much-loved local. So my constituency question is to the Minister for Health. When will construction start on the \$112 million of work to back in this great hospital?

Day in and day out our healthcare workers continue to turn up to give people the care they need when they need it. The Angliss is a great hospital that has served this part of the world for well over 80 years, but it needs a bit more work to ensure the staff and patients have the very best facilities, so I am excited that the state Labor government are significantly upgrading this loved local. I am also excited that architectural firm Silver Thomas Hanley has been appointed to design the expansion, which will see more beds, more elective surgery suites and better facilities for world-class care.

At the peak of construction the project is expected to create and sustain around 330 construction jobs, and the expansion builds on previous upgrades from 2018, which included a new ICU and a refurbishment of the adult short-stay and paediatric emergency areas. Thank you again to the team there and across the state who, during unprecedented demand on the healthcare system, continue to do incredible work each and every day. I am proud this government backs them in at every single step and always will.

SANDRINGHAM ELECTORATE

Mr ROWSWELL (Sandringham) (14:42): (6452) My constituency question is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and I ask: when will the government introduce road safety measures to keep

families, kids and educators safe along Bluff Road outside the Bambini Early Learning Centre? Bambini, a popular local childcare centre on Bluff Road in Sandringham, is prone to busy drop-off and pick-up periods, given there are over 150 children at that centre. Unfortunately one of the centre's educators was involved in a terrible accident just outside while on their way to work. Bambini has set up a petition calling on the government to establish a keep-clear zone and a 40-kilometre zone to ensure that families and staff members can safely enter and exit the centre. So far nearly 400 locals on behalf of their families have signed that petition, so I call on the government to immediately adopt measures to protect local families and educators from any further road accidents outside the Bambini Early Learning Centre before another unfortunate accident occurs.

MORDIALLOC ELECTORATE

Mr RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) (14:43): (6453) My constituency question is for the Minister for Transport Infrastructure. When will the next stage of designs for Parkdale's level crossing removals and brand new train station be shared with our Kingston community? The 44-minute boom gate down times impact on our local residents at Parkers Road and Warrigal Road. Two hundred and ten trains run up and down the Frankston train line every day, and with the Melbourne Metro rail tunnel around the corner in just the next two years a turn-up-and-go service will mean more trains will be running more often to get you to where you need to go in the future. These level crossings are taking 20 000 vehicle movements between them at Parkers Road and Warrigal Road. They are dangerous, they are congested and they need to go. We shared an iteration of designs with our local community recently—hundreds of residents shared their views on what they want to see in the open space and the beautiful new reimagined areas of Parkdale—and the next design iterations are just around the corner. So I ask the Deputy Premier and transport infrastructure minister when those designs will be shared with our local community.

PRAHRAN ELECTORATE

Mr HIBBINS (Prahran) (14:44): (6454) I will take this on the basis that the member for Morwell is not in the chamber and there is a spare crossbench slot going, unless that was to be taken by someone else. I just ask the minister for transport for an update on pop-up bike lanes within the Prahran electorate. My understanding is there are a number to be rolled out within the Stonnington local government area in Prahran. I had a really productive briefing with the government sometime earlier this year, but the time line indicated that they would be installed by halfway through this year. We are well past that now, so I would like to get an update on the progress of those from the minister and also an update on the progress of the ones rolled out in the Port Phillip area. My understanding is that while there has been some public discussion on those the installation is not complete: what is actually supposed to be there is not in there as yet. So I ask the minister for a further update on those pop-up bike lanes.

BOX HILL ELECTORATE

Mr HAMER (Box Hill) (14:45): (6455) My constituency question is for the Minister for Public Transport. I would like to know when Metro Trains will undertake works to revegetate the embankment at Blackburn station. I was approached some time ago by a Blackburn resident—a very passionate resident, Margarete Lee—about revegetating the barren slope of land at Blackburn station, between Station Street and Vine Street. The soil is extremely compacted and appears to be comprised of a combination of spoil and building rubble, making it unsightly in this highly trafficked area. For some time my office has been working alongside Margarete to seek action from Metro Trains to improve the soil structure in this area and plant trees and shrubs in this location to help beautify the area. I was recently notified of Metro Trains' intention to revegetate the embankment at the station, and any greening close to the station will be appreciated by rail users, bus commuters and locals. The Blackburn community looks forward to finding out when these works will commence.

Mr Hibbins: On a point of order, Speaker, just on a number of unanswered questions, questions 6640, 6641, 6642, 6643, 6644 and 6646 were due to be answered in June and have not been answered yet. I would appreciate if they could be followed up with the relevant ministers.

The SPEAKER: I will refer them to the responsible ministers.

Bills

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING BILL 2022

Second reading

Debate resumed.

Ms KEALY (Lowan) (14:47): In the brief time that I have left available to me I just want to reiterate how important it is that there is a specific focus put on rebuilding Victoria's mental health workforce. Unless we have the workforce there, people will simply not be able to get the mental health support they need when they need it. It is all well and good to create another 2500 jobs, but we have already got 6000 vacancies in the mental health sector in Victoria. We need the people to actually fill those jobs so that we can provide mental health support and not have the only avenue to getting critical support being once you finally make it into an emergency department or into a hospital bed. That is not the system that we need or want in Victoria. We must do better, and the only way to do that is to rebuild Victoria's mental health workforce.

I would like to highlight a number of recommendations arising from the minority report in the *Review of the Pandemic (Visitors to Hospitals and Care Facilities) Orders*, which was recently published by the Pandemic Declaration Accountability and Oversight Committee. This provides a number of recommendations which would immediately release mental health workers into Victoria's mental health system. For example, within this legislation finally counsellors are recognised as mental health practitioners, but we will not see this come into play until September next year. If the government had not voted against our private members bill in the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council last year, which would have recognised counsellors as mental health practitioners, then we would have an additional 2000 counsellors being able to deliver mental health support in our schools under the Schools Mental Health Fund.

We also have a number of recommendations in relation to providing funding support for a provisional psychologist to assist to meet surge demand for mental health support. This is something that can be provided by the Andrews Labor government in the same way it is providing funding support to student nurses. We also have recommended that the Andrews Labor government immediately provide additional funded positions to ensure that the number of postgraduate psychiatrists is sufficient for all suitable candidates to train to be a psychiatrist in Victoria. We missed out on over 30 last year. People that could be training in those positions simply are not. They wanted to—they applied, they met all the criteria—but the government would not fund the places. Finally, the Andrews Labor government should immediately bring forward funding for the Schools Mental Health Fund from 2024 to meet the immediate demand for mental health support from students in metropolitan Melbourne. These are simple solutions. They are what the Liberals and Nationals have put forward. That is why we are the only people who have a plan to fix Victoria's mental health system.

Mr RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) (14:49): It is great to see you in the chair, Speaker, and thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this landmark, generational bill. The Mental Health and Wellbeing Bill 2022 is some of the most important work that we will do as a Parliament, not just in the 59th Parliament but in succeeding parliaments, as we set a course to a new way of approaching mental health and wellbeing for generations to come.

There are a couple of points the member for Lowan made that I will probably reflect on during my contribution, but let us be clear here: it is the Andrews Labor government who called a royal commission. It is the Andrews Labor government who has delivered on every recommendation of this

royal commission and will continue to do so into the future. It is the Andrews Labor government that did not have a bet each way on whether it would support a mental health levy. Similar to the work that has been done in road trauma where we have special charges to support people with road trauma, we will do that into the future for mental health and wellbeing support. We will quarantine that funding to make sure that into the future Victorians get the support they need. It is not about the ebbs and flows of budgets and outcomes but about supporting mental health and wellbeing into the future, because we should be targeting zero for the number of people that are lost in Victoria to mental ill health. If we look at every person that has passed away as a preventable death, the work that we do and the urgency in acquitting these recommendations, this bill, these recommendations, will save lives. The ripple impact on communities of mental ill health was well established in the royal commission. It is a devastating toll that affects families and communities for generations to come, and we need to do a lot more.

It was not through a lack of funding and effort from the Andrews Labor government; we had hundreds of millions of dollars invested in each budget up until that landmark royal commission announcement in November 2019. In fact hundreds of millions of dollars—I think it was about \$700 million—in additional funding was provided by the then Minister for Mental Health, the member for Albert Park, but we were not seeing substantial changes in the outcomes. A lot of that funding was going towards important initiatives, but it was not the groundbreaking change that we needed to see to change the lives and outcomes of Victorians experiencing mental ill health. This bill is the mechanism for the implementation of all of that work done by the royal commission—the 65 recommendations that will be a guiding force for Victorian governments into the future.

I would ask the member for Lowan as the shadow minister, and indeed all coalition members, to guarantee that they will support the mental health and wellbeing levy into the future, to guarantee that they will share the Andrews Labor government's ambitious plan in this bill—750 pages that will absolutely transform the mental health and wellbeing outcomes for Victorians—and join us on that journey with cross-party support for these initiatives to make sure that our communities have certainty into the future.

There are some important elements that we need to consider, like the challenges that we face that were played out in the royal commission. About 60 000 people in Victoria each and every day care for someone with mental ill health. That is a significant amount of care and love and support from fellow Victorians giving up their own ambitions and aspirations in that moment to care for others. It is an extraordinary number. We have a \$14.2 billion economic impact from mental ill health in our community. That is really stifling the economic ambition of our state, but the social and emotional elements to that as well are that people are suffering over that time and are not able to fulfil their potential and destiny from a broken mental health system. These challenges played out quite vividly in the royal commission's evidence, and I wanted to place on record the thanks and appreciation of all Victorians for the people who shared their stories, who were vulnerable in that time and who detailed their journey to make sure that we have the lessons for the future to change those outcomes.

What has been the journey since November 2019 when the royal commission made those recommendations? In 2020 we did not waste a moment. Following the royal commission interim report we saw substantial investment. In 2020 we saw \$869 million invested in critical-demand mental health and wellbeing support as we awaited those final recommendations, such was the urgency of the Andrews Labor government in seeking to support our mental health and wellbeing system and to make those urgent changes up-front. We have seen over the last two budgets \$3.8 billion to kickstart the next decade of mental health and wellbeing reforms, focused on funding for services to provide greater clinical care and community support services to Victorians in need. In the most recent Victorian budget we saw the outgoing Deputy Premier and Minister for Mental Health detail \$1.3 billion in further investment, really securing the foundations of the generational reforms that will come from the Mental Health and Wellbeing Act reforms that start to really transform our mental health and wellbeing sector.

I want to place on record as well that a key focus of this year's budget was securing additional capacity and workforce. The member for Lowan made an interesting comment about where Victoria's mental

health and wellbeing community had found itself—a broken system. But to suggest it was a disaster I think is a poor reflection on the thousands of dedicated mental health and wellbeing workforce—our nurses, our doctors, our psychologists, our psychiatrists, our counsellors—who each and every day through their efforts support people on their mental health and wellbeing journey, sometimes at the acute level in our emergency departments, in our mental health and wellbeing facilities, all the way through to preventative health and the positive frame that we have for everyone having a role to play in supporting mental health and wellbeing, either for themselves or for someone in their community, someone that they love and care about and cherish. That is a real hallmark of this sector.

As the incoming Parliamentary Secretary for Mental Health and Social Inclusion, already I have had the opportunity to speak to the mental health and wellbeing workforce as well as the Health and Community Services Union who represent workers in this sector. You get an overwhelming sense of care, compassion and kindness from this sector. They are indeed the best parts of Victoria, each and every day supporting people, sometimes at their lowest point, and they are doing long hours and a huge amount of work to support those in need. On behalf of my community and the Victorian government I really give them a shout-out. Their work and toil over decades, the efforts that they have put in and their contributions to the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System and then to consultation on this landmark legislation have contributed to a better way forward. They have been toiling away for decades in a system with administrative challenges and a lack of integration of different services, and that wraparound policy support and aspiration has been very difficult. But this is a new way forward where we can be hopeful for a future where we lower the impact and the toll of mental ill health. We look towards a more aspirational, inclusive and supportive future for Victorians led by dedicated and committed mental health and wellbeing practitioners and workforces.

There is a substantial amount of recommendations to be seen in this bill coming forward. It is a substantial journey that we are on as a community into the future. We have seen this also in education, with mental health and wellbeing practitioners being rolled out across our communities and our primary schools and secondary schools. It is a really important contribution that is made in education. It is a journey from early childhood all the way through. That is why I think the portfolio of social inclusion will be really critical in ensuring that every single Victorian at any stage is not left behind. There is a place for you in Victoria, wherever you are up to—whether you are in your early years or have the challenges that we face with loneliness and social isolation, which have been impacted substantially during the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a place for you in Victoria, and we will support you into the future as well. That is a really critical frame to social inclusion. We see right at the grassroots level with not-for-profit and community organisations, with councils and all the way through to state government services the need to increase funding and support for people in our communities going forward.

I want to finally place on record the deep appreciation of my community but also of all Victorians of the work that was done by the former Deputy Premier and Minister for Mental Health. When you read through the second-reading speech, it is something else. The passion and energy and purpose that come from those pages are really something to behold. To read that speech with the passion that has been put forward shows this government's commitment, the Andrews Labor government's commitment, to getting this policy setting right and to making sure it is transparent and accountable into the future. You can see the purpose, energy and will to make sure that we change lives for the future. It is a real privilege to see this bill hit this Parliament. It is probably one of the greatest features of the 59th Parliament, if not the most important element of the work that we do as parliamentarians. This will change and save lives for the future. It is great to speak to this bill, and I am glad to see that it will support my constituents in Kingston and Greater Dandenong.

Mr BATTIN (Gembrook) (14:59): I might sound like I am a bit out of breath. It is a fair run up the stairs. I would like to rise on the Mental Health and Wellbeing Bill 2022.

Mr Richardson interjected.

Mr BATTIN: I have just had some water, thank you very much, member for Mordialloc. Some of the issues I know we have been reviewing around mental health are the impact it has in my shadow portfolio of police and how Victoria Police over time have dealt with mental health issues throughout our state. First of all, I think it is really important that we put on record that the training, education and access to education and support throughout Victoria Police have improved year on year. You can go back many years to when Victoria Police struggled with how they dealt with people living with mental health issues. Now, today, we see the improvements that have happened within the staffing, within the training and even through the academy in how recruits coming through learn how to better deal with and handle people who are living with mental health issues. During my time in Victoria Police I went to many cases; probably this and domestic violence were two of the main things you were called out for in the Dandenong area. Although crime is what everyone likes to think is all that the job of Victoria Police is, there is so much more to it. It is when you go out to deal with people living with mental health issues that you truly understand the different ways and the art of communicating with people to ensure that they are comfortable and ensure that you are protecting yourself as well as protecting them, not as an offender but as effectively, almost, a patient; they are someone you want to work with.

Some of the things that need to be addressed and that we have raised recently are around the handling of people living with mental health issues—how they are transported to hospital and what happens when they get into the public health network, particularly if they are being driven or transported in a police vehicle. Police vehicles can range from vans and cars to buses et cetera. They have got a whole range of police vehicles they use for transport, but when transporting people living with mental health issues who are non-violent, who generally are in a calmer state and who just need transport because they may be a danger to themselves or they are displaying suicidal ideation or other issues to be concerned about, Victoria Police may transport them to the hospital using a police divisional van. That in itself could be something very confronting for a person living with a mental health issue. It is something that needs to be addressed. It is something that the Police Association Victoria has many concerns about—how that transport turning up to a scene or a situation where there is a person living with mental health issues can trigger them—and even more so now. We all know we have got one of the best multicultural countries in the world, and particularly here in Victoria we know how proud we are of our multiculturalism. We also have a lot of people coming from countries where the police themselves do not have the same respect in the community, are treated differently and have been the ones to persecute some of these people before they arrived here in Australia. So people's level of respect for and understanding of Victoria Police can be vastly different. That is why when we talk about mental health it is so important, as we move forward, to talk about the education model and the many different ways to handle and deal with mental health issues. As I said, Victoria Police are very passionate about this.

The police association has been very strong in its messaging that the hours spent by Victoria Police in transport and in attending scenes with non-violent people living with mental health issues mean another police vehicle off the road, and it does put a strain on their resources. When you take to a hospital a person with mental health issues, you effectively end up in a similar situation to ambulance ramping, but obviously it is police ramping, where the person cannot be handed over directly to the hospital staff. I know the association is looking at and reviewing the process of how we hand people across and how people who are arrested and taken into custody, effectively, are to be transported to the hospital. It is under section 351 of the Mental Health Act 2014 now. It was under section 10 when I was younger. Sorry, it is under section 351 now, but it used to be section 10, in case I refer to the wrong one. It is, when they are using that power to transport someone, how long Victoria Police can then end up at the hospital that has become a real concern, because if you have got two police officers sitting there waiting to hand over a patient, again that is one less resource on the road. Victoria Police, no matter how much training they have done, are not psychologists and are not counsellors; they are Victoria Police. They do a wonderful job, but they cannot be expected to sit with someone living with a mental health issue for prolonged hours in a position where they effectively become someone who could be in a counselling position. Most who have been involved in anything in counselling will

understand that one of the important aspects of counselling is you have got to have that training, the education and the understanding of who you are dealing with, and if you have got Victoria Police, who could say the wrong thing—unintentionally—or counsel in the wrong direction, it could make situations worse just in words.

I will give an example of that. When I was out on the job in about 2003 we went to a scene and a person was at the time hallucinating about seeing people from the army in the garden. I was a young constable at the time, and we looked at that and we went along with that story because we had no training. We did not know what to do. So we went along with that story as being the best way to keep them calm until someone could come and assist. We were not counsellors, so we went along with the story. I know now that that was not the best way to deal with that situation, and if we had had the training we might have done it differently then.

The legislation here also emphasises and reiterates the police, ambulance and clinical early response program, which is ensuring that we have got mental health practitioners as well as Victoria Police responding to a lot of these situations, so you do not just have that one-pronged response, you actually have the best response in the interests of the patient. And I think we have to keep reiterating that it is in the interests of a patient. Even though we have arrest powers, we have warrants, we have all these other things, it is actually still a patient when it comes to these situations when you are going down with mental health issues.

Another thing that I know Victoria Police have raised is more and more recently, with the challenges in the health system and the health crisis here in Victoria, they are being used more and more as a first responder. That is a big concern not just to the police but in the interests of the patients that they are going to see because if Victoria Police are the first responders, again it goes back to the lack of counselling, the lack of understanding of exactly how to deal with it. No matter how much training they can do, they are never going to be the best qualified to do these responses. So what we need to ensure when we are moving forward is that we have the correct people within the health sector and the mental health sector so they can respond and we have got enough staff so we do not have to send out police as first responders.

As I said before, the issue is not just for the patient themselves, where it could be a trigger point, but also, if you can imagine being a person living with a mental health illness, having a police vehicle turn up at the front of your house is something that paints another picture throughout your community if neighbours see that. We all do it unintentionally, but if you walk out of your house and there is a police car in the street parked outside someone's house, if there are one or two police cars, you want to kind of know what is going on. Some of it is a bit selfish because we want to know if it is something that could impact us, but the other part is just curiosity. We want to know what is happening in our street when we see two or three police cars arriving at any particular scene, and if you have got someone who is non-violent, who is not a threat to the rest of the community, all that can do is change the perception among the local community that that person could be dangerous. And that is genuinely no good for the patient, because they then feel that they cannot communicate with others in their community.

You will know in this place we are very proud of what we are seeing with the mental health changes within legislation, the recommendations of the royal commission, and we have all agreed to the fact that we need to make changes throughout the entire mental health network, and I know this is the beginning of the process. I will say in closing on this that this is an exceptionally large bill, and I say to the staff and to the department staff, well done. Congratulations on actually putting together such an important document. We know these documents will always have elements of them that are not perfect as we move forward that will need to be fixed by future governments, and that is just because of the size of something like this where you are going to have those implications. But I will say, as a Parliament, it is so important that we work together to ensure that we are delivering the best outcomes in relation to patients here in Victoria in mental health. We can be and will be the lead organisations or the lead state when it comes to responding to mental health, but that comes through working in a great partnership between our mental health network and Victoria Police.

Mr McGuire (Broadmeadows) (15:09): Deputy Speaker, congratulations on your elevation.

I rise to speak on the Mental Health and Wellbeing Bill 2022 because this delivers the key recommendations of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System. It is an important milestone in the 10-year mental health reform program required to give full effect to the royal commission's vision. I want to add value to this as well, because I had the opportunity of catching up with Professor McGorry, who was the chair of the expert advisory committee for the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System. This was just in the last week when the Victorian government was launching its new strategy for health and medical research for the next 10 years. That is what we are doing.

Here is the big picture of how we are creating a better health system even in a time of pandemic, trying to take care of the issues surrounding mental health for people right throughout the community and also how we are going to build in the future. This is one of our world-leading areas. I say this to give a context. Victoria's thriving mental health research community is solving global health challenges and advancing the Victorian economy. Victoria's health and medical research sector is one of the state's most significant and productive industries. Every \$1 invested in the sector generates \$3.90 of activity in the economy. Here is how we take care of people: we build a better system, and we drive economic activity and a benefit for the community.

This ties in because I have been pursuing how we can get multibillion-euro investment opportunities from the UK and Italy to save lives at home and abroad. This stems from my address to the Australian British Health Catalyst, 'Creating opportunity from adversity'. That was the theme that I was prosecuting, and it has led to new opportunity. We had a great response from the Italian ministry of economic development. It has hundreds of millions of euros to invest. The leader of their biomedical sector publicly described the meeting on partnership scenarios as 'great', so there is an immediate connection and a willingness to collaborate with what we are doing in Victoria as Australia's leader. That is the key thing. These proposals offer outstanding benefits for medical research, for education and for industry development at home and abroad. Monash University has the competitive advantage, with a campus in Italy and a world number one ranking for commercialising intellectual property in pharmacy, and it is one of the epicentres of Victoria's acclaimed ecosystem. The projects remain confidential, but this is a collaboration scenario that is being discussed and pursued right now.

The second initiative I pursued is an Australian research collaboration with the UK, which has €2 billion it wants to invest in science and medical research. The problem that it has is that the European Union is blocking the UK from the world's largest research and development investment fund, the €95 billion Horizon Europe fund. This provides a lucrative opportunity for Australia, and again, as I say, with Victoria as the beating heart of our medical research, this gives us the best chance to progress on these issues and to land a deal and a benefit for all of Australia but based predominantly in Victoria.

The third initiative has already secured access to new digital technologies to enable health breakthroughs featuring the fight against cancer, especially the so-called Australian disease, melanoma, and also how we address hospital waiting lists, which is critical, and how we use digital technology and other innovative breakthroughs on mental health. This is the result of the investment from this government over a long period of time to build these ecosystems that are of international significance. The point I am making obviously is where you have Monash University, which has a campus already in Italy, here is a connection where we can bring our best and brightest in the same way that we did with the Cancer Moonshot. We internationalised that. That was President Obama's moonshot quest to cure cancer where he put then Vice-President Joe Biden in charge of mission control, and he came to Victoria in 2016 for the launch of our billion-dollar jewel in Australia's medical research crown, the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre. We are doing world-leading research. We have had the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System. The rest of the world is looking at what we are doing out of Victoria as Australia's leader. We also won the bid—

highly contested throughout the country—to manufacture mRNA vaccines. This becomes another part of our competitive advantage, and one thing leads to another.

Again in looking at how sophisticated the Monash sector is, you have got the university, you have got CSIRO connected by Innovation Walk, and we are going to have the heart hospital there as well. This is how we keep driving the sector and how it has the impact on saving lives at home and abroad. The point I want to make is that that is how national governments from Italy and from the UK see the opportunity that we can provide. That is what I have tried to do—create opportunity and then deliver the results as best we can. These are key strategies that will be pursued.

The mental health bill itself sets out the foundation for the future of mental health and wellbeing services in Victoria—one where lived experience voices are at the centre and mental health professionals are supported to deliver treatment, support and care in facilities that actually help people recover. The government acknowledged that the system was broken. This is how you have a patient-centred view. You have some of the world's leaders and best experts connected in as well. That is the model that is most likely to deliver you the best results, and that is the model that overseas countries are examining. That is the reason why you can build these much bigger partnerships and collaborations and have access to these new investments.

The situation that the UK finds itself in is that it has the €2 billion that it wants to invest, but it has now been frozen out by the European Union from the world's largest investment in research and development, the €95 billion Horizons Europe fund. That is because of Brexit and it is because of the situation in Ireland. So here is the opportunity. We are reaching out, saying, 'We can partner with you. If you want to invest with the best, you invest in Victoria'. That is how we have built this system, and that gives us the leadership position in medical research, not just nationally but also of international significance. I argue simply that you can look at the three biggest cities: Boston, with Harvard and MIT; London, with Imperial College and Oxbridge; and Melbourne, with the sophistication of the Parkville precinct, with all of our medical research leaders right through there. Then you reach across to the great southern hub, which is Monash University and CSIRO, and then you look at the manufacturing of vaccines, which the Italian government was incredibly interested in, and we have got the manufacturing arm in Broadmeadows with CSL. We have got the extra \$1.8 billion deal, done with the former federal government, for new vaccines against influenza nearby. So there is your manufacturing hub. There will be others to come, no doubt, with the manufacturing of mRNA.

This puts into the big-picture perspective why this bill is important, why we keep driving for leadership and excellence and why we connect with people to make sure that their experiences are told, listened to and delivered on. Here is how you can build a whole new system and an ecosystem that is truly of international significance. We are not world leading in many things if you take sport out, beyond being a quarry or a beach or a mine. Medical research has the best of our intellect, and it is how we drive the bigger picture ideas and then deliver the results for people and save lives and change lives at home and abroad.

Ms VALLENCE (Evelyn) (15:20): I rise also today to speak in support of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Bill 2022. We all know and we have all said around this chamber that Victoria is experiencing a mental health crisis and that the mental health system in Victoria is broken, and it has fallen drastically into this state under the watch of the Premier and this Labor government. People need to be able to access and receive help at the time that they need it, and at the moment that is not occurring. Unfortunately people are in need. They are experiencing mental ill health and have nowhere to turn to in their time of need. And the workforce—an amazing workforce, a dedicated workforce—are exhausted. They are fatigued. We know that the recent Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System identified a number of recommendations, particularly for addressing the challenges of the mental health workforce in Victoria but also the failure of the government. This exposes the failure of the government to invest adequately and in a timely fashion to address the decline in the workforce, the challenges that they are experiencing and dealing with, the burdens that they are experiencing and the attrition.

We also know that, through the course of the COVID-19 pandemic over recent times and during the lockdowns and restrictions imposed by the Andrews Labor government, things people were experiencing were around isolation and being away from loved ones, not being able to attend funerals and pay their respects to loved ones at that time, not being able to work, some small business owners struggling with actually keeping their business afloat, family breakdowns and an increase in domestic violence. All of those things that occurred and increased during lockdowns and the restrictions really only amplified the mental health crisis in Victoria. We knew that we were experiencing mental health challenges and plummeting into a crisis before the pandemic, and the pandemic only amplified it. The policies of this government through its pandemic response only amplified that. The workforce, as I said, have done a tremendous job, particularly during the pandemic, to support communities right across Victoria, and particularly my community, experiencing a spike in mental ill health. But of course where I live on the outskirts of Melbourne and near two country areas access to services is limited.

What I would just like to point out is that while members from the Andrews Labor government in their contributions on this bill will try to claim how good they were to have established the royal commission into the broken mental health system, what they fail to say in their contributions—they fail to be transparent—is that the system became broken under their failures, mismanagement and lack of investment. And while the Labor members will also claim that the Victorian Liberals and Nationals did not support a mental health levy, they have failed to be transparent that our policy was to actually make mental health core government business and part of the budget—not funded through a tax but funded through the budget—just like the health system, just like the police system and just like the education system. Our mental health system, the workforce, the sector and those Victorians experiencing mental ill health deserve absolutely that. The Victorian Liberals fully support all recommendations of the royal commission, and there is absolutely no time to delay in addressing and fixing the problems in our mental health system crucial to the collective wellbeing of communities right across Victoria. Victorians deserve no less than for the government and their elected members of Parliament to fix this crisis that we all talk about.

This bill seeks to act on recommendations of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System. The interim report was handed down in 2019. Five of the nine recommendations highlighted the desperate need to build the mental health workforce to ensure sufficient personnel to effectively deliver mental health services under the reformed system. That was a couple of years ago, and the bill is only coming before us today. The final report was handed down in early 2021.

While this legislation is before us today, and on behalf of the sector, I really think it is important to document that the government's consultation with the sector has been extremely limited. I think that is very disappointing. The Victorian Liberals and Nationals have been disappointed to hear from a variety of stakeholders throughout the mental health sector that there has been a lack of consultation and a lack of transparency about the contents of the proposed legislation. What concerns me most about this is that there may be opportunities missed and expertise not utilised to ensure that this bill is the best it can be to help recover and rebuild Victoria's mental health system.

To that end we have listened to the sector, in particular the alcohol and other drugs sector. I support our shadow minister's constructive amendment that will ensure the inherent relationship between alcohol and other drugs support services and treatment and the mental health sector is embedded in legislation. The Victorian Liberals and Nationals amendment is strongly supported by the alcohol and other drugs and mental health sectors. It recognises the inherent relationship between alcohol, drugs and mental health issues. It ensures that that group will be in the room as part of planning and implementation of the royal commission recommendations. We call on the Andrews government to recognise that this is a constructive amendment. It is a good idea, it is backed by the sector and it will strengthen the legislation. We plead with the members of the government to not oppose this just because it is not an idea that they had, but to support it.

I am particularly interested in young Victorians and supporting their mental wellbeing and mental health challenges. They have been disproportionately impacted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic

and the harsh and lengthy lockdowns imposed by the Andrews Labor government. This bill establishes Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing Victoria, which goes beyond the recommendations and distinctly recognises the fact that young people have been disproportionately impacted. Young people lost the ability to go to school. Their learning was disrupted, damaging their social networks and taking away their ability to work in jobs in retail and hospitality. They have been disproportionately impacted, and the statistics are troubling around mental ill health.

At this point in time I wish to pay tribute to the many local organisations in my community, in my electorate, that have gone above and beyond to help those experiencing mental ill health, both older Victorians and our youth, in our local community. I would like to shout out particularly to those who have played a key part. The Bridge Builders youth organisation made sure that they stayed connected with the youth of Lilydale district and the Yarra Ranges, the Yarra Valley and the Dandenong Ranges. Sue Sestan and the team at Inspiro do a tremendous job and not just at Inspiro—they are always looking to connect with other organisations for a full wraparound service for those in our community. Anchor, Headspace and the Lilydale Youth Hub—Lisa, Tyrell and the team at the Lilydale Youth Hub are doing a tremendous job.

I would like to point out the Lilydale Youth Hub is extremely valued in our community. They got off the ground through the pandemic and they have helped hundreds, probably thousands, of young people through the Lilydale district, the Yarra Valley and the Dandenong Ranges. They are at risk of closure because of uncertainty around future funding. They are so valued; we do not want to lose them. The mental health and wellbeing of young Victorians in my community will be at risk if the Andrews government does not listen and does not provide essential, crucial funding to the Lilydale Youth Hub. Some of the achievements include supporting nearly 3000 sessions with people and their families just in the last year. The Andrews government needs to provide interim funding of \$1.5 million to support the ongoing operations but really also a longer term plan to ensure that the Lilydale Youth Hub remains in Lilydale to the benefit of all young Victorians through Lilydale, the Yarra Valley and the Dandenong Ranges, otherwise this government will be leaving the youth in my community behind.

Ms RICHARDS (Cranbourne) (15:30): I am incredibly honoured to be able to have the opportunity to rise to speak on the Mental Health and Wellbeing Bill 2022 and reflect, in these last sitting weeks of this Parliament, that this is an incredibly important reform. To have the opportunity to be able to contribute to this debate is something that is extraordinarily important to all of us on this side and I think across the chamber as well, because this really does put our community at the centre, and the reason that many of us have actually fought so hard to be in this place is to represent our community. They say it takes a village to raise a child. Well, it has certainly taken a village to elevate this legislation and bring it to us here, so I am going to begin by making sure that at the centre of my contribution is appreciation and thanks to the many contributors to this legislation.

I would like to, straight up and at the very beginning, recognise those who have lived and living experience of mental illness—families, carers, supporters—and say how important it has been that they have opened up their hearts and provided us with the generosity of their contributions to this legislation. To have that lived experience put at the centre of a piece of legislation is something that we always aspire to. It is an aspiration that is always important to this government, but I think that the lived experience is particularly stark in this particular bill, and I wonder if there will be another place or another piece of legislation where it will be quite so strong in this Parliament. I would compare it perhaps to the legislation in response to the Royal Commission into Family Violence in that way.

I do want to thank the Minister for Mental Health and say how excited we are that the minister has taken on this important role at a time when we have so much reform and work to do, and I thank the member for Mordialloc in his role as Parliamentary Secretary for Mental Health and Social Inclusion. But I do want to say how important it has been to have the previous Minister for Mental Health, the member for Monbulk, and the work that he undertook in making sure that what we have here to debate is a reform that will change our state forever. I also want to thank the member for Albert Park. The genesis of this reform was perhaps sitting in his bailiwick when he had the role of Minister for Mental

Health. I also thank the departmental officials and the minister's office for the passion and drive, intellect and insight that have gone into this legislation. Others who I will talk a little bit more about later are members of the workforce, and many of us have had long, important and deep conversations with members of the workforce. Particularly in this context I would like to thank the Health and Community Services Union for always being generous with their time, the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation, of course, and clinicians, psychiatrists and allied health professionals.

This is an incredibly significant step towards rebuilding a mental health and wellbeing system that has been broken for far too long. It represents the delivery of important recommendations of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System—the day we announced this royal commission into mental health is one of those days I will always remember and reflect on as a proud member of this government but actually a proud member of the Labor Party and the labour movement—and introduces reforms that will lay the foundations for the transformation of the system into one that is well resourced with the best professionals and sustainable, ongoing investment. Of course that sustainable and ongoing investment is a really key part of the recommendations of the royal commission.

I am proud to be part of a government that in the first 18 months since the release of the final report has actioned 90 per cent of the royal commission's recommendations, and that is an extraordinary achievement. This achievement is testament to the strength of the commitment to the delivery of tangible outcomes that will benefit Victorians. It will ensure that rights-based objectives and principles are embedded and the inclusion of lived experience roles are central in the highest levels of the new and existing governance and oversight entities that form the basis for this legislation.

It also introduces a new category of mental health and wellbeing professional, which includes people who perform duties in connection with the provision of mental health and wellbeing services. It means that on every level of this new system there will be a more diverse and more robust workforce than the system currently has in place. A key finding of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System was the need for people with lived experience to be designated for this kind of position, and with the passing of this bill people with lived experience of mental illness and psychological distress, families, carers and supporters, as I said, will be at the centre of this system.

We are bringing together a new governance framework in this bill, and the new mental health and wellbeing system will be based on these principles of prevention and community wellbeing. That is a really important reminder I think we all need and an opportunity to thank those people who the member for Gembrook referred to as well—the people who often see the most acute and desperate need of people who are really very unwell. We are making sure that we have the focus on these principles of prevention. These are the areas that the royal commission, alongside Alfred Health, identified as lacking. Without a framework such as that outlined in this bill the system as it stands could not meet the needs of service users and communities.

Alongside a real lack of community and consumer leadership, there were concerns about limited public investment into mental health, and that was a feature of the royal commission. We are addressing this issue of investment with great enthusiasm. It is something I am particularly enthusiastic about, as I know those on this side of the chamber are. The 2022–23 Victorian state budget has invested \$1.3 billion for brand new initiatives, which will build on last year's record investment of \$3.8 billion. These are large numbers. It is important to recognise that investment does form a foundation, but think about the lives that this will affect and the consequences of this extraordinary investment. We know that there was \$490 million for acute hospital-based care, which includes mental health beds in key growth areas, something that many of us—I am thinking particularly about some of us who represent growth areas—are really conscious of, and \$12 million in mental health and wellbeing support for families whose infants or children and young people are accessing acute care in regional Victoria. These are the areas of investment that are relevant and important to so many in our community that we represent, and it is important to note that these investments will save lives.

The royal commission also highlighted the need for greater investment into the mental health and wellbeing workforce. As I said, that is very much a group whose voices we have been able to ensure are very well represented. In Cranbourne we are very fortunate to have some really strong relationships that many people have with each other as well as with their schools, sporting clubs, churches, youth groups, dance troupes, peers and of course our Scouts. It is really important for me as the member for Cranbourne, as somebody who serves this community, to recognise the important role that they have played and continue to play and how grateful we are for that continued role. But as somebody who represents a diverse and multicultural community I also want to place on the record the value that organisations like Sikh Volunteers Australia and the South Sudanese-Australian Academic Society have added to our community in caring for each other. That is that sweet and optimistic peace that I often speak about. I do want to say with great optimism how grateful I am as well to our teachers and educators, who I know have really been so pleased with the enthusiasm and investment in our mental health reforms and the impact that that will have on our schools.

Those on this side of the chamber I know are incredibly proud of this reform. It seems fitting that with only a few sitting weeks left we have the opportunity to contribute. I am grateful to the current minister, the previous minister and the workforce, but really to each of our colleagues as well, for recognising that people who are experiencing mental ill health deserve to be put at the centre of our reforms. I commend the bill to the house.

Ms HALL (Footscray) (15:40): Deputy Speaker, congratulations on your election. I am very pleased to make a contribution on this landmark reform in the Mental Health and Wellbeing Bill 2022. This bill is an important milestone in the 10-year mental health reform program required to give full effect to the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, and it delivers on a key recommendation. I think about significant moments in the 59th Parliament as we enter the last few sitting weeks of this Parliament, and two really significant events were of course the handing down of the royal commission's report at the Royal Exhibition Building as such an extraordinary moment for us as a Parliament but also the former minister's—the member for Monbulk's—second reading of this bill. That was just such an extraordinary speech, setting out all of the hard work that we have to come in the years ahead as we implement the royal commission recommendations.

It is a very proud moment for our Parliament to have this bill before us. As many people have acknowledged, the culmination of this work recognises that the mental health system is currently not working for patients and their carers. It was lovely to hear the new Parliamentary Secretary for Mental Health and Social Inclusion, the member for Mordialloc, outline and reflect on some of those aspects of care that have been failing us. I congratulate the member for Mordialloc on his new role; I think he will make an amazing contribution. If there was one message to take away from the royal commission, that was it. While our understanding of mental health has come a long way over recent decades, the system simply has not kept up with these developments. This bill puts people with lived and living experience of mental illness and psychological distress, as well as their families, carers and support networks, at the centre of the mental health and wellbeing system.

I would like to use this contribution to carry on with that theme of putting people with relevant and lived experience first, and I think the best way I can articulate that is by reflecting on the experience of my friend Joe, who is one of your constituents, Deputy Speaker, and his lived experience with mental health issues and also his experience of seclusion. I will speak more about seclusion later in my contribution. I have spoken about Joe in this place before, of course with his consent and with his contribution as well. Joe lives with bipolar and has been hospitalised twice, including at Sunshine Hospital. Both times he was hospitalised he was placed in seclusion, which he described to me as being a very traumatic experience. Joe had an alcohol addiction which took him away from us, his friends and his family for some time. He overcame the addiction, and we are very proud and thankful that he did. Any one of these experiences alone would be enough to make someone want to withdraw from the system and perhaps limit their engagement and interaction with the mental health system, but not Joe. In January last year he answered a job ad to become a lived-experience peer support worker

at the Royal Melbourne Hospital, part of their incredible multidisciplinary team within the psychiatric unit. He uses his lived experience to help people every single day; he validates their experiences and their feelings instead of undermining and retraumatising them. He told me that peer work is about building genuine connections with people and helping them by giving them a voice at what is usually the most traumatic and dehumanising time of their life. To take your own experience and use it to make someone else's a little bit easier I think takes incredible strength. So I am very proud of my friend. His story is just one—one that I use when I am speaking about our reforms to the system—that speaks to the importance of having lived experience, patients and carers, at the centre. It highlights exactly why things need to change.

The bill goes above and beyond the recommendations of the royal commission. This includes the establishment of Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing Victoria. As Parliamentary Secretary for Youth, this is something I am really excited about. Throughout our consultations for the Victorian youth strategy, mental health was a key theme that we heard spoken about many times. It is one of the key challenges faced by our young people. The bill includes specific decision-making principles in relation to compulsory assessment and treatment and restrictive interventions. It provides for a reduced maximum duration of community treatment orders, from 12 months to six months, and changes to support a health-led response to mental health crises.

I am pleased to note that the bill includes a statement of recognition and acknowledgement of treaty processes. In fact it is one of the first pieces of health legislation that incorporates a statement of recognition. It acknowledges the Andrews Labor government's commitment to Aboriginal self-determination in achieving positive mental health and wellbeing outcomes. It recognises the key role of the Aboriginal health sector in the delivery of Aboriginal mental health and wellbeing services, and it supports healing, acknowledges trauma and provides a foundation for future legislative reform to strengthen Aboriginal self-determination within mental health and wellbeing processes.

In keeping with the principle of putting people first, this bill aims to increase the uptake of safeguards such as advanced statements of preferences and nominated support persons. Any adult will be able to witness the making of these documents, not just an authorised witness. This will make it much easier for these documents to be signed and accessed and for people to be able to announce and safeguard their wishes.

As I mentioned before, a change that is really important to me, in reflecting on my friend Joe's experience of the system, is the change related to restrictive interventions, including seclusion. These also include bodily restraint or chemical restraint. The royal commission recommended that the Victorian government act immediately to reduce the use of seclusion and restraint, with the aim of eliminating these practices within the next 10 years. The government recognises the complexity of this issue. Therefore we will set targets outside of the legislation to progress this goal while still balancing the needs of patients and the workforce.

This bill will also expand the current regulations of restrictive interventions by including the regulation of chemical restraints. Currently chemical restraints, which the bill defines as being used to control a person's behaviour by 'restricting their freedom of movement', are unregulated. Once this bill is passed they will only be able to be used on a person to prevent imminent and serious harm to that person or another person.

Another important recommendation of the royal commission was for the establishment of a new independent oversight body, the Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission. The commission will have a wider role than the mental health complaints commissioner. It will hold the government to account, reinvigorate system leadership, report on how the system is operating, monitor the implementation of the royal commission recommendations and handle complaints about mental health and wellbeing service delivery. Crucially, it will be able to receive complaints from anyone about health services sought and received by themselves or another person.

In conclusion, I am thrilled to be able to make a contribution to this very significant reform. I am very proud of the Andrews Labor government's efforts to reform a system that is broken, has been broken and has failed patients. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr FOWLES (Burwood) (15:49): Deputy Speaker, what a pleasure it is to address you in those terms. Congratulations on your elevation to that very high office. I know you will do an outstanding work, so thank you in advance and thank you for your contributions when previously you have been in the chair.

The opposition are pretty fond of sort of saying that the problems in the mental health system happened on Labor's watch: 'They didn't need a royal commission; they should have just fixed it'. That is a dramatic oversimplification of some of the issues in the system and is clearly just a base political attack that does not have any foundation in reality or truth—and certainly not in decency. I think it falls to those on the government side to point out not just to those opposite but to members of the community more broadly just how significant the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System was and is, just how significant the implementation of its recommendations are and why those things are so important.

Unlike others, we accept the science. We got experts involved. We had a royal commission to surface all of those things which are very, very important when you go to contemplate establishing a new system from the ground up. Others might think that they have all the answers to everything, and I know there are a bunch of sort of epidemiologists and experts in other fields amongst those opposite. They think they have got the answers to everything. We do not share that arrogant world view. We instead have said that we will get the experts to help us put together a new system, a new mental health system that will better serve the needs of Victorians. We know how significant it is. I am one of the one in five Victorians who will experience mental ill health in their lifetime. We know how significant these issues are right across the community.

In fact, even since the findings of the royal commission have been handed down we know that there have been some changes in the presentation of mental ill health in Victoria, including in particular the preponderance of young people presenting with mental illness. That is why we have actually gone beyond the recommendations of the royal commission in establishing Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing Victoria. Now, that is one of those rare organisations where the acronym is almost as hard to say as the original—YMHVV. I think it is just probably better to call it Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing Victoria. Our response in very specifically addressing mental ill health amongst young people is significant. This is not something that has been done particularly broadly in other parts of the world. This is a new way of tackling these specific issues relating to young people head on. It also reflects the fact that the focus of the Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing (VCCMHW) will be on adults and indeed on older adults.

Given the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on young people, the importance of young people addressing mental health concerns early in their life and early in their journey of mental ill health warrant the need for the creation of this particular agency, YMHVV—I am already tripping up on it. Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing Victoria will provide system leadership in youth mental health and wellbeing. That work will be complementary to the VCCMHW. It will work very closely with the VCCMHW, and indeed the VCCMHW will provide a board member to the board of YMHVV—got it that time—to identify and promote opportunities to increase collaborative translational research between multiple organisations, multidisciplinary experts and people with lived experience to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young people across Victoria. It is a pretty important aim—to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young people right across Victoria. But you cannot do that—you cannot have the YMHVV doing its work—if you are not undertaking serious and substantial system-wide reform, and that is exactly what this government has delivered.

Those opposite say that the fact that they have not taken up the recommendation about revenue measures to fund this is entirely defensible because it should just be accommodated within the budget.

Well, it is expensive, and if you are going to on the one hand say that we should not be running deficits but on the other hand say that we should just accommodate this—in the case of what we have committed to, \$3.8 billion over 10 years—within the budget, then the question has to be: what are you going to cut to fund mental health services? What is it going to be? Because you simply cannot get the sums to add up if you do not have a revenue measure without making cuts elsewhere in the health system, the education system. Is it cuts to police? Who would know? I think it is absolutely imperative that those opposite share with Victorians what their plans are—what their cuts are going to be to be able to fund the mental health system to anything like the same extent that we have.

While the royal commission was underway we invested \$869 million in November 2020 to address the critical demand and to improve the mental health system, even as we were waiting for the report to come back. In fact since then we have invested more than \$252 million on pandemic-specific issues. Most importantly in the 2021–22 state budget we provided \$3.8 billion to kickstart the next decade of mental health reform, focusing on funding services to provide greater clinical care and community support to Victorians in need. It is funding the missing middle, because what you have at the moment is a system where you can go and see your GP; if you think you might be experiencing mental ill health, you might get a plan to visit a psychologist; if you can get in to a psychologist, great, you have that level of care; and then at the extreme end, at the acute end, you may be able to get a psychiatric bed. What you have is this enormous gap in the middle where people need more than a fortnightly psychological consult but they are not at a point of acuity where they need a bed and 24-hour care. So the missing middle is this substantial piece where we need to be able to offer people the more intensive services to address mental health crises before they become acute. So at the subacute level, but more than the sort of ‘I’m feeling a bit off’ level, there is this enormous gap, and that is exactly what the government is setting out to address. I know that the new Minister for Mental Health will do an outstanding job in this space, and I want to thank one of the ministers at the table, the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events, who in his work as Parliamentary Secretary for Mental Health did some fantastic work as well.

The consultation around these changes has been extraordinary: we have listened, we have consulted, there have been hundreds of submissions. They have all fed into the process in which we have built these investments and this new mental health system architecture. Indeed on top of the \$3.8 billion we invested in the financial year 2021–22 budget, we backed it in in the financial year 2022–23 with another \$1.3 billion of further investment.

But of course all of that is at risk because halfway through financial year 2022–23 we have an election, and if those opposite are elected, we will see that there simply cannot be the delivery of these commitments that the Andrews Labor government has made without cuts elsewhere in the system or without cuts to these commitments, because they have refused to take up the royal commission’s recommendation to introduce a revenue measure to fund this critical expansion in public health care. That is ultimately what we are talking about. This is public health care, and the only question for Victorians at this election is: do you want mental health care to be part of public health care or do you not? We say on this side of the chamber that public health care is so important that it ought to be funded and that it ought to include mental health care. If you need a specific revenue measure to make sure that that happens, then you go about doing it. That has been the commitment of this government, and that is exactly why it will be taking these commitments to the state election in November. The investment is going to be the turning of the tide for mental health in Victoria. We are very, very proud to be delivering this investment. We are very proud to have instigated the royal commission. We are very proud to have accepted every single one of the royal commission’s recommendations and indeed to have gone further in the creation of the Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing Victoria agency, allowing them to do very specific things to support the mental health of young people.

I frankly could bang on on this topic for a very long time indeed, but I am cognate of the fact that we are about to enter the period of the grievance debate. I think somehow we have managed to synchronise

the clocks beautifully here, because my 16 seconds neatly times with us approaching 4.00 pm. So without any further ado, I do commend this bill to the house, and I wish it indeed a very speedy passage.

Business interrupted under resolution of house today.

Grievance debate

The SPEAKER: The question is:

That grievances be noted.

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) (16:01): Today I grieve for the state of Victoria and the state government, a Labor government, that cares more about itself than the people it is meant to represent. It is a government that does not care about the health crisis we are in at the moment and that does not care that we see people dying on waiting lists and waiting for ambulances that just do not come when you call them in the 000 crisis that we have. We all know that we have great health workers that are doing the very best they can, but we have a government that does not care about fixing the health crisis.

We have a government that does not care about the cost-of-living pressures that each and every Victorian is dealing with at the moment. We have a government that does not care about the mental health crisis that our state is in—that our state is in largely because this government presided over the world’s longest lockdowns, which put many Victorians in this situation where they are trying to pick themselves up from the struggles that the government caused them. It is a government that does not care about small business. Many small businesses in our state are closing their doors simply because we have a state that is in crisis and an economy that is in freefall. Many of those small businesses were not supported when they needed support. Our state of Victoria is a great state. We have had the great reputation for many, many years of having the world’s most livable city, and it is being ruined on the global stage thanks to a government that has presided over the world’s longest lockdowns, using fear, control and power to damage us all.

In 2014 this government was elected on the back of promising accountability and transparency to all Victorians. We remember the promise made on Channel 7 on the eve of the election when the Premier said, ‘No new taxes under a government I lead’. And what do we have if we fast-forward? Forty-two of them and still counting. After eight years this will be a Labor government which will leave office with a lengthy charge sheet for corruption and improper behaviour that would rival any government around the world. Caught up in controversy and in scandal and guilty of rorting and corruption, its leader, the Premier, displays a complete absence of integrity and decency, the likes of which Victoria has never seen before. The Premier has been the Leader of the Labor Party since 2010, and the Premier has claimed all along that he takes responsibility for everything that happens under his leadership. That was said back in 2015. Fast-forward to today and we can see where we are now at. We all remember:

Operation Watts found a political culture—condoned or even actively encouraged by senior figures—of ends justifying means and of bending or breaking rules.

When asked on 3AW last week by Neil Mitchell:

Does that include the current party leadership?

Commissioner Redlich said:

Of course.

Neil Mitchell asked if that included the Premier. Commissioner Redlich said again:

Of course.

The report details how the Premier agreed that he has been aware of widespread recruiting of non-genuine members over the previous few decades and that there have been people who have been hand-picked who have paid for memberships for long periods. He also agreed that the practice was not limited to one faction but happened across the board.

We all recall and we all remember that Operation Watts has detailed further similar cases of misuse of public money by the Labor Party. The Premier has spent the past fortnight saying that he will not repay the \$1.38 million of Victorian taxpayers money that was misappropriated. Why? Because, the Premier states, it was not reported in the Operation Watts recommendations. Well, again we have a Premier who has been caught by his own web of spin. We all remember that in 2018 the Premier repaid \$388 000 of taxpayers money that was fraudulently misused as part of Labor's infamous red shirts scheme. In the Ombudsman's 2018 report that exposed the rort no recommendation was made to repay the money. So on one hand we have a Premier saying, 'Well, I'm not going to pay the money back because there's no recommendation', and yet on another he did pay it back because he thought it was the right thing to do. Well, if you are caught once, maybe that is a mistake. If you are caught twice, well, we know what that is; it is all about intent and corruption.

The Premier's transcript from the corruption commission remains hidden. Why? Why is the Premier so demanding that the questions and answers under oath remain under lock and key forever? What does the Premier have to hide? The Premier today can write to the corruption commission and ask that the transcripts be released. If it is okay for others in Parliament to do that, then the Premier can do the same. Why will the Premier not do that? Perhaps there is a reason the Premier does not want to have his transcript released; it may reveal that there is more involved when it comes to the red shirts scandal.

We know that we have many, many instances of where the Premier has been well and truly up to his eyeballs in all of this. This was a government that, when asked to cooperate with Victoria Police fraud squad investigators, turned around and said, 'No, thank you'. Imagine what the Victorian watchdog would do, watching today, if someone stole from their employer and the police came knocking and they just said, 'No, thank you. We're not cooperating'.

This is a government that are very, very happy to do what they like, to say one thing when they went to the election in 2014—that this was going to be a transparent and accountable government. This has been the most secretive and corrupt government that the state has ever seen. This is a government that wants another four years. Well, not under our watch. You only have to ask Victorians that are struggling each and every day. They do not want another lot of a corrupt government that has been up to its eyeballs in corruption, in scandals—in IBAC after IBAC after IBAC report. Not once, not twice, but three times—we have had the Premier before three IBAC investigations.

We all remember Operation Richmond, the anti-corruption commission for the last two years investigating suspected corrupt conduct involving dealings between the firefighters union and the state government. We all remember Operation Sandon, investigating the Premier's links to the dodgy developer John Woodman. We all remember the Premier's cut to the budget of the corruption commission and when he lied to the parliamentary committee about it. We all remember the Premier bullying an MP about being overweight and standing accused of slurring another female MP suffering from bowel cancer, saying she would 'soon be shitting in a bag'. We remember this disgusting behaviour by a Premier who claims to hold some kind of integrity in his job. The Premier would not know integrity if he fell over it.

We all know, we all remember, accusations of bullying of three senior female MPs, some forced to take the hit for the Premier, and the Premier refusing to investigate those members from his own side of Parliament—three female MPs who have all called this behaviour out. We all remember the Premier approving a \$10 million grant to Trades Hall, some of the largest financial supporters of the Victorian Labor Party. We all remember the dismantling of the CFA—good, hardworking volunteers—in order to satisfy union demands. We all remember the Premier spent more than \$1 million of taxpayers funds to buy friends on Facebook, and no wonder—when you are up to this kind of behaviour you need to buy friends, because no-one else would want to be your friend with this kind of behaviour and performance. We all remember the Premier endorsed more than 90 of his former ministerial staff being parachuted into plum executive public service roles, including a former staff member charged with family violence offences. The 90 staff are currently being investigated by the special investigator of the Victorian Ombudsman.

We all remember the Premier backing in former corrections minister Steve Herbert, who ordered his pet dogs be chauffeured in a ministerial vehicle. We all remember former Speaker Telmo Languiller and Deputy Speaker Don Nardella misusing the second residence allowance. We all remember how the Premier continues to accept political donations from the CFMEU, collecting more than \$3 million. We all remember the Treasurer approving a \$31 billion deal with Transurban while having a financial interest in the company. We all remember the Premier's staff member who admitted to destroying a journalist's dictaphone which was stolen from the ALP state conference. We all remember the Premier's hand-picked whip was forced to resign after it was revealed during a royal commission into the trade unions that a deal with a cleaning company left workers on lower pay in return for cash payments to the AWU when he was the secretary. Now, that is not looking after workers. We all remember the Premier backed a sports minister who kept a \$2000 bike given to him by a major events company. We all remember the Premier broke his promise not to introduce 42 new taxes, and we all remember how the Premier has trashed our reputation as the world's most livable city under his watch—we have gone from number 1 to number 10. And number 20 of the top 20 hits by this disgraceful, hopeless government: we all remember Victoria went through the world's longest and toughest lockdowns while this Premier lectured us every morning in his North Face jacket about what we could not do—fear and control.

The Premier—this government—has failed Victorians. We know and we remember all the decisions—to use untrained private security guards in hotel quarantine, which led to the deaths of more than 800 people. We remember that despite spending \$4.8 million to hold an inquiry into the hotel quarantine disaster, no-one was held responsible—and guess what? The Premier could not remember. We all remember the fact that legal fees of government departments totalling over \$15 million were all spent to actually cover up, and that dwarfed the actual cost of the Coate inquiry itself. We remember playgrounds closed and children not being able to access them for two weeks; we remember the curfews; we remember the 5-kilometre rules; and we remember the night curfews that were effectively the captain's call when the Chief Commissioner of Police at the time, Shane Patton, and the chief health officer, certainly said they knew nothing of them. We all remember the six lockdowns.

We all remember that it took the Andrews government until Christmas Eve 2021 to make their first large order of RATs. This came months after the Liberal-Nationals initially called for the use of rapid antigen tests here in Parliament. We came down and we stood out the front and we showed that this could be done, and what did the Premier do? He called it a stunt—the very test that we all use today. The Premier called it a stunt.

We all remember the former health minister, Jenny Mikakos, promised 4000 ICU beds. Where were they? Where were the 4000 ICU beds? We are in the middle of a health crisis, and even today in question time the fourth health minister—we have been through four of them in four years; that just shows how bad things are, when you are turning over more health ministers than you are an egg—was suggesting that when it comes to somebody experiencing issues in terms of intensive care and saying where those beds are, well, you know what? It is not about those beds. Well, we all remember those 4000 beds that were promised and never eventuated.

We all remember the \$28 billion in infrastructure blowouts—\$28 billion which would build 28 Royal Children's Hospitals, which would fix the healthcare crisis. And again, what has the government done? We remember that there has been not an increase in the health budget but a \$2 billion cut in the most recent health budget, in the middle of a health crisis—a \$2 billion cut.

This is a government that absolutely does not care. We all remember the lockdowns. We remember the Ombudsman reports. We remember COVID restrictions that were stronger and harder than everybody else's, and we all remember the damage that this cost each and every Victorian in terms of their businesses, their mental health, certainly their state of mind and this state's reputation—a state that was number one, a state that we have so much work to do to fix up. And we all will remember in November to change the government. We will remember in November that this is the worst government we have ever seen. We will remember in November the rorts, the corruption and the

scandals that this Premier has presided over as the number one. We will all remember that the Premier said he will take full responsibility for everything and every decision made. We will all remember a rotting, corrupt government that needs to go in November, and we hope that Victorians will make the decision in November to boot out Daniel Andrews.

LGBTIQA+ EQUALITY

Ms WARD (Eltham) (16:16): I tell you what, never let the truth get in—

The SPEAKER: Just before the member for Eltham continues, member for Caulfield, I remind you to call members by their correct titles.

Ms WARD: Thank you, Speaker. Yes, never let the truth get in the way of a bumbling, incomprehensible 15 minutes of I am not really quite sure what. I tell you what, though, I do grieve for people who only care about division and exclusion—those people who see division and exclusion as their only path to government and will do everything in their power to make sure that they sow those terrible seeds. I grieve for those who are so consumed with hate and bigotry that they can only peddle hurt, and I grieve for a party that preselects people who describe transgender laws as ‘my number one issue’. I would have thought that your number one issue would be about equality in this state, would be about fairness in this state or would be about creating economic opportunity in this state so that people can live their best lives and realise the people that they are to be, the integral people that they are. Instead we have got a political party that nurtures hatred, that nurtures division and that promotes those people. We have a party—and I grieve for a political party that is unable to show leadership in showing what equality looks like—that cannot show what empathy looks like. There is a lack of leadership on the other side of the house when it comes to this state and when it comes to inclusion in this state, and for this today I grieve.

I grieve for a party that does not have at their core the desire to see Victorians create a happy and inclusive community. I grieve for a party that is so focused on hatred that it can see nothing else. What we have got is a weak leader and a weak party. We need to be comfortable in our own skin, and we need to have a community around us that supports us for who we are. We need to be proud of ourselves, and we need to be proud of those people around us. We need to show pride. I am really proud to be part of a government that has created Victoria’s first Pride Centre. Not so long ago I went with a few other colleagues and had a visit to the Pride Centre, and it is amazing. It is a beautiful space. It is a space that is inclusive of all Victorians. It is there to celebrate our rainbow community, but it is inclusive for everyone, and they are so clear and determined in that goal to be inclusive for everyone. You walk into this space that is beautiful—this beautiful organic structure that is around you—and that has so many supports in there. You become very aware of and very clear on how important safe spaces are for vulnerable people, and our Pride Centre is one such place. It is a safe place.

I believe that it is the role of government to create various forms of pride centres all over our state where people can feel safe no matter who they are, no matter who they love and no matter what they look like. For those opposite to encourage people who do not want that pride and who do not want people to feel safe in this state is appalling, and I absolutely grieve for that, because every Victorian should feel safe in this state. When you have got people in positions of leadership who think it is okay to peddle hate and who think it is okay to denigrate different people, you are not creating those safe spaces. All you are doing is entrenching bigotry, and you are allowing bigots to be vocal, to be nasty, to be mean, to be hurtful and to be violent. These things need to be condemned, and that is what leadership is. Leadership stamps out that kind of bigotry. Leadership stamps out that kind of hate. And we are not seeing it from those opposite, because they continue to preselect people who peddle this rubbish, people who want to hurt other people. That is not what politics should be about. Politics should be about looking after the people in this state, not creating hurt, not creating division.

Speaker, like you, I know people who have got rainbow families, but I also know kids who are transgender. One of my daughter’s closest friends is trans. People I went to mothers group with, one of their kids is trans. I have got people around me in my community who have got trans kids who are

horrified at the conversations that they hear being held in public by people who are supposed to be leaders, people who make their kids feel unsafe. These parents are furious, and they have got every right to be, because their kids have got every right to be safe in this state and these kids have got the right for their political leaders to show that they are safe, to make policies that make them feel safe and to talk about safe and inclusive language. These kids in my community are safe because I live in a good community, a community that cares about other people.

One of the important parts of our leadership was in 2010 when we brought in Safe Schools. Now, Eltham High School was one of the four pilot schools for Safe Schools. My kids go to Eltham High School. My kids feel safe. Their friends feel safe because that school has worked really hard to create a culture of inclusion. And this was the foremost point of Safe Schools: to create those inclusive spaces and to help other people understand what is happening around rainbow kids and how they feel. So for someone to say that it is narcissistic to have programs like Safe Schools and to be talking about trans kids is shameful. It is absolutely shameful. The Leader of the Opposition should be stamping this out, should not be applauding the preselection of people who say these things and should not want these people in this place, whether it be in this chamber or the other. It is about inclusion. It is about protecting our kids. It is about looking after our kids. It is about doing everything that we can to help these kids live the lives that they should be allowed to live, which is a life of truth and which is a life of who they are, who they want to be and what they want to look like. It is not for any of us to judge when they are ready to be these people or what they should look like.

I find it ironic that we have got a party that wants to trumpet about the individual all the time and wants to rage against big government. They have got a former Prime Minister who does not trust in government; however, they are preselecting people who want the government in our houses, in our bedrooms and monitoring what our bodies look like. I do not think you can find a more invasive set of circumstances than that. That is big government, that is Big Brother—saying how you should behave, what you should look like. It is Big Brother when you are preselecting people who also do not want women to determine the health care that they receive when it comes to terminating pregnancies.

I am absolutely filled with grief for a political party that will not stand up for vulnerable people in this state, that will not stand up for trans kids and that will not stand up for our rainbow community. I think it is just shocking that those opposite think that they can march in Pride every summer as if they are allies. You are not an ally when you are not standing up and being counted. You are not an ally when you are allowing bigots to be at the front and centre of your political party. You are not an ally unless you are there standing with these people every day. You have actually got to be truthful, and you have got to stand in that truth, and your actions matter. Your actions absolutely matter. Walking in Pride does not make you an ally, it makes you cynical. It makes you a cynical abuser of people's trust because you are pretending that you are an ally. You are pretending that you are there for that community, and you are not, because if you were, you would have cancelled out—and I use that word 'cancel'—people who are bigots and people who are allowing discrimination against very vulnerable people.

We had the previous speaker, the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, talk about this side of the chamber not caring about mental health. I do not understand how he can stand in this place and say this government does not care about mental health when not only have we invested record amounts of funding in mental health support services but members opposite are allowing people in their party, people who they want in this Parliament, to discriminate and exhibit their bigotry against incredibly vulnerable people. Where are their mental health concerns there? Do not be hypocrites.

I grieve for a party that is absolutely hypocritical in this space. Stand up for our rainbow community. Stand up for our vulnerable kids. Be counted. Be a part of a community that shows acceptance and love. Do not use it as a tool for division. Do not use it as an electioneering tool. It is disgraceful. We saw how the Australian community will not put up with that. The Australian community showed at the last federal election that they will not put up with kids being bullied by adults who should know better. That is exactly what happened in New South Wales with a Liberal candidate there who did not

win her seat. She was there as a tool to sow division and try and pick up some votes, and it backfired spectacularly. It absolutely backfired because the hypocrisy was evident.

But, most importantly, it was the bullying. When you are repeatedly going after kids and telling them that they are not good enough, telling them that they are wrong, telling them what toilets they should use, telling them what clothes they should wear and telling them how they should be and how they should look, you are being a bully, and as an adult you should know better than to go after vulnerable people and make them feel worse about themselves. We know the physical harm that young people who are transgender or who are a part of the LGBTIQ+ group experience. We know these kids feel vulnerable. We know they self-harm. We know they attempt suicide, and they do that because they feel they do not fit in. This morning before I came here I was at Banyule council's youth summit. Banyule council youth do amazing work, and every two years they get together with their kids and the kids talk. They talk about what matters to them and they talk about what they are concerned about. This includes things like climate change, the environment and employment opportunities, but it also includes equality. It really does include equality, and it includes the rainbow kids being seen and being made to feel safe. Congratulations to Banyule for the work that they are doing in responding to that. These kids want to feel safe; they articulate that. They talk about the relief of going to events where there are other kids, they say, just like them, where they know they are not alone, where they know they are 100 per cent safe and where they know they can be their true selves and they are not on guard.

Before I finish up I want to give members a little story of someone I came across who was getting aged care help. This relates to a lot of the work that we are doing as a government, but this person was getting care in the home because they were older. What we learned was that this person, who is gay, was hiding their stuff. They were hiding themselves because they did not know if the carer coming in for them would support them if they saw that they were gay, and that is heartbreaking. It is heartbreaking that someone could not feel safe in their own home when a stranger was coming in to help them because of their sexuality. That is just horrible. I do not understand how anybody aspiring to be in this place thinks that that kind of behaviour is acceptable or thinks that it is okay to have a discourse, to have a conversation in our community that creates that fear and allows people to have that fear. It is wrong. It is absolutely wrong. Every person in this place should be campaigning against that fear, not encouraging it and not bringing more of it into this place.

I absolutely grieve for a political party who is so lost, who is so soulless that they cannot care for vulnerable people in this community but instead want to see them be attacked more. It is appalling. It is absolutely appalling. I am very, very grateful to be on this side of the chamber where I am a member of a political party that does take equality seriously, that does look after people and that does create policies that do look after people. We brought in our first Minister for Equality. We have gotten rid of the historical gay offences records—they are gone, those records that had people as criminals for being who they are, for owning their sexuality.

We have brought in Australia's first gender and sexuality discrimination commissioner. We have brought in a whole-of-government LGBTIQ+ strategy. We have brought so much into this Parliament that will make a safer place for all Victorians, not just those Victorians who look like me or the Minister for Youth or the member over there but those who look like themselves. We are creating a community where people can look like the people that they are supposed to be and be proud of that and feel safe in that. I would call on the opposition to join with us in creating that safe community, creating those safe spaces and stopping those angry, divisive, mean, rotten voices that just sow hurt—because that is all they do; they sow hurt, and it is disgraceful. The Leader of the Opposition needs to stand up and put a stop to it, because that is what leadership is. Leadership is showing people how to be better people, not small-minded bigots that just sow hurt and hate.

HEALTH SYSTEM

Ms KEALY (Lowan) (16:31): Today I grieve for the state of Victoria and the many Victorians who have declining health outcomes because they simply cannot access the health support that they

need when they need it. They are also suffering from a complete restriction of transparency around what the real issues are when you look at Victoria's health system, including the mental health system.

At the moment we are waiting for the government to release the elective surgery waitlists. There are expected to be 100 000 Victorians waiting for surgery in the state of Victoria—100 000 Victorians who do not know when they will be able to get that surgery that they desperately need. It is very important to note that 'elective' surgery does not mean that you have got a choice about it. Elective surgery just means that you need to have the surgery but not as an emergency, it is not at crisis point. So Victorians who are waiting and who desperately need to have surgery—because no-one chooses to have surgery if they do not have to—do not know, under Victoria's broken health system, when on earth that is going to happen.

But perhaps even worse is that in Victoria we do not know how many people out there have got a cancer that desperately needs surgery but which we have not had the opportunity to diagnose. Over the past three years of lockdowns and restrictions 6500 Victorians have missed their opportunity for cancer screening. This is important screening, whether it is for bowel cancer or breast cancer, having a mammogram done, whether it is about a Pap smear, whether it is about having those lumps and bumps checked out by a health professional or whether you are just not feeling 100 per cent—if you are a bit more tired than usual or are noticing some changes in your weight. They are the things that people should be getting checked out, but they put it off and kick the can down the road either because they have not been able to get an appointment or because they have been too scared to leave their home and enter a health system where they might be at risk of getting COVID. Others have felt that they would just be overwhelming the system and that they would be a burden. The fact that we have come to a point in Victoria's health system where we are so far in crisis that if people are unwell, they are unwilling to reach out and seek health support is a critical point, because people are getting diagnoses later down the track, they are more sick and they are more likely to need surgical intervention to deal with that issue, which is only going to further compound the elective surgery waitlists in Victoria.

We are going to see catastrophic outcomes for Victorians when it comes to their health needs into the future. This is not something that we are just talking about: 'COVID's over. That's it; we don't need to put any more money into it, we are at the end of the tunnel. No more masks; we are fine'. That is simply not the case. It is not the case when we look at surgical needs and elective surgical demands. It is not the case when we are looking at mental health and the severe impact that lockdowns and restrictions have had on the mental health of all Victorians but particularly young Victorians, particularly older Victorians, particularly those from culturally and linguistically diverse communities and particularly those who have lost their job or who have had to supervise their kids in homeschooling while balancing their work and have been just unable to do it. Unfortunately we have got a health sector and a mental health sector that cannot see the light at the end of the tunnel. They see that billions of dollars are being thrown at mental health and yet they have not seen any changes on the front line. There are no additional services available to provide support to the many Victorians who desperately need that support.

We are not seeing the release of elective surgery waitlists; instead we are actually seeing threats that there will be further closures to surgery, that these waitlists will continue to grow and that it is going to be an even longer period of time before Victorians can get the elective surgery that they are waiting for and that they need. We heard earlier today during question time that it is expected that over 100 000 Victorians are now on the elective surgery waitlist in Victoria. But this data is being hidden from Victorians in that it should have been published by now; it is well overdue and it should be in the public arena for debate and discussion and so we can hear from the government what they are going to do about it. But not only is this government refusing to be transparent and release that data, it is refusing to release a plan because, put simply, the Andrews Labor government has no real solutions when it comes to dealing with Victoria's health crisis.

The bigger problem around transparency is that now we expect over 100 000 Victorians to be on the elective surgery waitlist, but it is not the full story. We have also heard today about regional hospitals, hospitals like Bairnsdale in the member for Gippsland East's electorate. Bairnsdale hospital has about 1400 people on its elective surgery waitlist, but those numbers are not included in the state elective surgery results. So not only are we not seeing the full data and not only is the government covering this up with more secrecy and a lack of transparency, but when we finally do see the data it will not be the full story. We will not have the waitlists included for Bairnsdale or Mildura or Horsham or Hamilton or other important regional hospitals. It is a complete blight on the health system in Victoria when the government cannot even or is not courageous enough to say, 'This is how many people in total are waiting for surgery in the state'. When you do not know what you are dealing with, there is no way you can come up with an overall solution that is actually going to fix the problem in the first place.

This is not something that is restricted to just elective surgery. We know that there are of course massive shortfalls in support for people in the mental health sector. The government have taken no action at all to release the workforce that is there and waiting and willing to provide mental health support. They just need some financial support from the Andrews Labor government. This is around provisional psychologists, who the government refuse to even acknowledge could be funded, even though a little bit of funding for this group of people—they are fully trained and are ready to go, they just need a little bit of funding—would mean unlocking 2000 additional psychologists for Victoria's mental health system. We know that counsellors could participate in the mental health practitioners in schools program, but the government are pushing it back until next year. Even the Schools Mental Health Fund should be rolled out now to every single school, but the government are waiting until 2024 to roll it out to metropolitan schools. That is another two years before kids who live in metropolitan Melbourne will be able to access that important mental health support.

There are other challenges we have got that critically hit rural and regional Victoria. We know that there are massive shortages when it comes to accessing your general practitioner. I was speaking to my good friend the member for Ovens Valley earlier today, and he shared with me the issue that the community has in that people can move up to his electorate but cannot go and see a general practitioner in their new community because all of the books are full. This means that you have to go back to where you came from or Melbourne or wherever it might be to actually get in to see your GP. When so much of our medical system relies on having that entry point of seeing a general practitioner, it means that people who live in Ovens Valley are not able to get the health support that they critically need. Again, it means their health needs are not being addressed. It means that there might be a diagnosis later and people getting sicker, and then when they get critically sick they end up in an ambulance and in an emergency department and putting so much pressure on. I commend the member for Ovens Valley because he has been a fierce advocate for better health services in his region. He understands the health system completely, and he will always stand up and find real solutions for his local community to make sure that they can access the health care that they need and they deserve when they need it.

I have also seen doctor shortages in my own electorate of Lowan. Casterton is facing a critical shortage of general practitioners, and while we might hear from the Andrews Labor government, 'Hey, it's a federal issue, it's got nothing to do with us', it actually has so much of an impact on the state government because it means that people cannot be admitted into the public hospital system. There seems to be just this lack of knowledge of anything that happens outside of Melbourne for this Andrews Labor government. They do not understand that the local GP is the visiting medical officer, is the admitting GP for a hospital, and that actually not a single patient can be admitted to a hospital in country Victoria unless there is a general practitioner to admit them. So this seems to be lost on the government—'Not our problem', we hear from the Andrews Labor government. Well, we have got a critical problem in Casterton right now. It is replicated in many of the communities across my electorate, and unless the Andrews Labor government step up and actually put some support in place our hospitals will not have general practitioners to admit their patients. They will not have any doctors to visit their patients. Our communities will not be able to access a GP and the health outcomes will be catastrophic, having a cumulative effect on the ambulance system, on our emergency departments

and further up the track if they are referred to, say, Hamilton or Horsham hospital, or Ballarat or Geelong as the next level up, or our metropolitan hospitals. This is a critical issue, and we have just heard utter silence from the Andrews Labor government.

The other thing that we have had in our region are these ridiculous mega mergers of hospitals, which as we thought would happen, has just resulted in a gradual erosion of local health services. In Horsham we now have no paediatric dentist. It means that for our community—and this is what a friend of mine was told—‘No, it’s unlikely we’ll be able to get another paediatric dentist until much, much later in the year’. Now, if it is a year-long waitlist for a child in the public system to see a dentist, that can have catastrophic impacts on not just their physical health but their mental health. To not have good oral hygiene means that you cannot get a filling when you need to, and it means that extra spot that bacteria can enter your body through. It can result in significant problems when it comes to getting sepsis and strep A and other systemic issues. We also have that problem where kids who have rotten teeth are ashamed to smile. It has a massive impact on their mental health and wellbeing. So the fact that Horsham will not have a paediatric dentist for a significant period of time means that our local kids who would need to access the public dental system will not be able to do so. When it comes down to the crunch Labor always look away and try to put out a media release to say, ‘Oh, but we’re doing this’, but when it comes to the crunch in Horsham you cannot access a paediatric dentist and you will not be able to for a long period of time.

We also have issues around access to allied health professionals. There are simply no allied health professionals at Edenhope hospital now. As we expected, all of the money is being siphoned into Ballarat. We have lost our anaesthetist. We have lost some of our surgeons. We have lost key nursing professionals in our hospital. People are feeling dejected. They cannot see a career pathway. It has been catastrophic for our region. Putting everything under Ballarat has just funnelled the money into Ballarat, and our local hospitals are missing out and are being cut off from the health services that they need and deserve to have.

We also have issues around just workforce challenges altogether. We need to see an overall workforce plan when it comes to building that next generation of nurses, of doctors, of allied health professionals, because we know in country Victoria that unless you have got a big supply of doctors and nurses and allied health professionals in Melbourne, then the first place there are shortages is country Victoria. And we have all been suffering for a really long period of time, and that is why there are often worse health outcomes if you live in the country than if you live in the city. We need to see an urgent plan when it comes to growing the next generation of health professionals. We need to look at more funding of students to be able to get them out and onto the ground, because this is at crisis point. The health system is in collapse in Victoria. We need to look in every single corner to make sure we can get as many skilled practitioners as possible out and about and on the ground and providing that urgent support that Victorians need, whether you live in the city or whether you live in the country, but first and foremost we need to get the people on the ground and support them. There are opportunities to do that, and I urge the government to do that, but I know that the Liberals and Nationals are the one group that have got a plan to do this. We have got real solutions that will deliver additional workforces. We will make sure that we have got more people trained up. We know where those opportunities are to pay for provisional psychologists to get them in the system. We have got a fantastic program already announced about Australia’s biggest ever recruitment drive in mental health and health. We have got the solutions to deliver what Victorians need.

In November Victorians will remember. They will remember this November that there have been problems in the health system, that the people who started this health problem, who created this health system mess, are not the ones to get us out of it. They have overseen a disastrous collapse of Victoria’s health system. Nobody can get the health support they need. People are dying waiting for ambulances, waiting to have calls to 000 answered. They are taking their own lives because they cannot access the mental health support they need when they need it. It is absolutely disgraceful to think that we have

got—the member for Eureka soon—the member for Buninyong questioning whether that is worthwhile or not. I think it is disgraceful that anyone would ever argue against that.

Victorians will remember this November. They know the damage that the Andrews government have done to their health system. They know that the ones who have created the mess are not the ones to fix it, and they will vote 1 the Nationals and the Liberals this November.

OPPOSITION PERFORMANCE

Ms SETTLE (Buninyong) (16:46): I am delighted to stand to speak, Speaker, and I wish to pass my congratulations on. I would like to thank the member for Lowan for calling the election quite so soon for me. Thank you very much; I do look forward to being the member for Eureka.

I am standing to grieve for the people of Victoria, and it is a lot around the preselection process. Perhaps the reason the member for Lowan was so quick to congratulate me is that the Liberal-National parties are yet to select anybody to stand against me. It is a curious situation. I am here to grieve for the more vulnerable in our community, particularly for the LGBTQI community because they must look with absolute horror at the preselection car crash that is going on on the other side. Again and again those opposite select these nasty, divisive people to represent our community. I find that absolutely extraordinary. In 2014 my predecessor stood against a fellow by the name of Ben Taylor. He was very clearly anti abortion, so I do not doubt that they will be talking to Ben Taylor to stand against me again. Someone who has such sort of far-right and extremist views seems to really sit within their cohort of preselected people. I really grieve for our LGBTI community. They must have been in pain when confronted by the news that the Nationals-Liberals had selected someone for Eastern Victoria Region that believes in bringing back dreadful, dreadful conversion therapy.

The member for Lowan talks about mental health. What on earth do they think they are doing to the mental health of the LGBTI community by backing in people, giving a public forum to people that want to bring in some of the most heinous practices that we have ever seen? I find it extraordinary that on the one hand they are happy to dog whistle to the far right and then pretend that they care about the mental health of people in our community.

A member interjected.

Ms SETTLE: Exactly. They were quite happy to stand out the front with people who wanted to see democracy collapse. They were happy to stand out the front and see the virus run rampant, and they stand here now and talk to us about the health system. They talk to us about the mental health system when all they have done, day after day, is undermine the good work of this government to support not just our health system but all Victorians.

Ms Ward: They undermined the health department.

Ms SETTLE: As you say, they undermined endlessly the health department.

But what I also grieve for in some way is the very state of Victoria. We have this wonderful democracy that we all belong to, and I grieve for the state that the role of the opposition has been so denigrated as to make it utterly unelectable. It is a party that sees itself as an alternative government but can allow such hateful views to be aired in its party room and can deny the laws of our state. Even today we hear that they will seek to avoid the donation laws of our state. How can they make the role of opposition, of alternative government, so poor, so denigrated that the people of Victoria have no choice? They have no choice. I really grieve for the state of the Victorian Liberal Party—I mean, I would; I think about grieving for the state of the Liberals in Victoria, but I guess to some degree I say to myself, ‘They made their preselections. They stood there last Sunday and they put their hands up and they voted for people with these abhorrent views’. So I cannot grieve for them. They have made their preselection bed, and now they can lie in their far-right beds. They can lie with dogs with fleas that believe in abhorrent practices.

Now, let us go back to Renee Heath. Very clearly, she has been associated with a church. It was interesting, because the Leader of the Opposition sought to use issues that we hold very dear on this side, which are around females standing for themselves, for their own representation. He used these wonderful quotes—‘Renee is not her father’, ‘Renee is not her uncle’. I am a feminist, absolutely, and stand by her right to be her own self. And her own self—okay, I will grant you, she is not the pastor of this freaky church—is a very happy member of it. Not only is she a happy member but she is happy to seek business. She works for something called Todd Clinics. On their website they offer her up as being very connected with the area of Sale through her connections with that community church. So she is happy to make money, she is happy to tout her business, on the back of that church that worked so hard—worked so hard—against our wonderful ban on conversion therapy. So I am sorry. I agree with the opposition leader; she is not her father, she is not the pastor—but she is a very willing participant.

A member interjected.

Ms SETTLE: Well, I would like to hear what she really believes. If it is true that this is not her position, then let her stand up and say something. She hid from the media after she had been elected—something about it being within the Liberal Party rules. I am not sure what that rule is. There is certainly a need for the community to know: who are they electing? What does she believe? So I would ask the media to ask her every day: does she support conversion therapy? Tell us. Does she support something that is illegal and abhorrent in this state? Ask her every day. And make sure that when you are standing at a booth, when you are out there on election day, you ask her. Ask the people from the other side what their abhorrent views are. Let her tell us the truth then that she stands by.

I think that something that is very important for us all to remember is Albert Camus and the great quote, ‘Democracy is not the law of the majority but the protection of the minority’. We are here to protect people within our community, not to make them pilloried and denied. When we debated the gay conversion therapy legislation what those of us on this side found so hard to deal with was that there was some therapy out there that suggested in any way that people in the LGBTIQI community were broken and needed fixing. That is so not true. We on this side stand with our rainbow community. We love them, we see them. I am not denying them their right to love who they do. But those on the other side would have us elect people they put up to represent communities, people who believe that archaic therapies might in some way change them—no medical foundation, nothing whatever, to commend these therapies except pain and hurt.

We had a wonderful health commissioner who looked into this in 2018. She talked about the pain, what they saw when they did the inquiry into gay conversion therapy. It was absolute pain that was caused to people that had been put through that, and lasting pain. I would say to you that those people out there that have been through this hideous and heinous therapy will feel that pain again when they have to look upon someone like Renee Heath, who is supposed to represent communities, standing up there. It will remind them every day of these abhorrent practices. As I say, I have called on her to state her position, but I am also calling on the Liberal-National parties to give us a bit of a clear idea of where they stand on this. They like to hide behind ‘We’re a broad church’. I will agree with the church bit.

A member interjected.

Ms SETTLE: Yes, just one right-wing church. When we were going through the discussions about the conversion therapy, the member for Brighton stood up and he gave us an ‘ironclad guarantee’ that the party would not pursue any changes to those controversial laws. Well, I applaud the member for Brighton. However, we then got leaked some fairly unpleasant audio recordings. Those on the other side sought to use some rude words earlier. I will not, but what I will tell you is that one of the quotes came from the Leader of The Nationals, and he said:

From a Nationals point of view, we will not be supporting James on this position and he can go and get—
bleep—

... simple as that.

The Nationals leader told the meeting this. So on the one hand we have an ironclad guarantee from the member for Brighton. Then we are told that the member for Brighton can go and get bleeped, by the Leader of The Nationals. I just want some clarity on where they actually stand. They flip-flopped endlessly on the east–west link: today they do, tomorrow they do not. My great fear is their position on conversion therapy will be exactly the same.

We all know that the Leader of the Opposition is in a bit of hot water. I would not want to be in his position; he has got some problems. What is he going to promise? What is he going to commit to just to keep the numbers in his party room? That is what is wrong with supporting people like Renee Heath. Look at America—*Roe v. Wade*. There is not a woman on this side of the house that is not mortified. How did we get something like that happening? In America the eyes were closed and they let extremist views sneak into positions of power. We must not let people sneak into positions of power that hold such extreme views. They will sit in the party room. They will promise the leader their number so that he can survive. And what then for the vulnerable in our community?

I want the Liberal-National parties to stand up and tell us what their position is on conversion therapy. Do they support Renee Heath's position on this? Do they support the western metro candidate and her abhorrent views on our young LGBTQI community? Why don't they come clean? As the wonderful member for Eltham said, it is a disgrace that they can march at Pride. They stand there, they march at Pride and then in the same breath they turn around and shoot down those people. They make terrible, terrible preselections that are only bound to deeply hurt and wound the LGBTQI community, to whom we are utterly, utterly committed on this side of the house. I really want them to come clean.

While they are coming clean, how about the Leader of the Opposition comes clean about a few things at once? Let him come clean about his Hotmail account. I would like him to come clean about the reality of some of those emails. What was that original deal that they had agreed to? Why was it that he had to send on his personal email the email to the donor? Look, they might as well just come clean on a few things. Perhaps this is the day that they will finally be up-front. Tell us what you stand for on the other side. Tell us what you stand for. We know what we stand for on this side of Parliament. Our values are clear: fairness and equality. As articulated by the member for Eltham, it is about fairness and equality on the side of the house. What do they stand for on the other side of the house? Dog whistling for whoever will vote for them. All they are after is grubby numbers, and they do not care who they throw under the bus. They do not care about equality and fairness, they do not care about the LGBTQI community, they care about numbers. All they are is a party of opposition. They were formed solely to oppose the Labor Party. This fine party stood up and stood up for working people, and they had to create a party solely for opposition. I look forward to them staying in that position for a very, very long time. And while they continue to preselect people with such abhorrent views, then I am sure that the Victorian people will make sure that they stay in opposition. I say to all Victorians: stand by our community, stand by LGBTQI people. Do not allow people with abhorrent views to enter this house to besmirch the very work that we do in this house. I ask all Victorians to stand up and say no to division and hate.

The SPEAKER: I just remind members—obviously it is a passionate debate today—that the use of 'you' and 'your' when you are on your feet is a reflection on the Chair. Sometimes I know members forget that because they are very excited about their speech.

SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr HIBBINS (Pahran) (17:01): It is Homelessness Week this week, and I grieve for the thousands of Victorians who are experiencing homelessness every single night as well as the many others who are in housing stress who have been pushed to the margins, in particular the over 100 000—reaching almost 120 000 now—who are on the public housing waiting list. Victorians are facing a housing crisis, and just like public health and public education, governments have a responsibility to ensure that everyone has a safe and secure place to call home. About 25 000 Victorians are experiencing homelessness on any given night. 25 000 Victorians are either sleeping on the street—particularly difficult in what has

been a very cold winter—staying in a refuge or a rooming house or couch surfing, often in an unsafe and insecure environment, and thousands more have been pushed to the edge, pushed to the margins, and are living in financial stress only one pay cheque away from losing their homes.

The point must be made that homelessness is a policy choice. Homelessness is not some sort of unsolvable problem that will always be around. Governments can solve homelessness, and it is time our governments took responsibility for homelessness and committed to solving the crisis. The simplest and most effective way to end homelessness is to provide enough affordable long-term social and public housing for everyone who needs it, and they also need the support to maintain that tenancy. This approach, often called Housing First, means that people can secure housing, and from there they can get support and also address any of the other issues and hardships that they face. The Greens have been pushing for and are taking to this election a plan to build 100 000 new public homes in 10 years, enough to house everyone on the public housing waiting list, and to have long-term provision for affordable housing and long-term guaranteed funding for homelessness services as well.

Now, the theme for this year's Homelessness Week is 'To end homelessness we need a plan'. Earlier this year the Victorian Greens introduced a bill to end homelessness in Victoria by 2030. For me it was one of the most important bills that we have introduced. It was certainly very exciting, in my view, because it was a bold plan. It set ambitious targets for the building of social housing, and it built in transparency and reporting against those targets. It was a plan based on Housing First principles, it was a plan supported by the public advocacy groups in the homelessness and housing sector and it was a plan that would see homelessness end not just within our lifetimes but by the end of the decade.

During the pandemic, in particular the lockdowns that we faced, I was really impressed by some initiatives that the government developed, like From Homelessness to a Home. This was a plan to get people off the streets using hotels and then support them to make that transition to permanent housing. In questioning during the estimates hearings the then housing minister drew a direct link between that program and the prospect of ending homelessness here in Victoria. That is why I was incredibly disappointed to see that that program was cut in the most recent budget. I understand some funding has been made available to that program subsequently. It was explained away as, 'Well, you cannot measure the response during lockdown against the response that we have now'. I would simply make the point that if we can house people during lockdown, if we can get people off the streets during lockdown, then we can do it outside lockdown, and we should. From my perspective, we know that people are turned away from homelessness services. They cannot serve everyone. I would simply turn that on its head: no-one should be turned away from a homelessness service, whether they are sleeping rough or they are in unsafe or insecure accommodation.

The current homelessness system is just not sustainable for people, and it is no wonder so many people end up back on the streets, homeless or in unsafe accommodation. You can go from crisis accommodation—perhaps a short-term stay over the weekend in a hotel or something like that—to then some short-term accommodation, again perhaps well away from your community and your existing support networks. Even if you are living in the city or the inner city, perhaps the only place they can find for you is in a country town. There are plenty of dodgy hotels around as well. It is just not sustainable, particularly for people who have very complex needs, to somehow go from that system and then transition into private accommodation. We also know that with the public housing waiting list it could be a decade before you are allocated a house or a unit. It is just not sustainable. Many refuges are only funded to have people there for a week, so it is no wonder that for so many people the system itself is not sustainable and so many people fall through the cracks.

The main driver of homelessness—again, I will repeat this—has been the lack of affordable homes, and the single most important factor in preventing and solving homelessness is increasing the supply of social housing. We can build more social housing. Housing ends homelessness; that message is pretty clear. This was the approach after World War II when governments did embark on large public housing building programs and governments took responsibility. It was not just for people on the margins; it was for low-income workers as well. We definitely need to move back to those principles.

I visited, as I have on many occasions, my local public housing estates just the other week to chat with residents and have them tell me about some of the issues that they are facing. One thing I did notice was the plaques that they have on the buildings. The other week I was at Union Street in Windsor and Inkerman Heights in St Kilda. I noticed each had very similar plaques: 'Built in 1966 by the housing commission'. Again, the model of those massive towers is probably gone, but then that principle of having a fairly independent commission that is well funded go and plan and build houses for people in need is a principle we need to go back to.

I am really disappointed that not only have subsequent governments seemed to have walked away from that idea that it is the government's job to build enough public housing for people but certainly our public housing estates have been neglected for far too long. The issues that are raised with me constantly by public housing tenants are that the conditions are just unacceptable—bedbugs, windows covered in muck and crap that is never cleaned, a lack of maintenance and a lack of security. Not only do we need to build more public housing, quality public housing, but we need to upgrade public housing as well and upgrade our estates and make sure that they are fit for purpose, whether that is by upgrading the existing units; building new and better homes; making sure that people can actually have air conditioning—which many tenants cannot actually have, and they have got the hot sun beating on them throughout summer; improving the grounds, the security, the cleaning and the maintenance; or co-locating services on site so they can get the care that they need.

What I have also seen—and the Ombudsman came out with their report recently—is that tenants, when they make complaints, just have not been looked after. They have not been looked after, and one of the recommendations from the Ombudsman is to create a separate social housing ombudsman who would hear complaints from public and community housing residents. Certainly that is what we have heard from residents as well—that their voices just simply are not being heard.

I am concerned that the running down of public housing estates is just a case in point. It is neoliberalism 101, where you run down a public asset and then decide that the only response is to sell it off or engage in privatisation. I am incredibly disappointed that this government's first response when it came to public housing—and it still continues to do so—was to privatise public housing estates and only slightly increase the number of units. Now they have scrapped that plan, the sell-off, but they are still engaging private units being built on public land. The real value of that land, of public housing estates, does not sit with the monetary value that can be gained by selling it off or leasing it out for decades or engaging with private developers. The value of that land is such that public housing tenants can live in the inner city close to public transport, close to services, close to jobs and close to communities that they are involved in. So I would urge the government to move away from this idea that they cannot talk about providing more public or social housing without talking about private development and move towards the principle of planning, building and operating public housing for the public good. The Minister for Housing would trumpet these large investments in these estates, but that is private money, not public funds, which means they have to be building private housing on these estates, and I do not see that as necessary when the main aim needs to be reducing the public housing waiting list. I would urge the government to reinstate the social housing levy that they scrapped from pressure from property developers so that there is funding to build on their big build and make sure that it actually has the numbers to meet the demand that is out there in the long term, not just over the next four years. They need to step up with inclusionary zoning, not sign off on large development areas like Arden and then possibly Fishermans Bend and others, where property developers are not forced to build set numbers of affordable housing or public and social housing.

In addition to that, they need to make sure that tenants have got the services to ensure that they can get the help they need to secure those tenancies—that is a key tenet of Housing First. I know there are a lot of community organisations and community health organisations that are well placed, and if they were given the extra funding for the extra staff that they need, they could make a big difference to the lives of people in those communities.

I will just finish with the need for a youth housing guarantee to make sure that the special needs of young people, which can be quite different to other demographics, are looked after and to make sure that in any long-term plan to address housing and homelessness there is a separate and specific plan for young people and a youth housing plan. The government, I also believe, should take action in stopping runaway rent increases—strong action, including putting caps on outrageous and large rent increases, whether that is by a set figure or pegging them to inflation or wages. That sort of drastic action to make sure that for people it not only addresses the cost of living but addresses secure housing is critical action that this government needs to take. To tackle the housing crisis we need to have more public and social housing, end out-of-control rent rises and make property developers pay their fair share. We need a housing system that puts people before profit.

OPPOSITION PERFORMANCE

Mr EDBROOKE (Frankston) (17:16): Deputy Speaker, congratulations on your elevation to the new role. It is fantastic to see you sitting there, and you have been doing a great job listening to all these riveting contributions.

I rise to grieve for the future of the treaty process in Victoria under a potential Liberal-National government in the future. We have heard some incredible stories of the preselection process so far for the Liberal-Nationals today, and I have got to say it runs a chill down your spine hearing some of the opinions and some of the thoughts made known publicly by these potential candidates and potential MPs. Often these are thoughts and I guess policy pitches to a potential government that might be hidden during the campaign. We would not like that to happen, so it is my job today to grieve about the potential bigotry, which of course has no place in this house.

This government has made a foundation where in this house and the other house we have no acceptance of bigotry, racism, homophobic comments or sexism. It is very alarming when you see some of these preselections that really shine a light on people's backgrounds, what they have said in the past and what they believe right now as well, so we might talk about a few of them today. I was standing here not long ago, and I thought, 'Well, we've actually got rid of some of the bigots'. We have actually got rid of some people that I would consider uneducated bigots, and one of them would be a former member who did not stand for Rosie Batty when history was made as she made a presentation to this house. I think it might have been the first time a member of the community that was not elected to this house spoke in this house.

A member: That was amazing.

Mr EDBROOKE: It was absolutely amazing. I looked across, and I saw one person who later could not explain why they would not stand to the media. I could not actually explain to anyone else why someone would not stand. Why would you not show someone the respect and maybe educate yourself a little bit later? Maybe it is because you are a misogynist. Maybe it is because you are a sexist. I think today we might start calling a bit of that out.

I also raised a glass when I thought there was some leadership finally being shown in the Liberal Party as a member in the other place, Mr Finn, was removed from the party. He got voted out of the party. Mr Finn's decision to refuse to stand at the start of every day to acknowledge Indigenous Australians and what they have been through is the type of petty ridiculousness that his career will be known for, unfortunately. But I thought, 'Yes, we're moving on. The Liberal culture is even moving on, and they are maybe coming back to the centrist views a little bit'. But then we heard over the weekend and in the last couple weeks about some of these preselections. When you are in the Liberal caucus it must be like being in that show *Outlander*.

Mr M O'Brien: We don't have caucuses. Get the terminology right at least, will you? Come on.

Mr EDBROOKE: Oh, my goodness. At least you will speak up now; when Bernie Finn was there you were very, very weak on him. It must be really, really like that show *Outlander*. You feel like you

have gone back a hundred years at times, because on the weekend we had someone preselected for the Liberal Party who claimed that schools were actively trying to change children's gender and sexual identity while encouraging gay and transgender students to be really narcissistic. I can see there would be people over there, reasonable people on the other side of the house, that would be rolling their eyes and looking at their shoes, thinking, 'Oh dear, why are we doing this to ourselves again?'.

In interviews posted on YouTube this former Melton councillor and teacher, Moira Deeming, describes transgender laws as 'My number one issue'. I would challenge anyone to go to their psychologist or counsellor and say 'My number one issue is transgender people'. I reckon they would tell you the truth. I reckon they would tell you that maybe you were a bit perverse, maybe you have got a few issues yourself that you need to deal with. Maybe they would tell you that if you are going for a job, if you are up for election in a community who are going to vote for you and you want them to vote for you, you might have to ask what their number one issue is. I guarantee you, across Victoria there is not one electorate where the number one issue is transgender issues.

She also casts doubt on COVID-19 vaccines and claims LGBTIQ+ students get all the attention in schools. Well, I am a former teacher and I do not see it. I am not sure what she is on about. These people are the future of the state Liberal Party.

Mr Richardson: It's all going well.

Mr EDBROOKE: Yes, it is going well. We saw on the weekend too that Renee Heath, who is a Gippsland chiropractor, won the Liberal Party ticket for Eastern Victoria Region. She got the number one spot. She has got a connection to a conservative City Builders Church which has been accused of encouraging members of its congregation to take part in the Living Waters program. It is a peculiar name for an externally run gay conversion therapy. We have heard several members talk about the gay conversion therapy argument within the Liberal Party.

We have also got Evan Mulholland, who is from that wonderful think tank, the Institute of Public Affairs. He is a staunch critic of climate—

Ms Hennessy: And we use the term 'think' lightly.

Mr EDBROOKE: We do use the term 'think' lightly. He is a staunch critic of climate targets and our efforts to boost renewable energy. It is fair to say Victoria is leading the nation in regard to these policies, but on Sunday this man was preselected to a totally winnable position in Victoria's upper house. He has previously described federal Labor's 45 per cent by 2030 emissions target as 'a disaster', while suggesting people arguing for 'economy-destroying climate targets' and 'endless subsidisation of intermittent and unreliable renewable energy' represent an elite who take mainstream Australians for fools.

I think the preselection that alarms me—indeed the writing is on the wall with this preselection—is the one of a former City of Boroondara mayor. This is really alarming. This person, Cynthia Watson, was preselected for the seat of Ringwood. Even Liberal Party elders are very, very concerned about this person's values. Moderate Liberals believe that the former City of Boroondara mayor's religious right-wing values could be a liability, and some members were surprised when she told Ringwood members at the preselection she would not even live in the electorate. A senior Liberal Party official, prohibited from speaking publicly under party rules, told the *Age* they believed her right-wing views made her unelectable and were antithetical to the Victorian branch's attempts to modernise and appeal to a younger and ethnically diverse demographic. Apart from being a factional ally of disgraced factional leader Marcus Bastiaan and recruiting heavily from Mormon churches—and we have heard all of that story—Ms Watson was named repeatedly in a forensic audit into allegations of breaches of party rules that was prompted by an investigation by *60 Minutes*. I think that was a factional operation led by Mr Bastiaan and also former minister Sukkar as well.

But I do not think that is even the most disturbing thing for me, that we are preselecting candidates that have this kind of history. It might be a bit of a concern for the Leader of the Opposition now he is in the limelight for a Hotmail account and some emails, but the thing that shakes me to the core after proudly seeing our First Nations people in the spirit of self-determination come into this Parliament and start the process for treaty is the fact that this candidate for Ringwood is a person who made a stand, no pun intended, to stay seated during a council meeting and continued to for every acknowledgement of country. This person refuses to stand during an acknowledgement of country. So we just basically saw the Liberal Party give someone the boot for doing that, and now we are bringing someone else in who does it. I do not understand personally how you would want to align yourself with Mr Finn or indeed Pauline Hanson, who last week was in the media for walking out on the acknowledgement of country. Can you imagine what you would be thinking if someone said, 'Oh, Pauline Hanson's got the same opinion as you'. I would be pretty scared, I would be looking at myself, I would be looking at what I said and I would be educating myself pretty damn quickly.

I am proud that Victoria is leading the nation in implementing treaty and truth. I am proud that we are incorporating elements of the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* and we are also leading the nation in setting ambitious targets in the implementation of the national agreement too. I remind members today that there are people that were in this chamber and who might even be listening at home who are generational survivors of a cruel colonial past. Australia is not the only nation to have to go through this; we have seen that is the nature of colonisation across the world. But there are family members who might be watching this but who were certainly watching our Parliament not long ago, whose family members had been killed off and whose culture was bred out of them.

Now, traditional voices have been traditionally silenced, and that true history of colonisation has been whitewashed as well. We know this. It is incorruptible evidence. It is in the history books. Why are we preselecting people in the 21st century who cannot see that history should not be covered up or denied or erased? We should not be electing people that want to keep things as they were in the 1800s. We are closer than ever as a nation to addressing unfinished business in this state. I grieve that there would be people who could possibly be elected to this place and the other place who would deny that. We have been told in no uncertain terms that the treaty bill is the only way that we can heal and the only way that we can all create a future of justice, equality and respect, and I really wonder why anyone would step in the way of that.

It is bizarre to me that these preselections occur, because these people clearly are not there to listen to their community. They are clearly not going to represent their community. Do not get me wrong—I love the fact that we are all different people here, that we can all make up our minds, but there comes a point when we need to be educated, we need to be respected, we need to ensure that bigotry is called out and we need to ensure that prejudice and racism are called out as well. This government is definitely representative of our Victorian community, more so than probably any government in the nation. We have a vision for the future, and we are building that vision—and that does not involve bringing racists into the fold.

It is one thing for the Leader of the Opposition to stand there and tell us he has control of his party, that he wants more equality and that he is acting on things, whether that be equality in the sense of gender or sexuality or racial equality, and it is another thing entirely for him to stand there with this going on behind him and say absolutely nothing. He is allowing his party once again to be taken over by bigots that appear to be living in the 1800s. It is quite bizarre and not reflective of our community at all. That is not leadership.

Mr M O'Brien: On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, as you would be aware, standing order 118 prevents imputations and personal reflections on members, and I believe that the honourable member for Frankston's comments in attacking the Leader of the Opposition strayed into the territory. I would ask you to ask him to desist from doing so.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Malvern. The member for Frankston, to continue.

Mr EDBROOKE: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. I will leave damaging his reputation to the Leader of the Opposition.

While we are focused on acknowledging past wrongs and building a treaty process with our proud First Nations people, across the aisle they are arguing about why they should do that. When we are focused on providing equality and LGBTIQ+ rights to people in our community, we have got the opposition preselecting people obsessed with transgender issues and not giving equality to people. Whilst we are leading the nation in renewables, we have got people over the other side of the chamber who do seem to believe that renewables are not required, that we can still burn coal and that global warming does not exist. We have also got a bunch of MPs across the aisle who seem to think that taking away *Roe v. Wade* and the rights that go with that is a good thing.

I would say we listen to our community. We believe in evidence. We believe that the whole community has an opinion. We are not obsessed with race, gender or sex, and we do not have unhealthy perversions with people's bedrooms. I congratulate the Liberal candidates on their preselection. I think they will perform as expected. I hope they talk to everybody. I hope they find everyone in their community and they tell them their thoughts on these things, and I wish them luck.

SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr RIORDAN (Polwarth) (17:31): I rise to grieve today about the parlous state of homelessness and housing affordability in this great state of Victoria. This government talks about its big builds, it talks about its compassion, it talks about all these wonderful values, but it is in fact all talk. We do not have to go very far to look at this government's track record on looking after the most vulnerable, the most needy, those who most need the state's support. We are not talking about their members of Parliament who have got their fists in the trough all day every day, taking stamps, taking cash payments and paying for red T-shirts. No, we are talking about using taxpayers money for the benefit of those most in need in our community.

I refer to just the basic statistics. When this government took control back in 2014 there were 9990 people waiting for priority housing in this state. That is not a figure that most people would be happy with, and in fact in a modern, progressive society we would like to see that figure continue to go down. But after eight years of Labor, billions and billions and billions wasted and spent on overblown projects and on tunnels that have yet to materialise—I think one of the main tunnels has not even started to be dug yet—millions to developer friends and scandals galore about what they are doing with taxpayers money, where are the most vulnerable, where are the homeless, where are the people that need somewhere safe to stay at night? That list has increased 205 per cent in eight years. There are now 30 500 people just on the urgent priority list. We are not talking about the total list of homeless, because that is 54 000 people—up enormously.

This government talks big and acts so little because it is very, very obsessed with itself. It is obsessed with making sure it is covering up. It is spending millions of dollars going to the High Court to stop us here in the state understanding what they are doing with our money. Meanwhile people continue to be homeless. In these eight years we have gone on a waiting list. The average person needing urgent public housing is waiting 16 months. That is the best part of a year and a half spent waiting just to find somewhere to put their head down at night, and that does not include people who are in completely inadequate housing that needs to be upgraded or disabled or disadvantaged people that need housing. That is this list, and it is out of control.

This government claims to be wanting to spend \$5.5 billion on a big build, and they talk big about providing more public housing, but let us look at the facts of that. When they finish spending another \$5.5 billion of taxpayers money in a fairly unaccountable way—we will talk about that a little bit later—there is still not going to be the amount of houses available for the most needy and the most

vulnerable in this state as there was in 2014. Imagine that—eight years in government and a list that has blown out beyond any recognition of what it was only eight years ago. You have spent \$5.5 billion and you are still worse off. You have got to ask questions. Victorians are asking questions. The welfare sector is asking questions, and most certainly those trying to put people into a safe, affordable and accessible home every night of the week are asking the question of this government, ‘What are you doing?’.

I will just put on the record my own area—the Geelong-Ballarat-Warrnambool area—and its housing lists. I mean, in the Warrnambool area, which covers my hometown of Colac, there is a 2816 per cent increase in people looking for urgent housing. These are not people who want to upgrade their home and have a nicer home. These are people that do not actually have a home—a 2800 per cent increase. And this is under a government that is telling everybody it is spending money on housing. In Horsham there is a 403 per cent increase, in Ballarat a 649 per cent increase and in the Geelong region 618 per cent. The member for South Barwon is there. He has clearly been asleep in his own home, not thinking about the people in his own community nor those right across the Barwon and south-west region. There are literally 1475 more people desperately looking for a home under the watch of Labor just in Geelong alone in the last eight years.

So, what other statistics do we have here? We see that this problem is not a COVID problem. It is not a one-off problem. It is not from some recent event, it is an annual, ongoing problem. Just in the most recent figures, again, this government at the moment is running at basically putting another 400 people a quarter out of a home—less accessible. It is averaging around 358 people—or actually, registered people, so that can be families. That figure could actually be multiple; it could be many, many hundreds more than that. It is just a family registration, so if you are a young, single mum with a couple of kids, that is two extra people. We are averaging 358 a quarter finding themselves without assistance from this government.

Recently in other reports put out—and the government, surprisingly, has not yet doctored this information so that it is not available to the public—on the priority housing list, just to give you an idea of how dramatically it is increasing, in March 2021, for the most urgent people in the community, it was 32 079. Remember that when the Liberals were last in, in 2014, they inherited a list of only 9990. By March 2021 it was 32 079, and by March 2022, only a couple of months ago, the list was 36 237 people who do not have somewhere to call home—who are waiting endlessly, month after month, in some cases year after year, for somewhere safe to live. That is just the list of people with nowhere. There are people currently in public housing that is inadequate: it is not safe; it is not appropriate; it is not fit for purpose; it may not be disability friendly. There are a range of reasons why people are desperate to have their public housing upgraded, and when you add those poor people to the list, you are at 64 000 people—not people but families—that this government has no plan for, because their \$5 billion spend just keeps us where we are. It does not add anything new to the system.

We have seen in recent times the breakdown of people that are on this waiting list—the government is trying to record that. They are keeping people busy recording; perhaps they could send some of those people out to actually make some new homes. We have got, for example, just between March 2021 and March 2022 another 1000 people in emergency management. These are the most critical and most vulnerable people. In the last 12 months there have been an extra 1000 people in that category. We have got people needing housing for special needs—an extra 790 of those. I mean, that brings us to a total of just under 7000 people needing specialist housing assistance, and this government has no option for them.

We move to just some of the demographic types that this government is failing abysmally to provide any sort of future and support for. Single parents—you cannot get a more vulnerable cohort in society than a young mum with a couple of kids, desperate. I know in my own town I have regularly got people who are perhaps in one bedroom, and they have got two little children and have to make ends meet and make a home. From March 2021 to March 2022 the number of single parents was 12 200. It is now at 13 419. That is just the family household. So if it was a young parent with two children, it

could be three times that figure. That is a figure of probably 30 000 people without a home and in desperate and priority need for it.

The other one that of course breaks most people's hearts—it is the fastest growing demographic that this government is not providing a home for—is our elderly single people. These are people who have got to a period in life when they can no longer work and provide an income for themselves in a regular way. It may be people who have found themselves through no fault of their own single and without a home. That cohort of people just in the last 12 months has increased by 732. There are now over 10 300 elderly single people that this government is providing no hope and no opportunity for. Quite frankly they have been utterly asleep at the wheel in providing this most essential service to the Victorian community.

I received an email over the weekend—actually from someone who is a similar age to me—from a single woman who lives in my electorate who has lived her whole life in the township of Lorne. She has had good ongoing employment. She has had a house to live in. There is no rental accommodation for people who live and work in many of my coastal communities, for example. This woman wrote to me that she now finds herself living in a caravan out the back of her sister's farm many, many kilometres from where her regular employment was. She cannot get a home in the town that she was born and bred in and has worked in all her life, and there is nothing that this government can do to help her. There is no accommodation. There are no plans. There are no opportunities for her to have access to a safe, affordable and accessible home, which she is certainly entitled to.

And it is not just me raising these concerns. I have here from just the last month numerous articles from the Warrnambool *Standard*, the *Geelong Advertiser*, the *Ballarat Courier*, the *Colac Herald*—endless publications across my electorate—talking about some of the appalling statistics that this government has overseen in its eight years. We have got, for example, in the Geelong region only 9.7 per cent of the houses available for rent considered affordable. How does one of our major regional communities provide for its most vulnerable and its most needy when less than 10 per cent of the houses available are considered affordable? That is just not good enough. It means that this government has been asleep at the wheel.

Then of course early last month the Ombudsman, Deborah Glass, presented a report. It is not pretty reading. It is distressing reading. The Ombudsman came out and talked about the complete mismanagement of these public assets. The 60 000-odd homes that the Victorian government oversees should be an absolute priority—not red shirts, not millions of dollars to defend the Labor Party's actions in the High Court, not millions of dollars taken to prop up dodgy marketing and Labor Party activities in electorate offices. Money should not be spent on that, but it should be spent on keeping people's homes as homes. The Ombudsman receives two complaints a day—over 700 complaints a year. I just table here the increasing rate of complaints to the Ombudsman about the condition and the manner in which this government maintains its properties. We have had a lot of legislation go through this Parliament in recent years about the need for landlords to be responsible—to provide safe housing, to maintain it properly—and yet this government leads by disaster, not by example. It leads by disaster. In 2016 there were 598 complaints; the next year, 641; then 760, 822, 855 and 899. It is off the charts. I mean, the people in public housing are being shown no respect. There is no courtesy, there is no follow-up and in fact the 17 recommendations from the Ombudsman talk about this government's inability to properly manage the assets that it has in the best interests of Victorians and the most vulnerable Victorians. They have done a terrible job.

Finally, in the minute that we have left, let us talk about the other element: this government talks about the revitalisation and the reinvestment in public housing. Well, let us talk about that. There are a couple of properties, for example, in Northcote, North Melbourne and Preston. There have been some very, very cosy deals done there by this government with developers. I see online today that one former public housing estate now has private units for sale between \$500 000 and \$3 million—151 units on one site being sold off to the private sector. But guess what? This government has not revealed to the Parliament and it has not revealed to the people what the Victorian taxpayer, what the homeless and

what the people needing public housing have got out of that deal. Just on a short add-up there, it is potentially—

Ms Thomas: More public housing.

Mr RIORDAN: No, they have not. They have not got more public housing, because sadly there is less public housing after \$5.5 billion than there was when the Liberals were here in 2014. We have gone backwards—and it is not me saying that, it is the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman uses the word: public housing provision has ‘stagnated’. It has absolutely stagnated in this state. I grieve for the homeless in Victoria.

LIBERAL PARTY

Mr CHEESEMAN (South Barwon) (17:46): It is with some pleasure that I rise this afternoon to speak on this particular grievance debate. I take the opportunity to acknowledge and congratulate you, Deputy Speaker, for this fantastic opportunity to be the first Cypriot to be the Deputy Speaker of this chamber. That is a fantastic honour for you, and I congratulate you.

This morning when I got to work I took the opportunity to have a look at the *Age*, as I indeed do most mornings of my adult life. I like to read the newspaper and keep myself informed of the various machinations that might be taking place in politics. This morning’s *Age* was quite extraordinary, and I have brought a copy of the front page in today. I took some time to very carefully read the article put together by a couple of *Age* journalists, and what I found absolutely remarkable in today’s *Age* was that the Leader of the Opposition’s chief of staff has been used, it would appear, according to that article, as a person who would accept illegal donations on behalf of the Liberal Party to ensure that they could fund their election campaign for this coming year. It was quite an extraordinary read, and I wondered intently what this means. Of course the article very clearly states that a \$100 000 donation was sought from a private donor to help increase the staffing pool, as I understand it—something that the various integrity agencies would find, I am sure, illegal behaviour. And of course that individual has subsequently resigned.

But also, in reflecting very carefully on that article, it occurred to me that maybe this is not the first time that this practice has been used by the Liberal Party in this state, and I wonder whether the integrity agencies, if they do investigate this, may find that the Leader of the Opposition’s Hotmail account may be quite revealing in terms of other donations that have been made that are potentially illegal. In reflecting on that and in reflecting on the past conduct of the opposition leader it very much occurred to me that in his time as Minister for Planning he got himself into an enormous amount of hot water, where various meetings were held with key donors to the Liberal Party at which commitments were given that later had to be defended through court processes and ultimately settlements had to be made that no doubt cost the Victorian taxpayer an enormous amount of money.

In reflecting on that newspaper article and indeed on his previous practice that has been exposed over the years, it very much occurred to me: what might this mean for the Liberal Party, particularly given the preselection of a number of very, very conservative individuals to the Liberal Party to this place in very safe seats? One of the great issues that I have is that with the profound opportunity to be a world leader, as Victoria has been in responding to those great challenges of climate change, and using that as an economic opportunity to provide a way for working-class people to be able to access energy at a very affordable price, these dodgy and very loose arrangements that he has entered into will make the delivery of renewable energy that much more expensive to Victorians and will mean that the profound challenges of climate change will be that much more difficult to reach.

I further reflected on the Leader of the Opposition particularly in the lead-up to the 2018 election, I think, where he dined out with some notorious figures and enjoyed a crayfish meal as I understand it—again very, very dodgy individuals who the Leader of the Opposition should have known would have been seeking a leg-up in a way that would be onerous and horrendous to the Victorian—

A member interjected.

Mr CHEESEMAN: Individuals of police interest indeed. Again I grieve about where the Liberal Party is at with them. Victorians quite rightly expect people to be of absolute integrity who will make commitments to the Victorian community and will deliver those commitments. When I look at our track record of delivery in this place—that we say what we are going to do and we get on and do it—I think at this coming election there will be a very, very clear choice for the Victoria community. The mere fact that the chief of staff of the Leader of the Opposition has been used to generate illegal or at least alleged illegal donations to the Liberal Party, with a price of \$100 000 for the chief of staff, I wonder very clearly what the media adviser might be worth. Is that a donation that might have been sought from another business donor, maybe of \$80 000?

Mr Edbrooke: Who knows?

Mr CHEESEMAN: I wonder what the planning adviser might be worth—maybe more than \$100 000.

Mr M O'Brien: On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, I have been trying to give the member for South Barwon the benefit of the doubt, but even I have to make the point, and I make the point of order to you, that he is scandalously close to if not crossing the line in relation to standing order 118. Imputations and personal reflections on any member can only be made by way of substantive motion. I ask you to bring the member back within standing orders. Alternatively, he could take those 10 steps to courage and go out and say it on the steps of Parliament.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. The member for South Barwon, please continue, but continue with the point that is before the house.

Mr CHEESEMAN: Yes, I was wondering out loud, and I perhaps should not do that, but it does very much occur to me that in about 15 weeks time the Victorian community will have a very, very clear choice about a government that has a profound record of achievement—a profound record particularly in terms of delivering on the great challenges of climate change—and a Victorian government that is prepared to work with Canberra to deliver in the very, very best interests of Victorians when it comes to those great challenges.

I can recall very clearly having that opportunity of getting out there, of doorknocking my electorate and talking with my community about the opportunity of putting solar panels on their roofs. Not only was this a good thing for responding to the challenges of climate change but it was also great for household budgets. I can also recall engaging with and talking to my community about the importance of having a property system in this state, a planning process, a planning system where Victorians have the opportunity to put forward their say in a proper, formalised planning arrangement. I must say that through that process my community had the opportunity to engage with the former Minister for Planning, the member for Richmond, through all of the formal planning processes that he put in place to consult the community on important things like town boundaries and height limits across the Surf Coast and the Bellarine. These were important issues that were very, very well canvassed through the state election campaign, and through that period I can recall vividly the litany of publicly known planning decisions made by the former planning minister, now the Leader of the Opposition, that left a lot to be desired in terms of providing the opportunity and the right for Victorians to be able to make their clear voice known through that planning process.

When I reflect on where the Liberal Party are at and on the individuals that they are preselecting, what I can say is this: very clearly I know, as every Victorian and every person in this chamber knows, that with those individuals being preselected by the Liberal Party the challenges of responding to climate change will be harder, the rights of women will be trashed and the rights of our gay, lesbian and gender-diverse communities will be trashed. These are rights that we have put in place, that we have built on. This is what a progressive state should do. But when you open the door, as the Liberal Party have, to those that they have let into their party, it is no wonder they are preselecting people that are so conservative.

It is important at the end of the day that this Parliament be a genuine reflection of our community. That is important. That is a thing that I cherish. I am sure all Victorians cherish that. But it is also important that we do not see arch conservatives dominate the Liberal Party, because as a consequence of that we see the quality of debate and the opportunity to reform the state in a good way lessened.

I am looking forward to the Victorian election at the end of this year. I am looking forward, as I know all of my colleagues are, to putting our case about why Victoria matters, why the Victorian Parliament matters and why our offering is the right offering for the Victorian community. I am looking forward to that challenge. I am looking forward to putting my case locally in South Barwon. I am looking forward to that really profound opportunity to put the case to make sure that we deliver for the communities of Highton and Grovedale and Victoria's growth corridor. It is important that we provide a great opportunity, and this grievance debate has provided that chance.

Question agreed to.

Bills

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING BILL 2022

Second reading

Debate resumed.

Ms WILLIAMS (Dandenong—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Treaty and First Peoples) (18:01): It is my pleasure to rise in support of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Bill 2022 and indeed to now be in the role of the Minister for Mental Health, in which I now have carriage of this bill through the Parliament after a significant amount of work from my predecessor in getting it to this point. I will have, hopefully, more to say about that later on in my contribution.

I just want to recap on the journey so far, and that really takes us back to 2018 when we committed as a government to have the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System. We saw some 18 months ago that final report being handed down with great ceremony, and rightly so, and what it represented and the vision that it articulated for a compassionate, caring and expert mental health and wellbeing system, one where people could get the treatment and support they need and deserve close to home. From the outset the government very proudly—and still to this day it is very proud of this—committed to delivering on every single one of the royal commission's recommendations, knowing that transformation was what was required. In keeping that promise to the Victorian community we have taken on some very, very significant challenges, which has been well acknowledged, I think, in this debate so far. Chief among those challenges was the delivery of a brand new mental health and wellbeing bill within a very short 15 months of the final report being delivered.

This bill lays a new statutory foundation on which we will build Victoria's mental health and wellbeing system from the ground up. Sometimes we may as politicians be accused of saying things like that lightly, but I think this really does represent transformational reform—a very different way of doing things and a way that is more inclusive of voices that may have previously been largely excluded from important discussions about care ultimately.

This bill delivers in full on recommendation 42 of the royal commission's final report, which called on us to, just quoting that recommendation:

repeal the Mental Health Act 2014 ... and enact a new Mental Health and Wellbeing Act, preferably by the end of 2021 and no later than mid-2022 ...

It was to do a number of things, including:

- promote good mental health and wellbeing;
- reset the legislative foundations underpinning the mental health and wellbeing system; and
- support the delivery of services that are responsive to the needs and preferences of Victorians.

Look, it has been—and I would be the first to say it, and I am sure my predecessor would in fact join me in this—a very significant challenge to do all of that in little over a year, but what has been drafted in this time I think surely reflects the ambitions set for us by the royal commission in their final report and does a great job in breathing life into the vision that was given to us in that report.

This bill creates several new governance and accountability entities, it modernises our approach to crisis care and it establishes an opt-out, non-legal advocacy system for the very first time. It puts people with lived and living experience of mental illness and their families, carers and supporters at the centre of this rebuilt mental health and wellbeing system, and I think we cannot underestimate the significance of that. The bill better reflects also the diversity of services that will be needed in our future system. It better defines community expectations of the quality and safety of our services, and it recognises the absolutely critical role of clinical and community mental health workforces who make all of this possible, and I will have a little bit more to say about those workforces later on as well.

Of course, with another hat on as the Minister for Treaty and First Peoples, I am also very proud that the Mental Health and Wellbeing Bill incorporates a statement of recognition and an acknowledgement of the treaty process, which is hugely important, because we know that with that process, with treaty, we are ultimately talking about putting control of Aboriginal affairs back into the hands of Aboriginal people, where we can drive better outcomes. This system is no exception in that broader piece of work, so making sure that we put that placeholder in, that we allow that space for that work to take place, is critical to that other path that is being pursued with my other hat on. Indeed the opportunity to bring together mental health and the portfolio of treaty and First Peoples is enormous. It is certainly not lost on me. The impact of intergenerational trauma on our very proud First Nations communities cannot be understated, and I think we should all be able to recognise in this place that we can do better. It seems fitting to acknowledge that today after we lost the wonderful Uncle Archie Roach over the weekend, a man who had dedicated much of his life to telling the story of that trauma but also to painting a vision of hope and of a future where we could rectify that and truly walk together, as the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria co-chair Marcus Stewart said in this very place not all that long ago. So the royal commission's focus on Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing as a necessary part of building a culturally safe service system was very welcome, and the fact that the new Mental Health and Wellbeing Bill becomes one of the first pieces of legislation to carry this statement of recognition forward is very fitting.

Now, while this bill is a significant achievement, we know that legislation alone cannot fix the broken system that was laid bare by very frank and brave testimony from thousands of Victorians whose lives have been shaped by this system and who very bravely gave of themselves in the royal commission process so that we might build a system that better meets their needs and those of many others like them in the future.

In the second-reading speech my predecessor and colleague the member for Monbulk highlighted three core foundations necessary to see the royal commission's vision succeed: a strong and diverse workforce, a modern legislative framework, and sustainable ongoing funding to match the scale of the challenge at hand. Whilst we are only at the start of that 10-year journey, just over a year into it in fact, what I can say is that this government is delivering on all three of those fronts. Over \$600 million has been invested into priority workforce initiatives since the interim report was released in November 2019, and with the most recent budget investment we are on track to deliver 2500 more mental health workers into the system. I know our workforces are strained, they are fatigued, they are weary due to the pandemic, and I do want to take this opportunity to thank every single mental health nurse, psychologist, social worker, psychiatrist and peer worker, among others, for their dedication and for their commitment to the challenge of this reform, because as much as we do in this place, they will be doing more to make this work on the ground for the benefit of all Victorians. It takes a lot of strength to push on. It takes a lot of strength to work in a flawed system while also holding out hope for the future that we are all building together and to have confidence that what we are working towards is worth it—is worth the challenge, is worth the hard work, is worth the sweat and tears.

We have also legislated the mental health levy to provide an ongoing dedicated funding stream for mental health services, ensuring that the days of mental health funding being the health system's poor cousin are at an end. And that does need to come to an end, and I know that is a sentiment that has been articulated by many in this debate. In the last two budgets alone we have invested over \$5 billion into this reform and the creation of the system that Victorians truly deserve. None of this would be possible without that levy and the leadership also that it took to establish a sustainable funding source for years to come—and 'sustainability' is the key word when we talk about that funding model.

Since the introduction of the bill before the winter break I note that there has been some commentary around certain ambitious aspects of this bill, and I want to address that. I know we have seen some public reflections on the inclusion of an up-front goal to reduce and ultimately eliminate seclusion and restraint within mental health services over the next decade. This was a direct recommendation of the royal commission, reflecting that for many people the use of those practices, those interventions, has had really lasting traumatic impact with little to no therapeutic benefit. This 10-year goal is undoubtedly ambitious and must be approached with much patience, it must be said, and nuance as well.

However, the rates of seclusion and restraint we currently see are themselves, I think it is worth noting, the symptoms of a broken mental health system that we are dealing with. As we build a new and hopefully much stronger mental health system, the need for these interventions should decrease. With every modern facility that we build, with every local service that we open, the hope grows as we are moving towards a system where these restrictive practices are ultimately not needed.

However—I want to say this, and I know I have not got much time left—we cannot hope to eliminate these practices if our clinicians and professionals are not safe. These two things come hand in hand. I want to be really clear on this: the safety, security and support of mental health staff is absolutely critical and will never be a second-order priority in these reforms. This is the government of worker rights and workplace safety. We have a very strong track record in this area. Whether it be nurse-to-patient ratios or industrial manslaughter or wage theft laws, we firmly believe that there can be no meaningful system change without supporting, resourcing and empowering our workforce, and we commit to doing that and working in partnership with both consumers and clinicians as a part of this work. In closing I just want to commend my predecessor for all of his work in bringing the bill to this place and commend the bill to the house.

Dr READ (Brunswick) (18:11): The Victorian mental health system has been undergoing some major changes in the last few years. It has had to, because it was failing badly to meet the needs of Victorians struggling with mental illness. The much-awaited Mental Health and Wellbeing Bill 2022 is the next step in that journey. It includes a lot of promising words. At this point I just want to acknowledge the comments of the new minister; I am very pleased to hear a commitment to a solid investment in providing a well-trained mental health workforce.

In an attempt to move away from a system which focused largely on medication and compulsory treatment, the bill talks about people's experiences and their rights. It includes a principle on the rights and dignity of people with mental illness. It talks about people's right to make informed decisions about their own treatment. It acknowledges First Nations people and their right to be supported in a way that is culturally safe. It talks about treaty. It writes into legislation the value that people with lived experience of mental illness bring to the mental health system. It embraces diversity, and it compels mental health services to comply with these principles when they can. These are all welcome words.

However, the shift from focusing on medication and compulsory treatment will depend on more than these words. Much of it will depend on how the act deals with seclusion—in other words, locking someone in a room by themselves—and how it deals with restraint and with compulsory treatment. The hard decisions on these issues have been handed to a review which will recommend future amendments to the bill. We would love to see good legislation passed in this area, but we do appreciate the time needed to do it properly, because some of these are really hard questions. The bill does,

however, legislate the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System's aim of an end to seclusion and restraint within 10 years.

There is a near consensus that restraining people and locking them away rarely helps them recover and can make them worse, adding trauma to what should be a recovery process. There are countless stories of harrowing experiences with seclusion and restraint, including triggering people's experiences of past trauma or just abandoning people when they most need support. Indigo Daya told the royal commission about attempting suicide as an inpatient:

When the staff found me, I was forcibly walked straight to a seclusion room and locked in by myself. This was a terrifying and deeply shaming experience. There was nothing whatsoever to distract me from the overwhelming emotions, and I concluded that I must indeed be a terrible person, because they were punishing me. I remember hitting myself in the head, over and over ... I wish that those staff had instead been able to sit with me in a quiet room, show some compassion and empathy, and just asked me what had led me to feel this way.

Compassion and empathy are usually not enough, but they are a very good starting point. While seclusion and restraint can be damaging to the mentally ill person, we are also very conscious of the need to protect the safety of healthcare workers as well as mentally ill people's own physical safety. Mental health workers, like all of us, have the right to be safe at work. We also share the concerns raised by health workers that some people with acute mental illness are so disturbed that it may not be possible to offer treatment at all without some form of restrictive intervention. Restraint can be traumatic, and so can untreated severe mental illness, and untreated mental illness can cost sufferers their relationship, their job or their housing. This is the dilemma that the review will have to grapple with: how to enable such individuals to receive treatment without subjecting them to further trauma. The Greens are heartened by approaches in other jurisdictions which are reducing the use of seclusion, restraint and compulsory treatment without reducing safety.

We also understand that it is much harder to sit with someone in a quiet room when you are desperately understaffed. We sincerely hope that the extra funding working its way through the system means that staff will have more choices which make seclusion, restraint and compulsory treatment much less necessary. Thus far our mental health system has been so starved of funding and so understaffed that clinicians simply do not have the time to offer more. The new stream of funding for mental health care will fix some of this, but it will take time which we do not have. We are not training enough mental health nurses and allied health professionals to fill the many gaps, and there are bottlenecks in determining the diagnosis and appropriate care of patients in our mental health clinics due to the lack of psychiatrists. Many psychiatrists work in private practice, where they are unaffordable for a large section of our population, including those on benefits, who are often chronically ill. While the shortage of nursing and allied health staff may be numerically greater, their work will be hampered if there are not sufficient psychiatrists to make the treatment decisions that their work depends on. So workforce training and planning and funding will be the key to determining whether the human rights and other aspirations of this bill are realised, and that is where the minister's comments just now are very welcome.

Other than funding and staff, one other important factor may be increasing the use of restraint and seclusion, and that is that every day people are released from prison and some go straight into hospital mental health units because they have been suffering untreated or undertreated mental illness while in prison. This problem is multidimensional and complex, and it varies with the severity and type of mental illness as well as the offending that led to imprisonment, but certain features stand out. Some individuals with psychosis remain untreated in prison because they lack the insight to consent to treatment and because compulsory treatment is not allowed in prison and there are often no forensic mental health beds available—that is, there are no beds in Thomas Embling Hospital. More beds are being built, but we also need staff to care for those patients, and that is a challenge right now. Meanwhile, these patients are discharged via ambulance into hospital, where they are more likely to be violent when they are held in hospital for necessary but compulsory treatment, and this can be a particular problem at hospitals near prisons, such as Sunshine. Possible solutions include more comprehensive mental health assessment upon admission to prison and more resources for mental

health care in prison, including considering how to encourage prisoners to take advantage of the treatment on offer.

But we should also be looking at what can be done to keep mentally ill people out of prison in the first place. Changes to the Bail Act 1977 in the last few years have made it more difficult to get bail and have led to large numbers of low-level offenders from vulnerable populations, including those suffering mental illness and homelessness or both, serving weeks or months in prison on remand, and when they finally appear before a magistrate many are immediately released and likely would not have been imprisoned at all if they had received bail. Bail reform and public housing for offenders and for those with chronic mental illness would keep many out of prison and prevent this problem.

Besides principles and restrictive interventions, the bill makes a series of other changes, some of which I will touch on briefly now. People receiving compulsory treatment have a right to advocacy, and the bill takes this from an opt-in model, which lots of people do not know about, to an opt-out one. We welcome this, although we note that the Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council would like the service to also be provided to people on assessment orders. The bill legislates a definition of ‘chemical restraint’. Again, we welcome this, although we will be interested to see what it means in practice. The bill allows some health professionals to take people against their will to be examined as the first stage of compulsory treatment. This follows on from the royal commission’s recommendation that responses to mental health crises be led by health professionals, not police, and while we applaud the sentiment behind this, we note that the Health and Community Services Union are concerned about the practicalities of this with an already exhausted workforce. Other health workers and the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service have also raised concerns.

Despite these concerns the Mental Health and Wellbeing Bill 2022 has many promising words in it. It is worth noting, though, that the Mental Health Act 2014 has some of these words too, including on least restrictive treatment and supporting people to make their own decisions. And while the words in the bill matter, what also matters is implementation. Part of that is culture and part is funding. The Greens are heartened by the significant investment the Victorian government has made in mental health in the last couple of years and believe that this is a real cause for hope. However, we also hear again and again that all that funding has not made a real difference on the ground yet, particularly with the problems compounded by the pandemic. We are still optimistic, though, that it will. It is essential that it does.

Ms THEOPHANOUS (Northcote) (18:21): I consider it an honour to contribute to the debate on this significant bill, a bill which represents real transformational change in its own right but also represents a process of truth, investment and reform which will improve the lives of countless Victorians. Victoria’s mental health system is broken. We know this. For years the system has been overburdened, overly complicated and under-resourced. For Victorians experiencing mental ill health, the realities of this system are distressing. It has meant barrier after barrier to seeking care and convoluted pathways that are almost impossible to navigate. It has meant people in need being turned away because their conditions are too severe or not severe enough. For our heroic mental health workforce it has meant impossible case loads, workforce exhaustion and an overwhelming sense of disempowerment.

All this was brought to light by the Andrews Labor government’s Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System. This was a confronting process, but it was a necessary one, because the result of this royal commission was a clear and unequivocal blueprint for a complete rebuild of the system into one that puts people first. It delivers hope and a direction for the future. And as we have done time and again on issues from family violence to treaty to climate action, Labor has not shied away from the challenge. We have committed to delivering real change. We commit to delivering on every single recommendation of the royal commission. We said, ‘Yes, our state, Victorians, deserve better’, and we got to work.

Across the state budgets since the release of the royal commission's interim report we have already seen a record \$6 billion directly invested into mental health reform in Victoria. New services are already opening their doors, new workers are being recruited and new voices are being heard in the design of programs and services—but there is more to do. The complete transformation of our mental health system will not happen overnight; it is a decade-long reform. But significant change is already underway.

Coming into this Parliament in 2018 I knew that mental health was a priority for me and my community. The past three years have only reinforced my commitment to achieving greater investment and fairer access to services in the inner north. Indeed making a submission to the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System was one of the earliest steps I took to outline the needs of my community. As I have raised before in this place, the inner north of Melbourne faces a significant service gap when it comes to health and mental health infrastructure. That means that every day I am having conversations with residents, schools, local businesses, community organisations and clubs, and while the conversations are as diverse as our community the one issue that has consistently and insistently been raised with me is mental health. Whether that is a principal concerned about the mental health and wellbeing of their students, a small business owner trying to support their staff through tough times, parents persevering with perinatal anxiety and depression or an older resident coming up for a talk on the street feeling isolated and alone, the experience of mental health issues and concerns around access to services permeate the conversations I have with my community.

The recent 2021 census for the first time recorded long-term mental health conditions, and the results were confronting but not surprising to me. Over 8000 locals, or 12.5 per cent of residents of Northcote, reported a long-term mental health condition. This is compared to 8.8 per cent across Victoria and Australia more broadly. This tracks strongly with my discussions with residents and stakeholders like Headspace, the Fitzroy community legal centre and Women's Health in the North and providers like Your Community Health and PANDA.

Recently I have also been seeking direct feedback from my community through an electorate-wide mental health survey. I invited residents to share their priorities for and experiences of our mental health system, and the response was overwhelming. Hundreds of locals have now shared their thoughts and priorities with me, and I am hearing loud and clear that the inner north needs investment in more public mental health services. Many responses were from healthcare workers themselves, who spoke about seeing too many people who cannot get the care they need. There was a huge amount of support needed for infant, child, youth and family services both in community and in school settings. And as a proudly diverse community with strong multicultural, First Nations and LGBTIQ networks, there were many responses which called for culturally appropriate and affirming services. The stories people shared with me through this survey, emails, phone calls, forums and conversations on the street paint a picture of a real local need that is not being met by local services, but there was also real hope and real excitement about the Andrews Labor government's reform agenda.

One example is the massive investment already underway to support better mental health outcomes for young people through our schools. We know that the vast majority of mental health conditions occur before the age of 25, so investing in our young people is critical. Labor has now rolled out mental health practitioners in every single state secondary school across the state, including Northcote High, Thornbury High and Preston High. From next year our state primary schools will have their own mental health practitioners supporting our children through this important time in their lives. Thornbury Primary has been one of the trial schools participating in the early rollout of this program, and the feedback has been absolutely heartening. In coming years Northcote schools will also see the full rollout of the Schools Mental Health Fund, which will deliver a suite of evidence-based programs and supports that schools can tailor to their students' needs.

In Parkville earlier this year I was thrilled to see the opening of Victoria's fourth youth prevention and recovery units, or YPARC. Totalling 50 new beds, this service will provide short-term residential care

in a homelike setting for 200 young people per year stepping up from community care or down from hospital care. These investments are already delivering real change, but as I said, there is more to do.

One of the flagship recommendations of the royal commission is building the missing middle of our system, with 60 adult health services as well as 13 for infants, children and young people. The first six of the 60 will be up and running in 2022, and 21 more locations have already been identified. As I have said many times before, I will not stop working to ensure that the inner north benefits from the rollout of these local services. Northcote needs access to mental health supports close to home, not further afield. We know that the mental health of parents is critical to long-term outcomes for children, and for those following on the journey you will know that I am determined to keep raising awareness of the need for more support for infants and families in Northcote as well. Supporting women and supporting families means supporting our next generation of kids and young people too. That is why the royal commission intrinsically linked infant, child and family mental health and why the Victorian government is investing in initiatives like our three new hubs and expanding our network of early parenting centres.

The people of Northcote understand the need for this reform in a very personal way. They understand the importance of what this government is achieving, and they are backing it in. I have been stunned by the generous openness of locals willing to talk about their own lived experience as carers, as people impacted by mental ill health and as mental health workers, and I have been spurred by the incredible support I have received from locals backing in my work to boost services locally.

The investment in our mental health system needs to be sustained and ongoing. It is why we introduced the mental health levy and why it remains beyond disappointing that those opposite continue to flip-flop on this very important issue of sustained funding. There is a choice to make here about the value we put on mental wellbeing in our community and the value we put on the services providing it and the workforce that support people in their times of need. For too long the system has suffered from patchwork investment. The levy brings certainty to this sector and locks in mental health as core business in our public health system. That is as it should be. And of course investment is only one element of our reform.

Another foundational element is people building our workforce. Nothing happens without people, and our mental health workforce have been giving their all with empathy and passion day after day. I am proud to say that Labor has provided over \$269 million in dedicated investment in the mental health workforce in the past two years, and over 2500 mental health jobs have been created in Victoria. There are also incredible pathways for those seeking to enter that workforce, with free TAFE programs across mental health and peer support now available. I am looking forward to catching up with some of our local mental health workers and the Health and Community Services Union in a couple of weeks to hear more about how we can best support them through this rapid transition period.

This bill encapsulates our ambitions and our commitment to mental health reform in Victoria, one that puts human rights, lived experience, dignity and autonomy at its core. This bill is about putting people first. It builds on Labor's extraordinary record of delivering social and economic reform that makes our state fairer and stronger. We are doing the hard yards. We are delivering the mental health system Victorians need and deserve. I commend both the former and current ministers for their work, and I commend the bill to the house.

Mr ANGUS (Forest Hill) (18:31): I am pleased to rise this evening to make a brief contribution in relation to the Mental Health and Wellbeing Bill 2022. Can I say at the outset what an important bill this is for our community because all of us as local members and members of the broader community know what a difficult situation many people have found themselves in as a result of the last couple of very, very difficult years. This bill essentially acts on the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System. The outcomes of this bill and the purposes are going to be needed more than ever, particularly as we look and see the result and the evidence that has been heard

in other forums of this Parliament in relation to the mental health situation here in the state of Victoria following, as I said, the last two very, very difficult years.

I particularly want to just touch in my introduction on a couple of the matters that were raised in the committee which dealt with that, the Pandemic Declaration Accountability and Oversight Committee, and the report that they tabled recently in relation to some of the mental health issues and the evidence that was led to them, because I think this helps to give us a context as to how difficult and how very significant this issue is for our communities. The committee members on page 6 of the minority report said that there were significant concerns during the public hearings that:

... not one expert witness was requested to provide mental health advice to the Minister for Health or the Chief Health Officer regarding the impacts of pandemic orders before the orders were announced and came into force. This resulted in a systematic whole-of-government failure to recognise mental health stresses within the Victorian community, especially amongst under 25's.

I say that as the start, because it is all well and good to have an enormous bill like the one we have got and to have all sorts of aspirational goals, but I urge the relevant ministers opposite to ensure they are getting the feedback and getting the expert opinions from those that are indeed experts in their field before they go implementing various strategies and various other approaches to a whole range of public health issues. It is very obvious from the evidence that the committee heard and the evidence that has been distilled in this minority report that that clearly did not happen, and as a result of that there has been a catastrophic impact on the broader Victorian community and the mental health thereof. On page 7 it says:

Despite the Chief Psychiatrist indicating there was not an increase in suicides over the pandemic lockdowns and restrictions, the Coroners Court of Victoria ... has reported the highest number of suicides on record in 2020 ...

that is, 712.

There remains a number of cases pending for 2020, 2021 and 2022 to date so recent figures cannot be used comparatively.

It goes on to say:

Further, a peer reviewed study into suicides in Victoria investigated by the Victorian Coroner found that almost 10% of all suicides in 2020 were COVID-linked, 'where COVID-19 and its associated impacts were identified as being a factor in the suicide'.

Like other members in this place my office was certainly inundated with people of all different ages, all different backgrounds, that were having significant mental health issues as a result of the very onerous restrictions that were put on them during the height of the pandemic, over the last two years in particular.

That included people with suicidal ideation. We had young people who were just totally despairing and had lost all hope. We had parents contacting us stating that they had children that would not leave their bedrooms, would not come out and engage in any way and clearly were exhibiting all kinds of mental health issues. The issue there, really, is the fact that the government did not listen, because there were many people saying that that was what was going on in the community. Indeed we certainly mentioned it in here and in other places, but the government just chose to ignore the evidence that was so obvious. Now in hindsight, as the committee has done, they are able to clearly see that that evidence was there and was brought to the attention of the government, but the government fully neglected to do anything about it. That is a disgraceful situation and one that must never be allowed to be repeated.

We can see some of the expert evidence that was given by various organisations, including Beyond Blue. On page 8 of that report it talks about some of Beyond Blue's experiences, and it says:

Up until the middle of 2021, monthly demand for Beyond Blue's support services was 20 to 30 per cent above pre-pandemic levels nationally.

It goes on and says:

This includes a total of 128,000 calls and 13,000 webchats between July 2020 and February 2022, from Victorian contacts only.

The next expert witness that attended was representing Mental Health Victoria, and the report says they:

... wrote in December 2021 that “Victoria is in the midst of a mental health ... crisis.”

I think there is little doubt that that is absolutely the case, and we are still seeing many, many legacy issues of that in our communities. That can be exhibited in a range of ways, but it is presenting amongst all our broader communities, with people’s behaviour being changed, with people still not recovered at all and still not reintegrating back into the community, and a lot of that is just attributed, in my view, to the fear that we have been ruled under over the last two years here in Victoria. As a result of that—as a result of the fear, the threatening behaviours and the onerous restrictions that were put on all Victorians—that has resulted in mental health issues for many, many Victorians. That was Mental Health Victoria, as I said. Of Compassionate Friends Victoria the report says:

First contacts with people bereaved by suicide increased from 31 in 2019–20 to 64 in 2020–21. Grief calls to their helpline increased by 25 per cent in the same period.

It goes on and talks about further statistics, which I will not have time to go into in relation to that, but basically it paints a dreadful picture for the community as a result of these circumstances. Yourtown, or Kids Helpline, also gave expert evidence in that hearing, and I quote from that. It says:

In 2021 close to 123 000 attempts were made to connect to our Kids Helpline counsellors from young people in Victoria. This represented a 20 per cent increase in demand from 2019—pre COVID.

So we can see with a whole range of organisations the pressures they were under. It goes on:

Sadly, we could not respond to 62 per cent of these children and young people, or over 76 000 attempted contacts. Of the contacts we were able to respond to in 2021, 38.8 per cent sought help in relation to mental health or emotional wellbeing concerns, 11.5 per cent for suicide-related concerns, 7.7 per cent for child-parent relationships and 6.3 per cent for parents’ wellbeing.

It also goes on:

From the beginning of COVID in March 2020 to December 2021 Kids Helpline provided emergency support to 2408 Victorian children and young people. This included 978 young people who attempted suicide or expressed suicidal ideation and 749 children who reported child abuse.

So we can see, again, more expert evidence. I really commend the minority report to all members, because it does provide an insight not through the rose-coloured glasses that the government would like us to be looking through but through the reality of organisations that have been at the coalface over these last number of extraordinarily difficult years, dealing with the victims of the government’s pronouncements. We can see there is evidence also from the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists and the Australian Association of Psychologists. They gave more expert evidence, and the report says:

The Committee also heard that—

these organisations—

... directly approached the Andrews Labor Government with solutions to build the mental health workforce, but these requests did not receive funding support, and in some instances, no response was provided by the Minister for Mental Health.

What a shameful condemnation that is of the minister at the time in relation to how they did not respond to that particular situation. We had evidence from the Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council that talked about their increase in demand, and on and on it goes.

There was even a shadow pandemic group set up through social media. That had 20 000 Victorians involved, and all those people had a story, and they were directly impacted in some way or another. The evidence is there. It is all well and good for the government to bring a bill like this before the house, but it is a matter of not putting Victorians back into that dreadful situation that we all found

ourselves in—where they were essentially the cause of many of the mental health issues that Victorians are now facing and still dealing with. Some obviously will never recover, particularly those that have had tragic outcomes. Can I implore the government to ensure that they seek advice from mental health experts before they bring in any more lockdowns or any more constraints on Victorians.

Mr EDBROOKE (Frankston) (18:41): From that I take it that the opposition support the bill and that they thoroughly endorse all the recommendations that the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System put out.

Ms McLeish: Correct.

Mr EDBROOKE: Correct? I did not quite get that from that speech. I am not sure anyone else did, but we are here today to make sure that we take the next step in the fundamental reforms that this government committed to.

This bill of course gives effect to the royal commission's recommendations that we need to start fresh, we need to have a new mental health and wellbeing act and reset the legislative foundations of our system. Throughout my time as an elected member of this place I think that one of the issues that my office hears about the most is mental health. That was prior to COVID; it has not just magically appeared around COVID. We had a broken system before COVID, and this government has been very much at the forefront of saying, 'Yes, it is broken. It needs fixing'. But instead of being like that person that points out the massive fire, the house on fire up the street, going, 'Look, there's a fire! There's a fire!', someone actually has to do something about it, and it is this government that is actually doing it.

We heard some statistics from the previous member. I would like to have look into some of those statistics. I very much doubt there is a professional person who could forensically tell this chamber that they attribute COVID to someone's suicide. That is something that is a fairly decent reach, and I would like to have a look at those facts, maybe a little bit later, and see them for myself.

I do note that there was a joint statement made by some absolute peak bodies in this field. It was put out. I quote from that right now:

... as we respond to this once in a generation opportunity to make the mental health care system better for all who access and work within it today, and in the years ahead.

The passage of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Act 2022 is a crucial first step to enable this vital work to begin. Victorians cannot afford any delays to the vital work of reform.

That is signed by Marcelle Mogg, who is the CEO of Mental Health Victoria. It is signed by Marie Piu, who is the CEO of Tandem; Craig Wallace, who is the CEO of the Victorian mental health awareness council; Charlotte Jones, who I met with last week and who is the CEO of the Mental Health Legal Centre; and of course Professor Pat McGorry AO, who is the executive director of Orygen. These are the people who will not tell us that everything is rosy. They made sure and certain that throughout the royal commission people's voices were heard. There was a huge number of—I think 253—contributions, plus the hearings as well. This today is us, a government that have listened to our community, putting what our community wants in action. As was alluded to by one of the previous speakers, I really fret when I think that the opposition do flip-flop around the levy. We are talking about a \$3 billion-plus hole without that levy.

But in my mind—and I am sure that the data supports it—this is a community, in Victoria, that has supported this royal commission. They have voted on it, and they would like to see it rolled out. Can I say thank you to everyone who was involved in the royal commission and also particularly our workforce. I, the member for Carrum and members of the Health and Community Services Union pulled into the Peninsula Health community care unit last week, and we were able to listen to mental health workers talk about the pressures that they are under, what they see as great about this reform and also what is on the horizon with the \$1.1 billion Frankston Hospital redevelopment, with more mental health services on the way.

This is about acknowledging those people that have worked through such a difficult time, but they have worked in difficult times before COVID as well. We seem to have a context across the aisle where we bring back all our talk about mental health into the context and the optics of COVID. Well, mental health has been an issue for a long time, and it is this government that put into place and made sure that we were going to act on what the royal commission said—and we have accepted all those recommendations.

Can I also thank the people that came forward and gave their sometimes brutal stories, very hard to hear at times. I know that we heard some of those stories on the day that the royal commission recommendations were made public, and at times there probably was not a dry eye in the house, hearing about people's lived experience. I think that this bill goes a long way to making sure that there is a balance of that lived experience and the consumer and also the clinicians and mental health workers as well. So far in the last three state budgets this government has invested over \$600 million into that workforce, and also we have committed to deliver more than 2500 more mental health professionals across forward estimates, which is exactly what the strategy told us that we needed. As I mentioned before, the levy goes a long way to ensuring that the royal commission's recommendations in the form of the architecture of this bill can be rolled out.

Why are we doing this? I mean, we have just heard 10 minutes about COVID. We are doing this not just because we have had a one-in-100-year event—which is probably causing many of the same issues in every state and every nation across the globe—we are doing this because the system is broken. But we are not just doing what the royal commission says, we are actually going above and beyond. The bill really reflects the recommendations of the royal commission, and some aspects I think of the hearings reflected that we needed to go beyond those recommendations.

We are going to establish Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing Victoria. This responds to the significant mental health challenges being faced by young people and the fact that the primary focus of the Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing will be on adults and older adults. We are rolling out the inclusion of specific decision-making principles in relation to compulsory assessment and treatment and restrictive interventions, and although this is not a direct recommendation, the royal commission did state that the bill should include principles that reflect concepts of autonomy, supported decision-making, recovery-orientated practice, the protection and promotion of human rights and the use of compulsory treatment as a last resort.

I am sure 99 per cent of the time those kinds of treatments are the last resort at the moment, but as we will get to in a second, over a 10-year plan a lot needs to change—and this bill is unashamedly aspirational, as it should be. We have reduced the maximum duration of community treatment orders from 12 months to six months, and in line with recommendation 10 we are changing the support to a health-led response for mental health crises as well, which is something that I have heard the opposition speak about today—and I was nodding my head in agreement with what was said.

We have heard a little bit of chatter about the bill's limitations on the use of restrictive interventions possibly putting workers and people using mental health services at risk—so, other clients. While this bill does not actually ban the use of restrictive interventions, seclusion or restraint, chemical or physical, this bill seeks to envision a time that these might still be used, but not as much. That is I think in every mental health worker's mind. Everyone who works in the mental health area does not want to do this. Often it is for the safety of the client, often it is for the safety of other consumers and the staff themselves. So the bill continues to permit the use of restrictive interventions to prevent imminent and serious harm to that person or another person or, in the case of bodily restraint, to administer treatment or medical treatment to the person. Essentially the worst-case scenario, the last resort, is to do this, and we have got 10 years to actually get to that point.

I am absolutely proud, and probably one of my proudest moments in the last seven or eight years has been to stand up here and finally see this bill tabled. The recommendations of the royal commission were not pulling any punches, and they were the result of people opening their hearts and their minds

and reliving some horrible, horrible stories. So thank you to the workforce and thank you to everyone that worked on the royal commission and of course the previous minister and the current minister. I commend the bill to the house.

Ms McLEISH (Eildon) (18:51): I rise to make some comments on the Mental Health and Wellbeing Bill 2022 that has taken all our time today. I want to set the framework around this. Yes, the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System delivered its final report in March 2021, and this has come out of that, but it also builds on the work that was done between 2010 and 2014 by then Minister Wooldridge, who took on this space and did an enormous amount of hard work and heavy lifting in this space. Whilst it is very easy for the government members to read off prepared notes and look at everything through rose-coloured glasses, this is an area that they have certainly neglected in the last almost eight years. Having the royal commission was a very positive outcome for Victoria, but that did not mean that everything should have stood still for the four years leading up to that and now for the 3½ years to this point. So we have had such a long period of inaction by the Labor government in mental health support services, and they cannot see through their own rose-coloured glasses that they have an absolute crisis in mental health out there at the minute.

Now, I am confident to say that every member in this chamber would have spoken to people over the last number of years about that crisis and what that crisis means to them. I represent a number of small communities, and it is very difficult for them to get the mental health support that they deserve and that they need. We find people in the towns of Yea and Alexandra—even Kinglake—for example, that end up at Goulburn Valley Health in Shepparton quite some distance away, quite a considerable period away. Due to the limited capacity of the hospital to actually admit people, and by the time they get through the assessment, we find that people that have had mental health episodes are being discharged at 2.00 am and 3.00 am, and they have to get home. I have had a lot of people speak to me about having to get home, because now the standard way of doing that is unless you can ring somebody who will drive that 2 hours to pick you up another 2 hours home, you get a taxi. The bills that have been given to me, that I have seen, from Goulburn Valley Health and the number of taxi vouchers that have been provided to those with mental health episodes are really quite alarming. I know Kinglake residents would like to see that they can access mental health services in the north of Melbourne rather than being directed, too often, to Shepparton, which is quite a long way away. If people are admitted into hospital, they are very disconnected in terms of family and friends being able to visit them, whereas they could scoot down for half an hour into the suburbs and be treated.

I do want to also mention the ongoing failures of the Labor government in mental health and mental health and wellbeing support. They have been no more evident than during the pandemic we have had in the last couple of years. I know that people that I spoke to during that time did suffer enormously. I saw small business owners suffer big time. I saw children and I saw parents equally suffering, and for families that were living in fractured situations those situations were exacerbated by having everybody under the one roof where people could not go out. And if you had a family that was under a lot of stress, the access during COVID was very, very limited and very difficult for these families.

I note that we had the review of the pandemic orders handed down in July 2022, and I am going to actually quote from a couple of the points in the minority report which really do point out some of the failings of the government, because we know that there are many people now who have said that the impact of children being locked up to do homeschooling for as long as they did actually had a lot of negative consequences. Whilst it may have helped with the spread of the pandemic, on the other hand you had the absolute increase in need for support services, which was not happening. I want to read from page 16 of the minority report—some of the findings about mental health during that time.

The Australian Association of Psychologists wrote to the Minister for Mental Health on six occasions—
six occasions—

over two years requesting funding support for provisional psychologists to boost workforce capacity ...

We know there was a lack of support workers in the mental health space, and this was a solution. This was a good solution, but the report states:

... the Minister did not respond to any of these letters.

Six times. Do you reckon the Australian Association of Psychologists was pretty happy about that? Well, no, they were not. There was a huge demand in calls to support services, and this included Beyond Blue, Kids Helpline, Compassionate Friends Victoria, Mental Health Legal Centre, Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council and Tandem, as well as clinical support services for alcohol and other drug treatment and support. There was a significant increase in demand, and this was noted through the inquiry.

Very sadly, there were a number of suicides that could be attributed to COVID. The report states:

A peer reviewed study into suicides in Victoria investigated by the Victorian Coroner found that almost 10% of ... suicides in 2020 were COVID-linked.

I think that is devastating, and all the more devastating when there were calls by the association of psychologists with a solution for how to increase the number of provisional psychologists and counsellors who were on the ground and could have helped in this situation. The report states:

The impact of school closures—

I mentioned that—

had a profound impact on child and youth mental health, and increased mental health support has been slow to be enacted by the ... Labor Government.

We know that through the lockdown kids did not see their friends and did not get active, and they ended up not being able to be involved in any meaningful sport. Sport is good for their mental health, whether that is through community sport on the weekends or weeknights, whether it is through PE classes or whether it is that informal kick-to-kick in the street or that kick-to-kick in the schoolyard or throwing a ball where kids get active. We know that kids were not active, and we know that being away from their friends socially was very detrimental.

I want to outline a couple of the recommendations that were also put forward, and these are on page 17 of the minority report.

That the Coroner's Court of Victoria undertake a special inquiry into COVID-19 related stressors present in suicides in Victoria, and this report be tabled in Parliament.

I think that that is such a serious issue, and the government really should give some thought to doing that and how they may do that. Also:

That the Department of Health undertake a special inquiry into suicide and suicidal behaviour due to COVID-19 related stressors, especially for Victorians under 25, and this report—

also—

be tabled in Parliament.

Early interventions are what work, and we have lost the opportunity for early interventions with the number of suicides attributable to COVID but also with the rise in all these calls for help. And the later it is, the longer it is between the—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am required under sessional orders to interrupt business now. The member may continue their speech when the matter is next before the house.

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

Adjournment

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

COVID-19

Mr HODGETT (Croydon) (19:00): (6456) I rise tonight to demand that the Minister for Education instructs the Department of Education and Training to rescind its letter expecting students from year 3 onwards to wear a mask in school. This expectation is overly burdensome on a cohort that is at least risk from COVID and who have suffered enormously over the last 2½ years. I have received numerous copies of texts sent to Shadow Pandemic Victoria from distraught parents on the level of distress the mask expectations are causing our students. Students are being made to feel that it is up to them to protect the health system and worry that if they do not wear a mask, they might end up in lockdown again. One parent texted:

My 7 year old has started waking up in the middle of the night with lots of irrational fears and worries. She is crying on the way to school saying she feels like a naughty child because—

at seven years of age—

she doesn't wear a mask ...

What are we doing to our children? Since when has it ever been up to our children to protect our health system? They are children. Why are we burdening students with mask expectations when studies from Finland, the UK, the US and Spain into masks in schools have shown that there is no evidence that masking reduces the spread of COVID? But there is one conclusive thing from mask studies in the UK —94 per cent of teachers and 80 per cent of students responded saying that masking compromises learning. Our children have suffered so greatly, and it is time for them to go to school unburdened. It is time to prioritise our children's academic, social and mental health needs. It is time to end the mask expectation in schools. Again, the action I seek is that the minister instructs the department of education to rescind its letter expecting students from year 3 onwards to wear a mask in school.

O'SHEA ROAD, BERWICK

Mr MAAS (Narre Warren South) (19:02): (6457) The matter I wish to raise is for the attention of the Minister for Transport Infrastructure and concerns the O'Shea Road upgrade as part of the Monash Freeway upgrade stage 2 project. The action I seek is that the minister provide an update on the progress of the O'Shea Road upgrade in my electorate of Narre Warren South. The Andrews Labor government has invested record amounts into our transport infrastructure, which continues to create more jobs and deliver upgraded roads for safer and more efficient travel. Victoria's Big Build has delivered massive changes across the state to improve transport connections, user accessibility and safety, with less time needed to travel, meaning more time at home with our loved ones. The O'Shea Road upgrade will reduce congestion and provide easier access to the Beaconsfield interchange leading to the Princes Freeway and Monash Freeway, which will benefit so many in our community.

I have also previously raised constituents' concerns for the project on matters around sound barriers, lighting, amenity and privacy, and I appreciate the minister's previous advice, responses and consideration of these issues which I have taken to my community. I thank everyone for their patience during the works, and I appreciate all the feedback I have received on the project. I hope that even those opposed to the upgrade will soon see the benefits of this major arterial link which will help so many now and into the future. The project was funded by state and federal governments and supported by our City of Casey. I would appreciate if the minister could provide an update on the progress of the O'Shea Road upgrade, and I look forward to sharing the minister's response with my community.

LILYDALE YOUTH HUB

Ms VALLENCE (Evelyn) (19:04): (6458) The matter I raise is for the Minister for Mental Health on behalf of the Lilydale Youth Hub and the thousands of young people and their families in my community that rely on the vital services provided by the Lilydale Youth Hub. The action I seek is for the government to provide a desperately needed \$1.5 million in funding for at least a 12-month period, if not the amount required for the three-year funding model, to ensure the Lilydale Youth Hub can continue to provide vital mental health and wellbeing services to local young people and their families as well as provide the certainty to staff and ensure that they can continue their critical role in managing clinical risk.

The Lilydale Youth Hub supports Yarra Ranges youth from Lilydale, Mooroolbark, Montrose, Coldstream and Gruyere, including in my colleague the member for Eildon's electorate, right through the Yarra Valley and the Dandenong Ranges and reduces the burden on the broader health and community sector through an integrated case-management model. By offering a single entry point of access to no- or low-cost primary health care, community and social services they have kept thousands of local young people out of tertiary mental health and justice systems. It is led by Inspiro community health, and I thank Sue Sestan and her team for their dedication and vision. Inspiro partners with trusted effective local organisations Anchor, Cire Services, Oonah Health and Community Services Aboriginal Corporation, and Eastern Community Legal Centre, but funding and service delivery for the Lilydale Youth Hub is due to cease on 31 December this year and it is facing closure. The prospect of losing this local mental health service is devastating and poses a significant clinical risk to clients, who face losing a key local service and valuable connections, and there are currently over 100 young people who would be required to be discharged into a mental health system that is already at capacity.

The Lilydale Youth Hub was initially funded under the commonwealth government's community health and hospital program, and I thank the former federal Liberal government for funding it. Astonishingly and disappointingly, the new Albanese Labor government has left the Lilydale Youth Hub with an uncertain future because it has refused to provide any further funding after December, and requests of the Andrews Labor government have so far fallen on deaf ears. On a day when we have been addressing the Mental Health and Wellbeing Bill 2022 in this Parliament the Andrews Labor government has done nothing to offer funding for this Lilydale Youth Hub service, and I call on the minister to urgently investigate and provide this funding for youth mental health services across the Yarra Valley, Dandenong Ranges and Lilydale district.

POWER SAVING BONUS PROGRAM

Ms ADDISON (Wendouree) (19:07): (6459) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Energy and Minister for Environment and Climate Action, and it is about the Victorian government's \$250 power saving bonus, which opened to every eligible Victorian household from 1 July. The action that I seek is for the minister to provide me with an update on how many households in the Wendouree electorate have applied for and benefited from the \$250 power saving bonus.

Winter in Ballarat is cold, and we have recently had a number of below-zero mornings. I know that heating a home and keeping warm can be expensive. Therefore I am so pleased that the Andrews Labor government is addressing the cost-of-living pressures with the \$250 power saving bonus for eligible Ballarat households. The \$250 energy payment provides welcome financial relief for Wendouree constituents this winter. Significantly, it also provides energy consumers with potential for long-term financial relief by encouraging them potentially to find a better power plan through the Victorian Energy Compare website. Indeed seven out of 10 people who have logged on have found a cheaper deal.

It has been great to hear from so many people in Ballarat who have taken up this offer who appreciate this boost to their household budgets. Further, I am so pleased that over the last month my electorate office has assisted hundreds of constituents with inquiries about the bonus as well as supporting them to apply over the phone or in person or attend outreach posts, including events at the Wendouree Senior

Citizens and the Brown Hill Senior Citizens. Modern technology can be overwhelming for some community members, and I have found that our assistance has been welcomed. Indeed many had no idea they could approach their local MP for this, and I continue to encourage anyone that needs help to get in touch with my office. These interactions have also provided my staff and me with an opportunity to make a small difference in another person's life and hear from constituents that we have previously never met. As a result we have had wonderful and inspiring conversations with many people in my community about their life, family, travels, work, highs and lows. Our elderly seniors deserve support, social wellbeing and more than a little kindness, and it is a privilege to help with this in addition to providing the bonus itself.

I thank the minister for introducing this important initiative that addresses cost-of-living pressures, and I look forward to hearing how many households in my community have applied for and benefited from the \$250 power saving bonus.

GIPPSLAND TRAIN SERVICES

Mr D O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) (19:09): (6460) Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to rise tonight and congratulate you on your promotion to the position of Deputy Speaker.

My adjournment tonight is for the Minister for Public Transport, and the action I seek is for the minister to actually outline a time line for new train services beyond Traralgon, to Sale and Bairnsdale in particular. The minister will be aware that the government has the current Gippsland rail revival project underway at \$532.8 million, the vast bulk of that being funded by the former federal coalition government, thanks to my colleague Darren Chester, the former minister for transport infrastructure. We have also seen in the budget this year a commitment by the state government to train stabling at Bairnsdale, which is very welcome, which will allow obviously for VLocity trains to be stabled at Bairnsdale. The question that people in my electorate—and I am sure in the member for Gippsland East's as well—have is: why are we waiting? There are no further works proposed beyond Traralgon now. The works that are underway under the Gippsland rail revival are all to the west of Traralgon. The Stratford Avon River bridge has been replaced, the level crossing issues and signalling works that have been done between Traralgon and Bairnsdale are there. There is no reason why we actually could not get additional train services, particularly to Sale. Then, once the Bairnsdale stabling is completed, we would actually have more services.

By comparison, we currently have 19 services a day to Melbourne from Traralgon, and just three on to Bairnsdale, including Sale, and Rosedale to Stratford. That is a significant difference compared to other regional cities such as Ballarat and Bendigo, which have 20-plus. The comparison is not odious given that Wellington and East Gippsland shires collectively have a population of over 90 000 people. It is a significant part of the state; we do deserve additional services.

The works have been done, thanks to the federal government. I know that the then minister for transport and a member for Eastern Victoria in the other place at the time, in 2017, said these projects were shovel ready. In 2017 these projects were shovel ready, yet here we are—2022. The projects are still underway, they are still not completed, and we have no additional services. There is no point in spending half a billion dollars in extra money to fix up the Gippsland rail line and actually not give us any additional services.

In addition, I think the ministers should actually be looking, as I have called for time and time again, at the issue of dedicated tracks between Pakenham and the city for the Gippsland line. But the people of Sale and the people of Wellington and East Gippsland shires want to see additional services, and the minister should outline when those services will be delivered.

STATE BASKETBALL CENTRE

Mr TAYLOR (Bayswater) (19:13): (6461) We are building the home of basketball in Knox, and with construction well underway on the expansion of the revitalised State Basketball Centre in

Wantirna South we are not far off it being a reality. So I wish to raise a matter for the fantastic Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events, who is doing a great job. I would like to have the minister for sport come down to Knox and check out the massive construction site of the new home of basketball in the nation. Of course I am so proud that the state Labor government has started work on the new facility, with \$105 million from our government to get the job done. It is great to have an investment of \$27 million from Knox council too—in total a massive investment of \$132 million.

The landmark redevelopment of the State Basketball Centre will take the game in Victoria to a new level for elite and community players in basketball and gymnastics. The redevelopment will deliver 12 new indoor courts for local competitions and statewide championships, taking the total number of indoor courts to 18; high-performance facilities for the WNBL Deakin Melbourne Boomers and NBL South East Melbourne Phoenix; an administrative base for the Boomers and Phoenix along with Basketball Australia, Basketball Victoria and Knox Basketball; a regional state-of-the-art gymnastics facility; a fantastic cafe to get your lattes and everything else in between; and a stunning town square. I cannot understate the phrase ‘stunning town square’—it is fantastic.

Once completed, anticipated in late 2023, the centre will host up to 2 million visitors a year. Importantly this project will support more than 500 good, well-paying jobs in construction and more than 100 ongoing roles once completed. This is fantastic for local jobs and fantastic for our local community. The State Basketball Centre does currently welcome almost 800 000 visitors annually, and of course once the project is complete, this will increase visitation to more than 2 million people. As I said, it is absolutely huge. Once it is complete it will mean better facilities for locals and much more capacity for basketball and gymnastics to grow into the future.

It is a fantastic project that will deliver decades of enjoyment and opportunity for basketballers, gymnasts, coffee enthusiasts, sport lovers, lovers of town squares and everything else in between, and it means ongoing jobs for locals. I tell you what, this state Labor government just gets on, it gets things done, it delivers, and it delivers big infrastructure for our sporting community and everything else in between. I love it; I am excited. We are up and about.

NUMURKAH PIONEERS MEMORIAL LODGE

Ms SHEED (Shepparton) (19:15): (6462) Deputy Speaker, congratulations on your election today.

My adjournment is for the Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers, and the action I seek is that he visits Numurkah Pioneers Memorial Lodge to see the work that needs to be done at the facility. Numurkah Pioneers Memorial Lodge was built in 1976 and used as a hostel. Over time it transitioned to a residential, high needs aged care home catering for 32 residents, two respite residents and two people in transition care beds. It is a state-run, public sector residential aged care facility.

The building was never designed as a residential aged care home and needs significant capital works to improve the design, functionality and facilities and the safety and comfort of the residents and the staff. The residents’ rooms and bathrooms are too small to accommodate aid equipment such as wheelchairs, walkers and lifting aids. Its corridors are narrow, making it difficult to move equipment and help frail residents, increasing the risk of trips, falls and other accidents. The building does not create a suitable environment for our elderly residents, who deserve to live in comfort in their latter years. There is no dedicated medical consulting room for private appointments with doctors or allied health professionals and no communal area for leisure activities.

The redevelopment of Numurkah Pioneers Memorial Lodge was estimated to cost over \$17 million in 2020. Numurkah community health estimates this will have risen to more than \$20 million due to the increased cost of building supplies and Labor-designed guidelines for aged care facilities. As the years move on, the redevelopment gets more expensive and more urgent, with more financial support required. Without funding from the Victorian government a new pioneers lodge cannot be built, leaving our much-loved older residents living in outdated, unsuitable buildings that do not match their care needs. A modern, fit-for-purpose building for Numurkah would not only provide some level of

luxury, it is a basic right for them. Residents deserve a contemporary aged care home which enhances their quality of life.

So many of our aged care facilities have been challenged during the pandemic, but Numurkah Pioneers Memorial Lodge has been able to care for its residents in an exemplary manner. Its staff are all paid under the Victorian public sector awards. There have been no deaths due to COVID, and the cases have been able to be managed because they have sufficient staff who are dedicated to the care of their residents. I know the staff and residents of the facility would welcome the minister's visit, which may help the department to decide which areas should be prioritised for health funding during the coming 12 months.

RIPON ELECTORATE CHILDCARE SERVICES

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) (19:18): (6463) Deputy Speaker, congratulations on today's appointment.

My adjournment matter is for the attention of the Minister for Early Childhood and Pre-Prep in the other place, and the action I seek is for her to visit the Ripon electorate, especially those parts of Ripon, such as Central Goldfields and Loddon shires, that have endured and suffered childcare deserts. I seek this action on behalf of Labor's outstanding candidate for Ripon, Martha Haylett. Martha is a hardworking young woman, raised since her earliest years in central Victoria, who understands firsthand the difficulties experienced by other young men and women who are having their child-bearing, parenting and job participation choices severely curtailed due to a lack of child care. Martha has been out on the hustings non-stop and has spoken to many mums and dads at their doors, on the phones and at street stalls who are excited about Labor's announcement of free kinder, beginning next year. She has also spoken to many parents who are struggling with the lack of childcare places or indeed no childcare services at all, as is the case in Loddon shire, where my dad grew up. There is not one childcare centre in that whole shire. In Maryborough locals are having to travel to Castlemaine and to other areas out of town to find available places.

State Labor's policy of building 50 childcare centres in childcare deserts is in response to the utter failure of the now defeated Morrison-Joyce government along with their mute Victorian federal colleagues—federal MPs such as Anne Webster and Dan Tehan, who actually had responsibility for education. He could have made a difference in the central Victorian area and the west, but he chose not to. Some National and Liberal state MPs have been mere commentators and hand-wringers on the lack of child care in central and western Victoria, but at no stage have they criticised their federal colleagues and there has been no demonstrable lobbying of their federal friends. The Andrews Labor government has 18 regional MPs who have lobbied our government hard, which has brought results. The Ripon electorate deserves to hear firsthand from the minister how this great policy will help mums and dads if Martha Haylett is elected on 26 November, and I urge her to visit at the soonest possible time.

NORTH EAST WATER

Mr TILLEY (Benambra) (19:20): (6464) I wish to raise a matter for the Minister for Water in the other place, and the action I seek is for the minister to fast-track planning and preparatory works for North East Water to meet the demands for water and sewerage in and around Wodonga, Wangaratta, Tangambalanga, Bright, Mount Beauty and so forth. Whilst I have got your attention, we have the main pumping station—the number one pumping station—at capacity in Wodonga. It no longer meets EPA standards. We have trunk sewer lines that need to be bolstered and others that need to be created. There are decade-old plans that promise these works by 2018, but here we are more than four years later, and as I understand it there is not even a detailed design for some of this work.

In Wodonga's designated growth corridor this infrastructure requirement was locked down in part of the precinct structure plan that has been in place for years. Why is this important? Well, the flow-on effect—all puns intended—is that without these sewerage lines, the release of new land for housing lots is stymied. At a time when affordable housing is such an issue, the potential for delays for hundreds of new homes is absolutely appalling. This of course flows downhill to the building industry

and jobs, and the impasse at the sewerage pumping station also has impacts on industry, with plans for the expansion of the Wodonga abattoir and Mars pet food manufacturer, two of the biggest employers in Wodonga alone, which will likely add further pressure to the system. Developers have been offered a temporary solution, with sewerage holding tanks to be buried 6 metres underground. It is at their cost, but I am tipping that, too, will flow downhill to the first home owner. This is infrastructure that is the responsibility of North East Water.

Wodonga is not on its Pat Malone. As I mentioned earlier, Tangambalanga has become a dormitory settlement of Albury-Wodonga, with booming land sales. That, too, is on hold while North East Water plays catch-up to meet the demands of an anticipated further 2000 lots. Thirty million dollars was included in the budget, but it is probably somewhere like eight years off.

Outside my patch, in Wangaratta—as I earlier mentioned, Wangaratta and Bright—I recently met with the new chief executive of North East Water, Jo Murdoch, and her planning and infrastructure executive, Rebecca Johnston, who provided assurance they could get this back on track. But some of the estimates to get back on track are sitting upwards of \$150 million and perhaps even more than \$200 million. The question is simply: does North East Water have the capacity, resources and skill set to manage so many critical and time-sensitive projects? How did it get to this point? I do not want to hear about unprecedented growth. The Wodonga growth corridor plan was clearly put under the onus of North East Water a decade ago, and the water authority sets its own key milestones that on the face of it it failed to meet. This has happened on your watch, and it is incumbent on you now to take every step to get North East Water out of the S-H-1-T-hole.

FRANKSTON SIGNAL BOX CENTENARY

Mr EDBROOKE (Frankston) (19:23): (6465) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Public Transport, and the action I seek is for the minister to attend the Frankston signal box centenary birthday celebrations in Frankston this month. The signal box, which is located at the north end of the station and adjacent to the Beach Street pedestrian crossing, was built in 1922 and at the time it controlled the station, the stabling yard, the Stony Point line and the Long Island junction as well. It is interesting because the Frankston signal box and Flinders Street station actually have something in common, and that is that they share the same architect, James Fawcett. James Fawcett, of Fawcett and Ashworth, was an English-born architect. He was first hired by the then Victorian Railways in 1889 and eventually became the chief architect in 1919. He was a contributor to the arts and crafts movement, and Fawcett also designed the pressed metal ceilings that were heavily incorporated into the construction of Flinders Street station and can still be seen in the station today. Fawcett and Ashworth won the competition held for the detailed design of Melbourne's Flinders Street station, but not without some controversy as both architects were employed by Victorian Railways at the time and some felt that this had given them an unfair advantage. I know that my community would love the minister to join us in ringing in the next chapter of history at the 100th birthday celebration of the Frankston signal box.

RESPONSES

Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe—Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Racing) (19:25): There were several matters raised in the adjournment: from the honourable member for Croydon for the Minister for Education regarding masks in schools; from the member for Narre Warren South to the Minister for Transport Infrastructure regarding the O'Shea Road upgrade; from the member for Evelyn to the Minister for Mental Health regarding the Lilydale Youth Hub; from the member for Wendouree to the Minister for Energy regarding the \$250 energy bonus; from the member for Gippsland South to the Minister for Public Transport regarding new train services beyond Traralgon; from the member for Bayswater for the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events regarding the minister visiting Knox and the amazing services out there for sporting clubs in his electorate; from the member for Shepparton to the Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers regarding the minister visiting her electorate; from the member for Yan Yean to the Minister for Early

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Childhood and Pre-Prep asking the minister to visit the Ripon electorate; from the member for Benambra to the Minister for Water in the other place regarding fast-tracking the North East Water project; and from the member for Frankston to the Minister for Public Transport asking the minister to attend the Frankston signal box celebrations. I will ensure these matters are passed on to the relevant honourable ministers for their action.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The house stands adjourned until tomorrow.

House adjourned 7.27 pm.