

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FIFTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY, 16 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	Richards, 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

Ms 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 Rowsell.

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 Rowsell, 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, 16 August 2022

The SPEAKER (Ms JM Edwards) took the chair at 12.03 pm and read the prayer.

Announcements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The SPEAKER (12:04): We acknowledge the traditional 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.

Bills

HUMAN SOURCE MANAGEMENT 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) (12:04): I move:

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

Motion agreed to.

Mr M O'BRIEN (Malvern) (12:05): I ask the minister to provide a brief explanation of the content of the bill.

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Youth Justice, Minister for Victim Support, Minister for Fishing and Boating) (12:05): The bill delivers 25 recommendations of the Royal Commission into the Management of Police Informants, which delivered its final report on 30 November 2020. The government has publicly committed to implementing the 111 recommendations in the report. The bill aims to regulate Victoria Police's registration, use and management of human sources, to provide a clear framework for police to obtain and use information from human sources and to ensure that they are used in an ethical and justifiable manner.

Read first time.

Ordered to be read second time tomorrow.

Business of the house

NOTICES OF MOTION

The SPEAKER (12:06): General business, notices of motion 35 and 36, will be removed from the notice paper unless members wishing them matter to remain advise the Clerk in writing before 5.00 pm today.

Petitions

Following petitions presented to house by Clerk:

LOCH SPORT

This petition of residents in Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly the continuing advance of erosion along the Loch Sport township foreshore of Lake Victoria and that research has been concluded outlining solutions, including the installation of groynes that would protect public and private property.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly to call on the State Government to provide funding urgently to address the situation.

By Mr D O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) (367 signatures).

CURDIES RIVER MANAGEMENT

This petition of residents in Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly the urgent plight of the Curdies River Catchment located on Eastern Maar Country in Victoria's south-west. After decades of neglect and poor stewardship, the Curdies is at a crisis point. The river's health has worsened to the point where it is suffering recurrent and worsening blue-green algae blooms, mass fish kills, and the overall degradation of a fragile ecosystem with devastating impacts on rare and protected bird and fish species. There are extensive impacts on the local economy: farmers, commercial fisheries, tourism, and recreational users; alongside threats to the health and wellbeing of local residents and their communities.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly require relevant Ministers to approve an urgent Remediation Action Plan for the Curdies River Catchment. The Plan will strengthen stewardship and accountability by vesting overall responsibility on one statutory agency, and deliver the actions needed to restore the river's health in the immediate and long terms. It will involve robust participation of local communities including Traditional Owners and organisations like Landcare. The plan will specify timelines, targets, and how funding and responsibility is allocated to statutory and/or other organisations. This will deliver a program of rapid and coordinated actions to regenerate and maintain the health and bio-cultural values of the Curdies River Catchment for the benefit of all Victorians.

By Mr RIORDAN (Polwarth) (522 signatures).

Tabled.

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

Ordered that petition lodged by member for Polwarth be considered next day on motion of Mr RIORDAN (Polwarth).

Committees**SCRUTINY OF ACTS AND REGULATIONS COMMITTEE***Alert Digest No. 11*

Ms CONNOLLY (Tarneit) (12:07): I have the honour to present to the house a report from the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee, being *Alert Digest* No. 11 of 2022, on the following bills and subordinate legislation:

Casino Legislation Amendment (Royal Commission Implementation and Other Matters) Bill 2022
Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill 2022
Disability Amendment Bill 2022
Early Childhood Legislation Amendment Bill 2022
Health Legislation Amendment (Conscientious Objection) Bill 2022
Justice Legislation Amendment (Police and Other Matters) Bill 2022
Justice Legislation Amendment (Sexual Offences and Other Matters) Bill 2022
Major Crime and Community Safety Legislation Amendment Bill 2022
Monitoring of Places of Detention by the United Nations Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (OPCAT) Bill 2022
Multicultural Victoria Amendment (Independence) Bill 2022
Planning and Environment Amendment (Wake Up to Climate Change) Bill 2022
Racing Amendment (Unauthorised Access) Bill 2022
State Sport Centres Legislation Amendment Bill 2022
SR No 43—Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment (QR Reporting Infringement) Regulations 2021
SR No 11—Relationships (Fees) Amendment Regulations 2022

together with appendices.

Ordered to be published.

Documents

DOCUMENTS

Incorporated list as follows:

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

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

Ballarat—C214

Cardinia—C275

Maroondah—C147

Pyrenees—C51

South Gippsland—C124

Victoria Planning Provisions—VC221, VC223

Wodonga—C130

Wyndham—C248

Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008—Documents under s 165AQ on the making of pandemic orders implemented on:

24 June 2022

12 July 2022

Statutory Rules under the following Acts:

Assisted Reproductive Treatment Act 2008—SR 60

Building Act 1993—SR 61

Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994—SR 59

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994:

Documents tabled under s 15 in relation to Statutory Rules 59, 61, 64, 66

Documents tabled under s 16B in relation to:

Education and Training Reform Act 2006—Ministerial Order No 1365 amending Ministerial Order No 1228—Victorian Institute of Teaching Registration Fees

Food Act 1984:

Classes of Food Premises and Requirements—Declarations and Exemptions

Minimum Record Keeping—Class 3 Food Premises and Class 3A Food Premises.

Bills

LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (RATING AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2022**SUSTAINABLE FORESTS TIMBER AMENDMENT (TIMBER HARVESTING SAFETY ZONES) BILL 2022***Council's agreement*

The SPEAKER (12:10): I have received messages from the Legislative Council agreeing to the following bills without amendment: the Local Government Legislation Amendment (Rating and Other Matters) Bill 2022 and the Sustainable Forests Timber Amendment (Timber Harvesting Safety Zones) Bill 2022.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (RATING AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2022**SUSTAINABLE FORESTS TIMBER AMENDMENT (TIMBER HARVESTING SAFETY ZONES) BILL 2022***Royal assent*

The SPEAKER (12:10): I inform the house that on 9 August 2022 the Lieutenant-Governor gave royal assent to the Local Government Legislation Amendment (Rating and Other Matters) Bill 2022 and the Sustainable Forests Timber Amendment (Timber Harvesting Safety Zones) Bill 2022.

CASINO LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (ROYAL COMMISSION IMPLEMENTATION AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2022**EARLY CHILDHOOD LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022****JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (POLICE AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2022****JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (SEXUAL OFFENCES AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2022****MAJOR CRIME AND COMMUNITY SAFETY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022****RACING AMENDMENT (UNAUTHORISED ACCESS) BILL 2022***Appropriation*

The SPEAKER (12:10): I have received messages from the Governor recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Casino Legislation Amendment (Royal Commission Implementation and Other Matters) Bill 2022, the Early Childhood Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, the Justice Legislation Amendment (Police and Other Matters) Bill 2022, the Justice Legislation Amendment (Sexual Offences and Other Matters) Bill 2022, the Major Crime and Community Safety Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 and the Racing Amendment (Unauthorised Access) Bill 2022.

Committees**PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES***Membership*

The SPEAKER (12:11): I have received the resignation of Ms Edwards from the House Committee effective from today.

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale—Leader of the House, Minister for Planning) (12:11): I move, by leave, that:

- (1) Ms Allan, Mr Cheeseman and Ms Edwards be discharged from the Standing Orders Committee and Ms Blandthorn, Ms Settle and Ms Suleyman be members in their place; and
- (2) Ms Suleyman be a member of the House Committee.

Motion agreed to.

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

Ms SHEED (Shepparton) (12:12): I desire to move, by leave:

That so much of standing and sessional orders be suspended to allow general business, notice of motion 36, relating to the reintroduction of non-government business into this house, to be debated immediately.

Leave refused.

Ms STALEY (Ripon) (12:12): I desire to move, by leave, on behalf of the coalition:

That so much of standing and sessional orders be suspended to allow general business, notice of motion 36, under the name of the member for Shepparton, relating to the reintroduction of non-government business, to be moved immediately.

Leave refused.

Dr READ (Brunswick) (12:12): I desire to move, by leave:

That so much of standing and sessional orders be suspended to allow general business, notice of motion 36, in the name of the member for Shepparton, relating to the reintroduction of non-government business to this house, to be debated immediately.

Leave refused.

PROGRAM

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale—Leader of the House, Minister for Planning) (12:13): 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, 18 August 2022:

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

Justice Legislation Amendment (Police and Other Matters) Bill 2022

Justice Legislation Amendment (Sexual Offences and Other Matters) Bill 2022

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

State Sport Centres Legislation Amendment Bill 2022.

I would like to start my remarks by again thanking the Manager of Opposition Business for continuing to build our relationship in these roles and—

A member interjected.

Ms BLANDTHORN: So far, so good; you are right. I look forward to a continuance of the goodwill shown by those on the other side and all of us working together to deliver the remaining sitting weeks that we have before the proroguing of this Parliament. In particular I would like to acknowledge the productive conversations we have had in relation to the possible holding of a joint sitting tomorrow in order to appoint a person to fill the vacancy in the other place due to the passing of the Honourable Jane Garrett. We also thank those in the other place and her family for giving due consideration to this important issue and the continuance of the important work of Jane in that.

For the government business program we have five important bills that we would like the house to debate and consider this week. We have the Justice Legislation Amendment (Sexual Offences and Other Matters) Bill 2022, which delivers strengthened sexual offence laws, provides additional protections for victim-survivors and ensures that those who perpetrate sexual abuse are held to account for their actions. I am proud to advise that it will deliver on the government's commitment to introduce legislation to deliver affirmative consent laws and make it explicit that stealthing is a crime.

We will also debate the Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other Matters) Bill 2022 today as we continue to deliver on the significant reforms of Victoria's waste and recycling system, and this is obviously an important issue in the current context. The bill delivers the continuation of our government's major transformational reform of the waste and recycling sector, built on the community and industry consultation that has been ongoing over a number of years. I know that many in our local communities are really excited that this bill is coming to fruition.

We have the Residential Tenancies, Housing and Social Services Regulation Amendment (Administration and Other Matters) Bill 2022, which will make amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act 1997, the Housing Act 1983 and the Social Services Regulation Act 2021 and will establish Homes Victoria as a strong, sustainable and contemporary housing agency underpinned by

a robust and enduring governance structure. This is so important to delivering both the government's big build and affordable housing agenda and ensuring that the right to a home, the right to a roof over one's head—which is a fundamental right in the United Nations declaration of human rights—is protected by issue of legislative instruments such as this. The Residential Tenancies Act amendments will clarify certain requirements for both providers and renters of affordable housing.

We also have the State Sport Centres Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, which provides for important changes to the State Sport Centres Act 1994, not least in relation to the State Basketball Centre out in the east, and extends and improves the management arrangements under which the State Sport Centres Trust operates as well as amending the Melbourne and Olympic Parks Act 1985. I think everyone who has been involved in the delivery of community sport across our area knows how integral good governance at the State Sport Centres Trust is to that agenda, so this is a really important bill as well.

Finally, we have the Justice Legislation Amendment (Police and Other Matters) Bill 2022. Again I thank the opposition for their cooperation in introducing and second reading this bill on the Thursday of the last sitting week. It will be debated on Thursday this sitting week, and it introduces a range of policing reforms aimed at keeping the community safe as well as protecting the privacy of applicants to the Victoria Police restorative engagement and redress scheme.

This is a really full business program. There is a lot to get through this week, and when you add in the joint sitting there is much work for all of us to do in this place over the coming days. I do thank the opposition and the other parties for their cooperation and enthusiasm for this agenda. I look forward to the debate in the house, and I commend the program to the house.

Ms STALEY (Ripon) (12:18): I rise to speak on the government business program. In my opening remarks I would like to recognise that Andrew Young, the Clerk of the Legislative Council, has announced his retirement, and I put on record our thanks to him. I particularly want to note that as a result of that Bridget Noonan, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, will become the first female Clerk of the Parliaments, and I congratulate her on achieving that honour.

Today we are coming to debate five bills, and I can advise that the opposition will be opposing the government business program on the grounds that we requested to go into consideration in detail on three bills and the government did not find time for us to do that. I do note that a couple of those bills have very new ministers in their portfolios, and that may be why they are not keen to go into consideration in detail on the Residential Tenancies, Housing and Social Services Regulation Amendment (Administration and Other Matters) Bill 2022 and the State Sport Centres Legislation Amendment Bill 2022.

Consideration in detail remains a core part of this chamber interrogating bills to make sure that they are fit for purpose, and it is also the only opportunity that members in this chamber have to move textual amendments and have them put if we or the Greens or any of the independents want to do that. So we are disappointed that once again the government, when asked if we could go into consideration-in-detail stage, chose to deny that. We have only had a couple of opportunities in this Parliament to have consideration in detail, and we remain of the view that that is an important part of this chamber and it should be used more frequently than this government does.

As the Leader of the House has noted, we will be having a joint sitting on Wednesday to choose a replacement following the untimely death of Jane Garrett. We will be, as the Leader of the House has said, facilitating that joint sitting and looking forward to that as well.

Beyond that we do have these five bills. I note that for most of this year and last year the Assembly has considered three bills. We are now in these dying days of the Parliament and we have five bills, some of which I recognise are advancing the government's legislative agenda, but some others appear to be the departments trying to get in at the end—get cleaned up at the end. I am not convinced that they have managed their legislative agenda over the whole of the Parliament in the most optimal way, such that we are now faced with slamming through five bills this week. We have only had one

introduced today, so let us see what we get tomorrow, shall we, in the introduction of bills. But as I note, we will be opposing the government business program.

Mr CHEESEMAM (South Barwon) (12:21): It is with some pleasure that I rise this morning to speak on the government's business program, and as has been noted through the course of the debate already, the government has five bills that we are looking to see through this chamber in the course of this week. Of course all of these bills in some way have a profound impact on key parts of the Victorian community, and particularly I want to note the Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other Matters) Bill 2022. This particular bill will set out new legislative arrangements going forward to have a circular economy. Just on the weekend indeed, when I was out engaging with my community, people were raising with me how they might participate in the circular economy, and I am very pleased to see this bill brought to this chamber so that we can advance the government's very substantial public policy reform in this space. I think Victoria is a leader, particularly in the commercial construction space, for using recycled materials—and I note that we do have key roads, such as the Tullamarine Freeway, that have glass used within that road-making material. I think that particular legislation is important, and those trials are important to prove that recycled goods can be recycled into our economy, and particularly—

The SPEAKER: Member for South Barwon, it is not appropriate to go into detail on the bill.

Mr CHEESEMAM: No, no. I am just talking about this particular issue—and I say my community is very keen on that.

But also we do have in Victoria and indeed in other jurisdictions around Australia profound housing challenges, and I do think the Residential Tenancies, Housing and Social Services Regulation Amendment (Administration and Other Matters) Bill 2022 will help with responding to those particular challenges. I did note the opposition contribution a little earlier that we do have five bills before this chamber. We have a very busy legislative reform program. This is the third-last sitting week before the Parliament is prorogued, and I am wishing these five matters that we have in this chamber speedy passage through the course of this week. I do note that there have been many conversations today and indeed over the last few days about whether Matthew Guy, or Matt Guy, will survive as the Liberal leader—

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for South Barwon, please refer to members by their correct titles.

Mr CHEESEMAM: Indeed I am very pleased that we do have the opportunity to put these five matters through this Parliament through the course of this week. We have a very ambitious agenda for this state. These are important matters that we advance, and I am very much looking forward to hearing the debate through the course of this week.

Mr WALSH (Murray Plains) (12:25): Can I also offer my congratulations to the Clerk on her elevation. It is good to have a senior Clerk back in the house of government, where they deserve to be into the future. I look forward to the Clerk fulfilling that role as well as she has fulfilled every other role in the Parliament in the time that I have been here. Congratulations on that.

If we look at the government business program, there are five bills. As the Manager of Opposition Business has said, for most of this year we have spent the weeks filibustering to deal with probably only three bills, and not necessarily three bills of major consequence, in this Parliament. The government has finally realised that there is an election shortly and is in a mad rush to get stuff through this Parliament. I think the former Leader of the House in this place has managed the legislative agenda of this chamber, the government's legislative agenda, probably as effectively as she has managed major projects in this state. They are a mess, an absolute mess—\$28 billion in cost overruns on major projects in Victoria. So this is just another example of that particular minister not being able to manage the portfolios that she has had over time, and we have seen that in this house and in this state over a long period of time.

The fact that the government are now bringing five bills in when they could have had additional bills in previous weeks through this year and the fact that they are refusing any consideration in detail just shows how out of touch, how arrogant, the Andrews government are in that they think they can just ram stuff through and not debate it properly. We come to this chamber as members of Parliament to represent our communities and to be legislators, and part of being a legislator is to consider in detail the bills that a government puts before this house that will affect Victorians' lives into the future. We have got three shadow ministers who, upon reflecting on and reading the legislation that is before the house, would actually like to examine it in detail with the relevant minister. That is part of putting legislation through this chamber. That is part of what has been enshrined in the Westminster system for literally hundreds of years. When legislation comes forward from the executive government, the opposition, Her Majesty's loyal opposition, should be able to have that legislation examined in detail and should be able to ask the minister questions clause by clause if they see fit.

The fact is that we have got new ministers who may not think they are across their briefs well enough. There are officers that sit in the advisers box. We have not seen it in this house because we have not considered bills in detail, but we have seen in the upper house that ministers go to the box and ask advice. Justin Madden, when he was planning minister, has the record for the number of times he went to the advisers box to get advice on a particular piece of legislation. I do not think there is any shame in a minister actually asking advice if they do not know the detail, so I cannot see why the government is hiding its new ministers from scrutiny. That is part of the parliamentary process. That is why they are paid a minister's salary. They are paid a premium as ministers to do their job as ministers, and part of that job is being a legislator and being open to scrutiny from the Parliament. The three shadow ministers that want to do that are being denied that right because of the arrogance of the Andrews Labor government. I think that is wrong. I think it has been a failing of this Parliament for now two terms that the government does not want any scrutiny. It is a particular failing of the Premier that he believes he should be able to tell everyone in Victoria what to do, and we saw that through COVID, when we were lectured for over 100 days on how what went wrong was everyone but the Andrews government's fault with COVID management in this state.

As the Manager of Opposition Business has said, we will be opposing the government business program because we believe the government is not doing its job in the Legislative Assembly in allowing scrutiny of these particular bills. I think it is just very, very sad for democracy in Victoria that the Andrews government is dumbing down the parliamentary process and the legislative process so much because of its arrogance.

Mr FREGON (Mount Waverley) (12:30): I rise obviously in support of the government business program. It is disappointing to see colleagues on the other side not supporting it, but that is our system and we will follow that through and see how we go. And what a great program it is we have this week ahead of us.

Members interjecting.

Mr FREGON: We will. That is the system. You never know in this place, no. But I would also like to join with the Manager of Opposition Business—

Mr Walsh interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! Leader of The Nationals, you have had your turn.

Mr FREGON: on the other side and the Leader of The Nationals in congratulating Andrew Young for his service and thanking him for everything that he has done and will continue to do until his retirement but also congratulating Bridget Noonan for her elevation. There is a lot of duck on the water in this place with our clerks, and you do not necessarily see what our fantastic parliamentary staff and clerks do. But we really cannot thank them enough, and I guess as we come to the close of this parliamentary term—we have three weeks left—we can never really thank all of our staff enough,

because they have done a pretty tough job over the last couple of years. So I thank them wholeheartedly for that, and I am sure my colleagues join me in that.

We have a number of very, very exciting bills ahead of us. The Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other Matters) Bill 2022—I am very much looking forward to standing up on that later today. I will be able to reflect on my local council and their work in recycling. That will be a really good listen. I invite you all to come and listen to that. It will really excite you all.

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

Members interjecting.

Mr FREGON: I can see you checking your diaries as we speak. We will all be here.

We have done a lot of work over the last four years on residential tenancies. As you are doorknocking and you are out and about, you speak to many renters. Whether it be allowing pets in the house or whether it be allowing them to put up picture frames, there are a lot of things that we have done and we continue to do, like the bill today—and I will not debate it now obviously, but we will get to it.

It is commendable what our ministers do. The funny thing about our ministers is they all have their own jobs. I mean, there are multiple portfolios, but they do not tend to assign themselves to other ones. I think, with some news around the country, we are all shaking our heads, wondering how someone made themselves Treasurer and then made a budget in Canberra. But anyway, I will let our federal colleagues prosecute that one.

What else have we got? We will get to talk about sport. Obviously we will not have Roy and HG here to do that, but I am sure there will be some wonderful contributions.

Finally, of course we will have our joint sitting, which I am sure will be a very sombre event and occasion, and I hope we all remember our colleague Jane Garrett from the other place, because her passing is so untimely and, yes, very sad. On that note I will commend the government business program to the house.

Mr Wynne interjected.

Mr ROWSWELL (Sandringham) (12:34): Thank you, member for Richmond, for your encouragement.

I do not know how many times we need to have this conversation—fair dinkum. Why are government ministers so afraid, so scared, to answer pretty basic, simple questions about legislation which they are responsible for? That is the—

Mr Wells: The sports trust.

Mr ROWSWELL: The sports trust! Forgive me for being ill disciplined. I should not take interjections. Please, member for Rowville. This Parliament has gone into consideration in detail twice, and I have been in the chamber—

Members interjecting.

Mr ROWSWELL: I agree with you, Leader of The Nationals; the member for Rowville should know better than that. We have gone into—

The SPEAKER: Member for Sandringham, through the Chair!

Mr ROWSWELL: We have gone into consideration in detail on two occasions in this Parliament. I have been in the Parliament when that has happened. It is a good part of the process. Just recently I was on a panel that was organised by the Parliament. The soon to be former Clerk of the Parliaments, Andrew Young, was on that panel, as was the president of VCAT as well. During that time and as part

of that conversation with secondary school students and teachers around the state we were discussing just how important that consideration-in-detail process is to the judiciary understanding and interpreting the laws that this Parliament gives it to interpret and how without that the judiciary is somewhat disadvantaged in understanding sometimes the intent of the laws that pass this Parliament. It should be a process that we engage with more regularly than we do, and I cannot for the life of me understand why the government does not want to go into consideration in detail on the three bills as requested by the opposition.

I join with the Manager of Opposition Business, my colleague the member for Ripon, in congratulating the Clerk of this chamber for her soon to be elevation as Clerk of the Parliaments. I think that is a wonderful, wonderful thing.

Just finally, again, there are five bills this week, as the Leader of The Nationals pointed out. For the majority of this Parliament there have been at most three, sometimes as little as two, bills considered during the course of a parliamentary sitting week in this chamber, and in the last couple of weeks there have been up to five. There are certainly five this week as well. That says to me that by some measures, by some definitions, the permanent government, those government departments, are shaking the tin, rattling the can, knocking on the door of their minister, saying, 'Come on, we've got to get this through' and pressing these new ministers to get legislation through cabinet processes and through other processes before they make it to this place, because time is running out. That says to me, as the Leader of The Nationals pointed out, that the process has not been managed entirely well at all for the term of this Parliament. It also says to me that there is no clarity or certainty of agenda from a government that is tired at this late stage of the 59th Parliament. We will be opposing this government business program this week, and we do so on very strong, very stable and very credible grounds.

Ms SHEED (Shepparton) (12:38): (*By leave*) I too join in opposing the government business program just as the Manager of Opposition Business has done and for the same reasons. Consideration in detail is an important part of this Parliament and others have spoken on it, but it is only one of many democratic processes that have been set aside over a number of years in this place. It is time, as the dying days of the 59th Parliament draw to a close, that we consider very hard what we want the next Parliament to look like and what sort of processes we want to see in this place. Might I say that the parties have over the years proceeded on the basis of allowing this sort of denigration of the parliamentary processes within the house to continue. I think it is really important from the point of view of operating a government business program that the government business program provides all the opportunities that ought to be there for the process to take place in a proper fashion.

There are so many things that we are not given the opportunity to do. Of course having no non-government business program means that members on this side of the house have very little opportunity to do many things. Just some of those things are moving motions on general debates, seeking an order for the production of documents, referring a matter to an inquiry or to a standing or select committee, disallowance motions under standing order 151, revocation motions and motions seeking to amend standing orders or introduce sessional or temporary orders or motions. There are so many things that this side of the house cannot do that are part of what ought to be a non-government business program. That we only have a government business program in this house—and the parties, for over 20 years, have stood aside and let that occur and be chipped away at—and do not have a consideration-in-detail stage is just another example of the final stage of shutting down this side of the house. Whether it be the National Party, the Liberal Party, the independents or the Greens, they are being denied the opportunity to have their say and to represent their electorates. It is an issue that needs to be debated in this place, and there needs to be a restoration of these things.

Let me say that, given the reform that clearly needs to take place within the parties now, I maintain that the Parliament also needs to have a level of reform to get democracy operating in the way that it was intended to do and should do and that consideration of all these bills, which are important bills, is properly taken into account and a minister does stand there for that.

I am very concerned too, I might just add while I have got the chance, that we have the Minister for Agriculture and the Minister for Water in the upper house. Two of our most important regional ministers are not here and not introducing legislation in this house. This is the house where government is formed, and yet these ministers are not in this house. What does that say about regional Victoria? It is important that after this election important ministries that affect regional areas are overseen in this house. I think the government should take note that that is a very important issue. We have seen what the neglect of regional Victoria has done in previous elections, and I think it is really worthwhile to note that, when we have a pandemic and we are seeing major impacts on food chains and on food security, ministers responsible for those things are in this house where government is formed.

Today we are simply debating opposition to the government business program because of the lack of consideration in detail. But these are much bigger issues, and they are issues that will be discussed during the forthcoming election campaign. I think the people of Victoria are ready to try and introduce some of the reforms that are needed to make this place work better to make sure that communities are better represented. We have seen what has happened at the federal level, with the biggest crossbench now in the lower house, the house where government is formed. I believe that the community of Victoria are now ready to see some commitment to that sort of process to get good government back and operating within the Victorian Parliament.

House divided on motion:

Ayes, 49

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

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

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

Noes, 27

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

Kealy, Ms
McLeish, Ms
Newbury, Mr
O'Brien, Mr D
O'Brien, Mr M
Read, Dr
Riordan, Mr
Rowswell, Mr
Ryan, Ms

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

Motion agreed to.

Joint sitting of Parliament

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL VACANCY

The SPEAKER (12:49): I have received the following message from the Legislative Council proposing that the Council meets the Legislative Assembly for the purpose of sitting and voting together to choose a person to hold the seat in the Legislative Council rendered vacant following the

death of the Honourable Jane Garrett MLC and that the place and time of such meeting be the Legislative Assembly chamber on Wednesday, 17 August 2022, at 6.15 pm.

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale—Leader of the House, Minister for Planning) (12:49): I move:

That this house agrees to the Legislative Council's proposal for a joint sitting on Wednesday, 17 August 2022, at 6.15 pm in the Legislative Assembly chamber for the purpose of sitting and voting together to choose a person to hold the seat in the Legislative Council rendered vacant following the death of the Honourable Jane Garrett MLC.

Motion agreed to.

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

Members statements

DONALD AND CHARLTON

Ms STALEY (Ripon) (12:50): Last week I had the great pleasure to go to Donald and Charlton, currently in the great electorate of Ripon but soon to become part of the electorate of Mildura. Over those two days I took the fabulous Liberal candidate for Mildura, Paul Matheson, around Donald and Charlton. We visited many places. We started at the Charlton Neighbourhood House. That is one of the neighbourhood houses that the government has not secured ongoing funding for that we on our side have said we will continue to permanently fund. We then went to the Charlton Traffic Safety Education Centre. That is a fabulous institution that provides real-world training for young people in driver education. That place is in need of a major upgrade; Paul Matheson got that immediately, as a currently serving police officer. We then went to Donald, to the Donald stadium, a project that I am very proud to have been involved with all the way through my tenure in the Parliament. Of course we ended up in Donald at Kooka's Country Cookies, where we went to see the new facility that they are building there. It is going to be a great facility that will provide expanded production facilities for those great cookies.

MARIBYRNONG PARK FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr PEARSON (Essendon—Assistant Treasurer, Minister for Regulatory Reform, Minister for Government Services, Minister for Housing) (12:52): A big shout-out to the Maribyrnong Park Football Club under-14 mixed division 5 premiers, who won in the Essendon District Football League finals. Number 1 was Nathan Hartelt; number 3, Liam Marshall-Pearson; number 4, Hamish McDonald; number 5, Addison Lambertini; number 6, Ari Hinrichs; number 7, Aden Thompson; number 8, Joshua Gorman; number 9, Charlie De Fazio; number 10, Charlie McDonald; number 11, Tyler Ferguson; number 12, Xavier Treglia; number 13, Xavier Jackson; number 14, Jack Collins; number 18, Mateo Barac; number 19, Lachie Atchison; number 20, Benjamin Hausfeld; number 22, Adam Nasarczyk; number 23, Miles Thompson; number 24, Jack Wallis; number 26, Hunter Holland; number 29, Lucas Janetzki; number 35, Jack De Fazio; number 43, Luke Stevenson; and number 50, Dash Mistry. The boys did a fantastic job, and a big shout-out to the coach, Adrian McDonald, and the assistant coach, Clint Holland, for all their efforts throughout the season with these boys. The boys have learned so much more than just football. They have learned responsibility, they have learned discipline and focus. They have just been a great group of kids, and this has been a fantastic achievement by Maribyrnong Park. It is a testament to the work of Adrian as well as Clint and is something that I am incredibly proud to have in my community and my electorate. I think that the boys have learned so much. It was a tough game; it was a hard game. The score was tied with about a minute to go. A free kick and a 50-metre penalty saw the boys bring it home. Go Marby!

ENERGY POLICY

Mr D O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) (12:53): I am here to stand up today for the communities of Gippsland against the rash Greens plans to mandate an end to coal power production in Victoria. The proposal announced this morning to shut down all coal power plants in Victoria by 2030 is illogical,

dangerous and does not help with our transition to cleaner forms of energy. We all know there is an energy transition underway, but as always the radical Greens have to up the ante and, for base political reasons, are selling out the communities of Gippsland and the Latrobe Valley. It is typical of the Greens to demand in full Orwellian fashion that coal power workers be given ‘certainty’. I know many of the workers at Loy Yang A and B and at Yallourn. They might want certainty, but they do not want the certain death of their jobs. We will have a transition to cleaner energy, but there is no chance we can switch to renewables entirely in the next eight years and keep the lights on and electricity affordable. The question is: will the Labor Party rule out this reckless policy?

GIPPSLAND NEW ENERGY CONFERENCE

Mr D O’BRIEN: On a more optimistic note, the Gippsland New Energy Conference last week was a glimpse of the positive future that could be coming Gippsland’s way. Well done to Wellington shire and the Gippsland Climate Change Network for organising what became a national conference, attracting huge interest from companies all around the world. There are great prospects in offshore wind and other energy developments, including hydrogen, to help Gippsland transition and maintain our role as a national energy powerhouse. In doing so, though, we must all be mindful of the potential negative impacts on some in the community, especially from new transmission lines marching across farmland. Where feasible, these lines should go underground to minimise the impacts on small rural communities.

COST OF LIVING

Ms THEOPHANOUS (Northcote) (12:55): The Andrews Labor government is working hard every day to ease cost-of-living pressures and help hardworking families to get ahead. We have expanded the \$250 power saving bonus to all Victorians, and my office has now helped hundreds of locals to access this saving on their energy bills. We have put in place flagship reforms, like free kinder and free TAFE, which not only remove fees but remove barriers to workforce participation and education too. We have capped rental bonds and council rates and given sick pay to casuals and are helping homes to become energy efficient. And from this week we are making it free to get your drivers licence too. We know how empowering having a licence is. It is not just being about being able to take your friends up the coast on a road trip. For so many it means access to job opportunities across town and being able to get to classes at TAFE or uni.

Labor takes easing cost-of-living pressures seriously because it is part of a movement that has at its core the mission to build a better and fairer future for every Victorian. And we do not just talk about this, we get on and do it. Right now we are building thousands of new homes through our Big Housing Build—another way we are helping those who need it most. It is the largest single investment in social and affordable housing by any state or territory government in Australia’s history, and we are doing it—Labor is doing it—because we know that having a safe and secure place to call home, having education and job opportunities and having support when you need it means that Victorians can get on with living their best lives. That is what Victorians deserve, and that is what we are delivering.

POLWARTH ELECTORATE WATERWAYS

Mr RIORDAN (Polwarth) (12:56): I draw the house’s attention today to a series of approaches to my office about the state of our waterways and estuaries flowing out past the Great Ocean Road and into the sea, mainly from the Otway catchments. I bring to attention firstly the Curdies River community, and that takes in Peterborough, Timboon, Cobden and the Heytesbury farming district. The community has put petitions to the Parliament both electronically and manually from well over 1000 people—and that is from a very small community—who are saying, ‘We want a well-funded remediation plan to help with the blue-green algae and the terrible state of the estuary of the Curdies River down at Peterborough’. Likewise, the Anglesea community has been fighting for a long time to get some sense from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning about the catchment behind the now closed Alcoa coal plant. They want to know that the government is putting real resources into addressing the acid sulphate soils that have now made the beautiful Anglesea estuary,

which is used for canoeing, fishing and other pastimes, so sterile that there is no fish life and it is affecting birds and other microorganisms in the catchment. These are important to the local environment. They are important to the local community. These waterways need real investment and not more talk.

CITY OF BALLARAT YOUTH AWARDS

Ms ADDISON (Wendouree) (12:58): Congratulations to Ballarat's extraordinary and impressive young people who were nominated for and won awards at the City of Ballarat Youth Awards 2022. The achievements of almost 100 young people aged between 12 and 25 were recognised by the City of Ballarat through the nomination process. The winners were Ruby Lloyd-Vendy for the Personal Growth Award; Ballarat Action Climate Co-op's Green Fest for the Group Project Award; Rohan McMaster for the Leadership in Sport and Recreation Award; Zara Jarvis for the Creative Arts Award; Meghan Lee for the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Award; Dhuvarrishlanth Veerabahu for the Positive Leader Award; Millie Collins for the Compassion and Care Award; Indya Hayes for the Innovators Award; Liam Ryan for the Youth Volunteer Award; Tarryn Harris for the Influential Adult Volunteer Award; and John Maher for the Influential Adult Worker Award. And for the major awards, congratulations to Millie Collins for the 12 to 17 age group and Ruby Lloyd-Vendy for 18 to 25. Well done to Ballarat Youth Services and TEAM youth volunteers Aditi, Amelia, Ardi, Charli, Coral, Ebony, Jo, Sarah, Shannon, Shayla and Sophia for organising a fantastic event. It was also terrific to hear from the 2022 award ambassadors, Gabriel Gervasoni and Harry Buck. Ballarat's future is in excellent hands with so many positive, diverse and compassionate young people doing so much.

EUROA ELECTORATE SCHOOLS

Ms RYAN (Euroa) (12:59): Speaker, may I congratulate you on your elevation to the Speaker's role. I rise today after what has been a very distressing and an incredibly difficult few weeks for students, staff and families of Colmont School in Kilmore after its recent closure. The school had a very strong reputation as an academic institution and drew students from far and wide. Today I am seeking a guarantee from the government that it will not strip the school of its registration until every avenue to save it has been explored. The school has appointed a new administrator who is currently analysing the books, but there is a great deal of concern from locals that the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority plans to cancel the school's registration.

There is also another concern here. In the days following the sudden closure, the Minister for Education, appreciating that she is new in her role, said:

Certainly we do have capacity at schools in the region to pick up anyone that needs a class, for both primary and secondary schools

That unfortunately is simply not true. Broadford Secondary College has already had to turn away more than 30 prospective students for next year, and the school's capacity of 825 students is under pressure. The catchment through that region is growing rapidly, and Broadford desperately needs investment in order to deal with that growth. This is an issue that can no longer be ignored by the Andrews government. We do not have a public secondary school in Kilmore, and I would urge the government to invest in Broadford to ensure that it can deal with that growth.

VICTORIAN HEALTHY HOMES PROGRAM

Mr McGHIE (Melton) (13:01): I was recently lucky enough to be joined by the Minister for Energy and Minister for Environment and Climate Action when we visited the beautiful home of Heather Westaway in Melton South. We saw firsthand the transformational impact an energy upgrade can have for Victorians. Heather was part of the Victorian Healthy Homes program: 800 houses in the west received energy upgrades; 176 of these houses were in Melton and 200 in the Goulburn Valley. Heather's late husband was severely allergic to natural gas, so their home was heated for decades by inefficient heat banks and electric water storage. Her heating costs were astronomical and a massive burden on her budget.

The funding of this program helped Heather install an energy-efficient reverse-cycle air conditioner. Changing this heat source meant that Heather had a more responsive heat source, and it is saving her around \$430 per power bill. She told us how much warmer her house is and how she can feel free to leave her home to do more activities. She feels more comfortable with people visiting her in winter and how she can afford to stay in her magnificent home without feeling the pressure to move because it is too expensive to live there. The environmental benefits are of course important, but sometimes we can lose sight that for people like Heather energy efficiency can make a massive improvement to their quality of life, both physical and mental wellbeing. When asked whether the upgrade had improved her health Heather responded, 'Oh heaps, because you don't worry or stress. I can have visitors over without worrying about whether they will be warm enough'. I want to thank Heather for allowing us into her house and telling us and all of her friends about the benefits of this program.

LGBTIQA+ HEALTH CARE

Dr READ (Brunswick) (13:03): Recently a constituent contacted my office concerned about the age gap for gender health services in Melbourne whereby a 16-year-old has been too old to qualify for gender-affirming youth services at the children's hospital but too young to qualify for the adult service at Monash Health. So I spoke to Monash Health, and I was pleased when they told me that they had planned to change their policies so that 16-year-olds could access this essential health care. I congratulate Monash on making this change to ensure that trans and gender-diverse Victorians of any age can access gender health services.

But while age is no longer a factor, financial resources still are. In Victoria gender-affirming surgery is simply not available in the public system. That means people in need of gender care have to raise considerable funds to access the private system, and the waiting list is long. We know that trans and gender-diverse people are at high risk of negative health outcomes due to the marginalisation they experience, and the Department of Health's research has found that better access to gender-affirming services would be one of the most important ways to support their health and wellbeing. Victoria urgently needs to develop these services, and I encourage them to work with the college of surgeons to ensure that we have enough doctors with experience and knowledge in this field. I urge the government to start this now to support the many Victorians waiting for this necessary care.

COMMONWEALTH GAMES

Ms HALL (Footscray) (13:04): I rise to acknowledge the incredible sporting achievements of local clubs and athletes in my community of Footscray. The Commonwealth Games have now come to a close, and as the athletes return home I am thrilled to be acknowledging members of my community for their fantastic achievements at this year's games. This is extraordinary. The Resilience Training Centre in Footscray came home with 10 medals from 10 athletes in judo, two gold and eight bronze—an awesome achievement. Congratulations to everyone from the Resilience Training Centre in Footscray. To year 10 student Alan from Sunshine College, who competed in four swimming competitions at his first Commonwealth Games, congratulations.

FOOTSCRAY ELECTORATE FOOTBALL CLUBS

Ms HALL: It is not only the Commonwealth Games where inner westies are showcasing their sporting prowess. Many of our fantastic footy clubs are on the home stretch as they look towards the finals in the coming weeks. The West Footscray Roosters women's football club are looking to take one step closer to a grand final with a win over Point Cook Centrals this weekend—go Bokkers! And staying with the Roosters, the under-14s will be playing their first finals this weekend, as will the under-16s. The West Footscray Roosters have a very bright future ahead in their juniors. In the men's seniors division the inner west has two reps, with Parkside Football Club and the North Footscray Devils both playing in the finals this weekend. Good luck to everyone involved.

SHIRLEY PENNY

Ms CUPPER (Mildura) (13:06): Mildura has lost a local icon in the late great Shirley Penny. She was a gracious, kind, smart woman with a passion for our community. Her style was inimitable, from her trademark updo to her pastel-coloured suits and her jaw-droppingly fabulous 1970s-era home decor. She was a firebrand of local government politics, making her mark as a councillor and mayor. We loved her stories of sister city trips, where the men would all scurry away for secret men's business while she would do all the work of an international attaché, making connections, strengthening relationships and having the time of her life.

Shirley's success was assisted by the enduring support of her husband, Bert. At a time when many husbands were actively embracing the perks of male privilege, Bert was not. For many children of the era, gender inequality permeated every aspect of home life, but to the Penny kids it was a completely foreign concept. Bert and Shirley were equal partners: they were equal in power inside the home, and they were equal in opportunity outside it. Against the prevailing cultural current of the mid-century, Bert respected Shirley, and against that same cultural current Shirley respected herself.

If you can see it, you can be it, and for many of the local women councillors and MPs that have followed Shirley Penny was what we saw. Her politics were more conservative than mine, causing one person to ask why I chose Shirley, of all people, to be my marriage celebrant. My reason was simple: she is a legend and an inspiration. Vale, Shirley. Your legacy will live on.

OAKLEIGH SOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mr TAK (Clarinda) (13:07): Deputy Speaker, can I start by congratulating you on your appointment as Deputy Speaker of this house.

It was my great pleasure to join the Minister for Education for the sod turn at Oakleigh South Primary School recently. The Oakleigh South Primary School is an amazing local school, and it was a great day joining students to turn the first sod on this exciting new project. The Victorian government's investment of more than \$9.5 million will give teachers and students a beautiful new classroom and administration building and a kitchen garden. Thank you and congratulations to the principal, Ron Cantlon, assistant principal Nikki Virtuoso and the OSPS student leaders for allowing me to share this special milestone. Ron is an amazing advocate for his school and his community. He has been at Oakleigh South since 1987, originally as a teacher assistant and acting principal, taking over the substantive role in 1992. The success of Oakleigh South Primary School is a testament to Ron and the whole school community, growing from what Ron recalled as an underachieving school, offering enrolment for just over 100 students, to a school with over 1000 students and one of the highest performing schools in Australia—simply amazing. Congratulations again, and I am extremely proud to support this wonderful school. It is a wonderful project.

CAMPING REGULATION

Mr TILLEY (Benambra) (13:09): The ongoing farce of the jackbooted approach to public policy that is the issue of licensed riverfront camping continues. There are about 90 sites that have been picked throughout the state of Victoria. Three of the spots coincidentally have been identified on Sarah and Stuart Crosthwaite's dairy farm on the Kiewa River at Kergunyah South. There was another one, making it four under consideration, but the inspector from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning was not authorised to walk across the road to have a look at that paddock. That apparently was somebody else's job. All three sit atop a steep riverbank. Access to the river is near impossible. Adding insult to injury is that on the opposite bank, about 100 metres away, there is a designated public camping spot at Boyds Bridge Reserve. Why there is any need for these spots is a mystery, particularly with the biosecurity threat of foot-and-mouth disease on our doorstep. Who is going to carry a portable toilet 700 metres to camp on the farm or the licensed riverfrontage when they can drive straight onto the reserve?

It is increasingly apparent that this wasteful exercise is fulfilling an election promise, knowing these spots are unlikely to be used. You need a machete and a snakebite kit to get to most of the ones along the Mitta Mitta River in the Benambra district. This is just a sick joke that gives campers and fishers false expectations while creating fear, frustration and anxiety for the landholders. We will fix it.

MEDICAL RESEARCH

Mr McGuire (Broadmeadows) (13:10): In the era of distraction, value can too often be lost in the blink of a tweet, so I want to highlight that a world-first mRNA manufacturing facility on a university campus was announced yesterday at Monash, with Moderna. Melbourne, like Boston and London, is a world leader in life-changing and life-saving medical research, emanating from our internationally acclaimed academics, especially the University of Melbourne and Monash. mRNA provides next-generation vaccines against the pandemic and is crucial for breakthroughs against cancers and other diseases. I was delighted to join Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, the Premier and federal and state ministers for this defining announcement for health, science and national security.

As Victoria's first Parliamentary Secretary for Medical Research, my driven pursuit has been internationalising collaborations and delivering community results. My initiatives have ranged from identifying new multibillion-euro opportunities with the United Kingdom and the European Union to advocacy internationalising the Cancer Moonshot with the White House, which brought Joe Biden to Melbourne in 2016 for the opening of the billion-dollar jewel in Australia's medical research crown, the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre. I have also driven plans to redefine the social determinants of life in postcodes of disadvantage, designing Broadmeadows as the prototype. I look forward to new investments in public health addressing the causes of pandemic outbreaks and lockdowns by coordinating the expansion of the Broadmeadows Hospital and the Broadmeadows super clinic and training the nurses and allied health workers vital for our most vulnerable communities, with Kangan Institute. Such investments are vital.

TARNEIT ELECTORATE SCHOOL ZONES

Ms Connolly (Tarneit) (13:12): As we resume Parliament this week, I want to kick off by celebrating the fantastic announcement for Williams Landing families that was made just before the July break. Starting from next year Williams Landing will benefit from a shared enrolment arrangement with nearby schools in the area. What this means is that parents will have the choice—the choice of sending their kids to nearby schools without worrying about zoning restrictions. As it currently stands, only a small part of Williams Landing is zoned to the nearest school, Truganina South Primary School, while the rest of the community is zoned to schools in nearby Laverton and Seabrook. Unfortunately Trug South, literally a 5-minute drive from my electorate office in Williams Landing, still has space to take kids from across the Williams Landing community. Parents will have the option of sending their kids to Trug South, if that is what suits them and what they want to do, or to send them to the school they are currently zoned to. I want to be clear: this is about giving parents the choice, the choice of which school to send their children to, because parents in Williams Landing should not have to drive all the way to Seabrook, through traffic, to drop their kids off to that school when there is another school just a stone's throw away. While some parents might find it easier to drop their kids off at Laverton on their way to work, they too should be able to make that decision. When it comes to education in this state, every child deserves to go to a great local school, and I am so happy that families in Williams Landing will now get their choice of which great school to send their child to.

SUBURBAN RAIL LOOP

Mr Fregon (Mount Waverley) (13:13): I rise to celebrate another milestone in the delivery of the Andrews government's visionary rail infrastructure project, the Suburban Rail Loop. Last week the Minister for Environment and Climate Action endorsed this historic project, giving it a green light following an exhaustive environment effects statement process. This project is now on track to deliver six new underground stations and nearly 30 kilometres of twin tunnels. The project will also create up to 8000 jobs in its development, creating unprecedented benefits to our local communities. The EES

process has been a rigorous and transparent assessment of the environmental impacts the project will have, and it addresses key concerns of residents about the SRL. It is now even more accessible thanks to the fully digital process that we have undertaken. We obviously had independent hearings, and many people in my community gave their input. The Minister for Environment and Climate Action endorsed the inquiry's recommendations, which had some crucial outcomes, such as tougher requirements to limit noise and traffic impacts; more support for businesses affected by the construction; and additional bicycle connections and footpaths to encourage walking and cycling, including upgrading the Gardiners Creek Trail. I spoke recently with the traders at Glen Waverley, the Glen Waverley Traders Association, led by Christo Christophidis and Craig Lane—great local traders. They are very excited about what is coming and very interested in the results. Bring it on.

BOX HILL HIGH SCHOOL

Mr HAMER (Box Hill) (13:15): Deputy Speaker, may I add my congratulations to your elevation to that role.

It was terrific to join year 10 commerce students at Box Hill High School last week as part of their 'influencing the law and economic issues' learning unit. Students were required to put together a short presentation about a contemporary issue that they are passionate about. This assignment tested students' research skills and their personal and social capability skills by presenting a proposal for change related to their topic of interest. Topics being investigated ranged across adoption legislation, homelessness, the cost of living, refugee policy, climate change, housing and digital privacy. All topics were well researched and demonstrated well-considered arguments in favour of and against proposed changes. With students such as these leading the way our future is in good hands.

CHINESE COMMUNITY SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

Mr HAMER: The Chinese Community Society of Victoria has operated for more than 100 years and, similar to other Chinese organisations around the world, was established to assist and support Chinese immigrants arriving in their new home. While its core objectives have remained, the society also does an enormous amount of charity work, including funding an emergency paramedic vehicle for Box Hill Hospital and raising \$14 000 for the Royal Children's Hospital, \$46 000 for flood relief for Victoria and \$10 000 for flood relief for Queensland, as well as supplying masks and sanitiser to the Salvation Army and various local public welfare organisations. Box Hill is very lucky to have the CCS Vic active in its community, and I want to pay particular tribute to its chairperson, long-time Box Hill identity the hardworking Vincent Liu, and his tremendous community leadership.

TONY DRISCOLL

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) (13:16): I rise today to pay tribute to the life of Tony Driscoll, who was the wonderful mayor of Northern Grampians shire, and I will miss him very much—his friendship, his wise counsel. He was a husband to Annette and a father to Eliza, James and Josephine, and there were his wonderful grandchildren, and he was a brother to Kate, Gabe, Winnie and Justin. In celebrating requiem mass in St Arnaud, his brother Justin, Father Justin Driscoll, described Tony's commitment to his community as not just a commitment, it was a vocation. You could really see that he lived for and loved his community, and the number of people that were there really demonstrated that. The funeral book just showed that he was so comfortable, whether it was with the people that he dealt with when he worked at the siloes, giving many farmers advice and support in good times and bad, or mixing with the wonderful staff at Northern Grampians, prime ministers, premiers, including Premier Andrews, and also princes—Prince Edward. He was just so much more than all the things that I could say in these 90 seconds, and it was one of the most beautiful requiem masses I have ever been to. He was just such a wonderful human being, taken too soon. To my shock I discovered that one of my best schoolfriends, Bernie Kelly, was his first cousin. Vale, Tony Driscoll.

WANTIRNA COLLEGE

Mr TAYLOR (Bayswater) (13:18): No surprises that Wantirna College put on another cracking show this year, lifting off the roof with their rendition of a new Broadway hit, *Be More Chill*. I want to give a shout-out to all the amazing cast members—here we go: Brayden Alexander, Nathan Bromfield, Kai Simcocks, Sasha Buchstaller, Elleshia Calvert, Emma Cameron, Josie Coath, Jamie David, Mackenzie Ross, Max Chisholm, William Davis, Thomas De Laine, Bailey Lubin, Nathan Vibal, William Caira, Tain Corless, Angelo Koulouris, Caitlin Murphy, Elijana Henry, Ella Day, Chloe Heron, Orion Rigano, Siobhan Haynes, Shelby Nation Bates, Abbey De Faye, Elijah Keam, Harrison Bedford, Aidyn Haroun, Alexandra Evans, Amber Higgins, Amy Cameron, Amy Ievoli, Ashley Robinson, Bianca Mizzi, Callum Foster, Charlotte Antonopoulos, Chelsea Lin, Chloe Roldan, Cinta Purcell, Dakota Garner, Dusty Lijnders, Ebony Loten, Ella Brown, Harrison Mitchell, Ellora Rode-Bramanis, Erica Loten, Gabrielle Coath, Emily Gray, Harry Williams, Holly Moran, Indigo Wood, Isabella Lawler, Ivy Hale-Moore, Jade Campbell, Izzy Heffernan, Jayvel Singh, Jeremy Coath, Kailee Smedley, Kate Johnson, Katherine Styles, Kesiah Rawlings, Kylie Smith, Laura Smith, Lydia Thomas, Maddison Jones, Madi Dodge, Megan Hocking, Mia Riley, Mikayla Milner, Niamh Slattery, Nicholas Schulte, Paityn Le Fevre, Rachel Cameron, Ritkriti Melam, Sadie Reeve, Sandra Vibal, Sienna Ponente, Stephanie Bennett, Stephanie Coffey, Tam Lewis, Tayla King, Tiarna Handley, Tammy Henderson, Tiana Robinson, Thomas Megee, William Heron, Zachary Day and Zali Moore. The tech crew were Jason Henderson, Even Henderson, Jade Yeomans, Deng Kuot, Toby Mathews, Tristan Rashleigh, Elijah Hayes, Harry Langsford, Liana Tanser, Joshua Christoff, Cooper Rockstro, Lennix Rode-Bramanis, Jack Lindberg, Leo Beveridge, Callum Coombs, Annabelle Zvara, Blake Mackenzie, Izzy Antonopoulos, Nyx Main, Charli Burchett, Kaylee Freeman, Madison Cook, Angus Schipkie, Ryan Kalisperis and Shay Whiteside.

PINES FOOTBALL NETBALL CLUB

Mr EDBROOKE (Frankston) (13:19): I am very excited to attend the If These Walls Could Talk event at Eric Bell Reserve this Saturday. I was there in 2018 when the Pines Football Netball Club won the grand final, and I have attended so many presidents luncheons and functions over the years and sat in the rooms with the new plans. This day will be a tribute to all the current and past players, administrators, members, supporters and partners and a celebration of all the premierships and grand finals that their teams have participated in in the 58 years of the club's existence.

VIETNAM VETERANS DAY

Mr EDBROOKE: Can I also say how proud and honoured I was to stand beside our community's Vietnam veterans at the Frankston RSL at the Vietnam veterans remembrance day service last weekend. A huge thankyou to Kevin Hillier OAM, Mark Kinder, Kelvin Parker, Cheryl Myers, the cadets and RSL Vietnam veterans sub-branch patron Peta Murphy MP for ensuring their tireless commitment to veterans.

Bills**ENVIRONMENT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2022***Second reading***Debate resumed on motion of Ms D'AMBROSIO:**

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (13:20): I rise to speak on the Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other Matters) Bill 2022. When it comes to this bill, the environment and the circular economy, the government need a rocket under them. They absolutely need a rocket under them, and what I will go through today are the reasons why, because this is a problem, and this bill does not solve problems that are new. This bill seeks to provide policy solutions to problems that have

been going for five years. In five years we have seen announcements. You would not be surprised to hear there have been a number of announcements. We have seen a plan—and it was glossy. We saw a glossy plan. We saw a legislative amendment two years after the glossy plan that announced a shell of a policy, and today we are seeing a furtherance of that shell. But does this bill set in place a date to commence some of the policy things that Victorians actually want done? The answer is no.

Earlier today we heard a member on the other side say that his community had been saying to him, ‘We want to see the container deposit scheme implemented. We want to see it implemented. We want to know when it starts’. The member on the other side was saying there was such strong community interest in seeing that and being part of that—and that is true. We know that across every community that is true. We know how important that is. When is it commencing? There is no date.

What does this bill do? This bill sets a date for a new bureaucracy. That is what this bill does. Make no mistake, this bill sets the date of a new bureaucracy; it does not set a date to implement, in a way that the community can participate in, the measures that they are so strongly wanting. The government are simply refusing to do that. When it comes to policy in this space not only do the government need a rocket under them, they are looking old and tired.

Mr Dimopoulos interjected.

Mr NEWBURY: Perhaps not the minister at the table, the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events—he has taken personal exception—but other than the minister at the table, when it comes to policy in this space the government are looking old and tired. We need a plan for the future. We need a plan to see these policies happen. We need to see these things happen. We need dates for them to commence, and we do not see that in this bill. This bill does not provide that. This bill provides a policy solution for an issue that first came about in—well, even before, but the mechanics of the issue were first seen in—2018, five years ago. Five years ago we were aware of fundamental collapses in the way we dealt with rubbish and the way we dealt with recycling. When those collapses started to occur what did the government do about it? Nothing. The government saw these failures occur—and not only did they see these failures occur, it took them quite some time to decide what they would do about it.

I know I spoke in the chamber soon after I was elected about the need for a container deposit scheme—within a couple of months of being elected. In fact the coalition led in this policy space by announcing serious policy on fixing these issues not only with a container deposit scheme but with a broader *Zero to Landfill* policy, and I will talk about that a bit later. What did the government do after following our lead? They announced a glossy policy on a 10-year plan. In February 2022 they announced a recycling 10-year plan. Two and a half years ago they announced the plan—and it was a glossy plan, I will give them that. They spent a lot of money making a glossy document, and some of the transitioning elements that were included in the plan were ‘boosting the economy’, ‘creating jobs’—important things—and ‘improving social inclusion’, but it lacked any detail. So the government announced, after 2½ years, a plan without substance, and they have done nothing with it since. They did nothing with it until legislating a shell at the end of last year and announcing this bill, which provides a date for a new bureaucracy.

By contrast the coalition has led in this policy space. When it comes to the container deposit scheme, many on our side of the chamber were vocal and public about this policy early. It is something that many of us were talking about—in my case before I was even in Parliament. It is a policy area that has been pushed from this side of the chamber. Our former leader the member for Malvern absolutely should be acknowledged for his achievements in this policy contribution space. He announced on behalf of the coalition a significant policy, and I am going to make some mention of it. Firstly, the policy states we would:

Work with industry and councils to achieve a:

- 33% reduction of household waste going to landfill by 2025;

- 66% ... by 2030; and
- 100% ... by 2035.

What a significant milestone for us as an opposition, moving with those types of goals. Secondly, we would:

Commit \$120 million (over four years) from the Sustainability Fund to create a Zero to Landfill Fund ...

We are currently looking at a bill which is proposing to do some of these things. This is years later. We were on the front foot. Thirdly, we were to:

Commit State Government departments to work with industry to expedite approvals to get Victoria's waste management and recycling back on track ...

Well, sadly, the government has not been doing that. Finally, we would:

Require State Government agencies ... to prioritise fully recycled plastic products as part of their purchasing policies.

When you look around Australia—just Australia, let alone the world—it takes a very short time, when you compare and contrast, to see how slow we have been here. Those that have visited other states and wandered around their sites will have seen that container deposit schemes are now part of what you see when you visit places. When you visit the main sites in New South Wales you will see the container deposit scheme. When you go overseas you will see the scheme is being incorporated into the major supermarkets so that people can shop and return their recycling at the same time—things Victorians want and expect but, sadly, things that are only a pipedream in Victoria because the government have not actually done anything to make them happen. They have not proceeded in a way that the community would expect not only in a policy area that the community want but also, pressingly, in a policy space that requires attention. That is I think what is so disturbing here. It is not only what the community wants, it is also the policy requirement.

I will make mention of the bill in terms of what it actually does. Primarily the bill establishes a firmer waste-to-energy scheme. Interestingly enough, as part of that scheme it introduces an annual cap on the amount of tonnage, which it sets at 1 million tonnes, exempting the current operators—I understand there are three who produce 950 000 tonnes. In terms of setting in place a scheme, the first step they have made is to put in place a cap on something they have not even set out or commenced yet, which frankly makes little to no sense, and I can assure you the coalition in the other place will have more to say on that particular issue. It is putting in place a waste-to-energy scheme, which the coalition has been advocating for for years and provided a comprehensive plan for several years ago.

The bill will also introduce a new statewide infrastructure planning framework, and you can understand why that would be the case. I think that something the last five years have shown us is that we need to have far better strategic planning when it comes to managing these things. If we can coordinate that more centrally rather than, as at the moment, through several parts, that can only be a good thing. It is a 30-year plan, so that clearly gives some future to it, which is good. The bill also goes to risk-and-consequences contingency planning, which as you would expect in terms of corporate governance is also important. There are some matters relating to the way reporting occurs that are worth noting, and the ministerial discretion when it comes to the release of that plan is unique in the bill in relation to that particular plan. When you are talking about important statewide infrastructure matters, policy matters, it is worth noting that there is ministerial discretion on the release of part of those plans.

Finally, I spoke earlier about the creation of a new bureaucracy. When it comes to Labor, we know that they love a good bureaucracy. This bill introduces a date for the commencement of that bureaucracy, and the government have provided advice—which is advice that is appreciated—that the funding envelope would be within current funding envelopes. We would certainly expect that to be the case. Those are the elements of the bill and what it actually does. What it does not do is start doing what we have needed to be doing for a number of years. We actually need to get this stuff going. The

government are very quick to say part of the delay is because they have been consulting. How can you consult for five years on an urgent policy matter and not reach the point of going?

It is genuinely concerning. When you look at their Recycling Victoria policy announcement of February 2020—so a good two years after issues arose and we were seeing market failures in this space, we see failures in the market—to see that their 10-year plan did not have any meat was really disappointing. Since they released that 10-year plan we have seen a quarter of that time lapse, and the only actions the government have taken have been to introduce a shell of a bill and now to introduce a bill that sets out the framework for a scheme and does not actually start it. I think Victorians could look at this bill with a bureaucracy commencing in the middle of the year and say, ‘There’s no way, if the bureaucracy is commencing in the middle of the year, that they will not need several months to set up’. Of course they will. They have set out a date for commencement for the middle of the year. and I suspect if lucky we might commence the container deposit scheme at the end of the year—if very, very lucky. The commitment the government has given is sometime in 2023. Well, let me tell you, it is not going to be early in 2023—and they are not going to be here.

We will certainly be having more to say in this space in the lead-up to the election, because we know that Victorians want this policy implemented, and they want it done quickly. That will be a campaign issue. That will be an issue for Victorians to decide on. I say to the minister and flag with the minister that the answer ‘I ain’t going to tell you when it’s going to happen’—probably because the minister has not even bothered to think through setting a date and some kind of go-slow—is not going to cut it anymore. We will be pushing this issue towards voters and saying ‘There will be a contrast on this’. There will be a contrast on the container deposit scheme because it is something that we have passionately spoken about. It is something we have passionately advocated for. It is something that we have been talking about getting action on for years.

We released significant policy on it before the government did—as an opposition—and yet we have no date when we will see this commence in Victoria. Under a coalition you will see a difference in that space, and I look forward to having that debate because we need to have a debate in this area. We have needed to have a debate on the environment more generally, because when it comes to environmental policy this government needs a rocket under them. They absolutely need a rocket under them. The policies are looking tired, they are looking old, and what they actually miss more than anything is a future plan. If you have been listening to your constituents or the constituency or Victorians or Australians, what they are saying is ‘We want to see plans, and we want to see plans for the future’. We want to see those plans being underpinned with hopefulness—of course we do—but it is about seeing plans for the future. Sadly, in a number of spaces in this portfolio area we do not actually have a plan for the future, and the plans that are in place are currently undercooked. They are not being achieved. There are targets that are not being met.

You do not have to look any further than electric vehicles and the commitment of 50 per cent by 2030 to know that when it comes to achieving its own policy goals in this portfolio space it is not happening. We are currently at 2 per cent of electric vehicles. Industry is now speaking publicly about the hopelessness of the government’s electric vehicle plan, the absolute hopelessness—2 per cent. Basically the government has done nothing, and I think that the minister having set up a task force to look at the electric vehicle policy issue is an acknowledgement of failure. When it comes to this government on that issue, it certainly is, but the same can be said in other policy areas.

We have been talking about recycling and waste, but it is not just in recycling and waste, it is in other areas in the broader environmental space. It is genuinely important that governments, especially in this space, recognise the need to have plans for the future and take the community with them on things like solar homes or batteries. These are policy areas where we need to see significant ideas and investment in the future that bring people along on that journey. When I last looked on the website, there had been 10 000 batteries installed in four years in Victoria under this government—10 000. We all know how important energy security is. The funding for the solar panel plan, from memory, finishes this year. I expect Labor to make an election issue out of a number of these things, and I anticipate that solar will

be one of them. I am going to be watching very closely to see if they have the gumption to match our 1 million households plan. It is a plan that not only helps home owners but helps tenants and renters. How important is that?

That is what worries me I think with the container deposit scheme and the slowness of the government on these issues. Some of the people in our community who are most wanting to take part in community sustainability are people who do not live in a home—they might live in an apartment or they might be renters—and unfortunately there are so many blockages in the way policy works that they cannot do that. When we implement the container deposit scheme, renters and apartment dwellers will take more time to become involved because it is harder to make it work. There are genuine issues with rolling out these policies into those spaces. We need to get on with it. We need to do it with a rocket to make sure that we are not only starting it but rolling it out in a way that it can be achieved quickly. When you look at waste more generally now, you see that just in recycling and food waste. I represent Elwood, and Elwood is absolutely at the forefront of these issues. But because of the number of dwellings in the suburb and the suburbs around Port Phillip generally, they have not got capacity for pick-ups to be rolled out in a way that the community can be involved. Why shouldn't they be involved? We want them to be involved. We want to be doing everything when it comes to policy to do that.

That is why we as a coalition, both in this particular policy space in terms of waste and recycling and in the broader environmental area, have led on announcing future plans, plans for four years. We committed to legislating an emissions reduction target of 50 per cent by 2030. That side of the chamber has gone very quiet on that. We will legislate a 50 per cent reduction by 2030. I have not seen Labor say anything about that, except the minister getting out her little Twitter account and tweeting five-year-old quotes, so not responding in substance to the policy matter. It is just drivel. This is a minister of the Crown, and that is just drivel. We need plans for the future, and we need to have ambitious plans, hopeful plans. When it comes to this portfolio space, we have not seen that.

There are a number of other things that we have talked about as a coalition. We have talked about the importance of gas. We have talked about the importance of a local gas guarantee. These are important because you need to ensure that people have a supply of energy. We have seen recently reports on the front page of a major newspaper that we have projected gas shortages, and the minister simply responding, 'Oh well, it's being shipped to New South Wales'—how embarrassing, former minister for environment. How embarrassing to know that the minister is just saying, 'It's not my problem, because it's being shipped interstate'. Why don't you do something about it, Minister? That is why the coalition has committed to legislating a local gas guarantee, to ensure that on new projects there is the capacity for Victorians to have access. This ensures energy security. I mentioned batteries earlier—the same thing. Energy security is so important, and we must put in place policies that plan for the future.

We have also committed to a \$1 billion hydrogen strategy—how very important. I mean, the current hydrogen strategy in Victoria was managed by the minister for environment, but I understand it has been transferred to the Treasurer. I think, without making any deeply personal asides, that probably says quite a bit. My comments earlier about the government needing a rocket under them in this policy space have been absolutely shown by the hydrogen strategy in Victoria, because the responsibility was taken away from the minister—how embarrassing—and given to the Treasurer.

We have also committed to fixing Victoria's grid, and that is fundamental to so much when it comes to energy and a lot of these plans for the future—making sure that that is modern and able to do the things we need it to do to meet the changes and challenges in the ways we need energy and energy is moved in this state.

Finally, something I have been particularly passionate about: we announced recently an increase in Melbourne's tree canopy. I was talking about targets earlier and the electric vehicle target being, frankly, a dud in terms of the government's capacity to get going there. The other one is tree canopy, and the government have been asleep at the wheel when it comes to tree canopy. They committed to a significant increase in trees in part of Melbourne—I think it was 1 million trees—and have currently

delivered 50 000 from memory, the last time I checked with the minister. Seriously, you have got to do more than set targets. You actually need plans for the future, and then you have to follow up on them. Having a target is not enough.

We do not intend to oppose this bill. But when you look at the bill it is shameful to see that the government has taken five years to develop a plan for a policy space where we saw market failure, and in those five years it has released a glossy document that was a 10-year plan that did nothing, a shell bill at the end of last year and now a bill that sets a date for a new bureaucracy. What the government has not done in five years is actually started these things in Victoria, ensured that Victorians when it comes to things like the container deposit scheme can be part of the solution—can be involved. People are desperate to be involved. Sadly these policies are little steps towards that—but they are little steps. Just get up and get going. This minister and the government need a rocket up them. We need to show ambition, and we need a plan for the future, and that is exactly what the coalition will deliver.

Mr STAIKOS (Bentleigh) (13:50): Deputy Speaker, I congratulate you on your election to that post. I have not had an opportunity to congratulate you yet.

It is a pleasure to rise to make a contribution on the Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other Matters) Bill 2022. I have got to say one of the drawbacks of being the first government speaker on a bill is having to sit through 30 minutes of absolute garbage from the low-altitude flyers opposite—because what we just heard is a complete misunderstanding of the bill before us. In fact I would question if the member opposite had even read the bill because he said a number of things—for starters, I think it is important to point out to the member that the bill does not actually establish Recycling Victoria, or as he called it, the ‘new bureaucracy’. We passed that bill last year. I am sure the member for Brighton actually spoke on that legislation, and of course it commenced on 1 July this year. It has been operational for more than a month. As for waste-to-energy schemes, as he called them, well, there is currently a fully operational waste-to-energy facility in Victoria, and we are just placing regulation on what is an emerging technology.

I also think I heard the member for Brighton say words to the effect that we will not be around in 2023 to realise these reforms. Well, the reality is nothing can be taken for granted. But if I were the member for the ultra-marginal seat of Brighton, I would not be too cocky about being around in 2023, because what I would suggest to the member for Brighton is this current interest in the environment is like in the past with the Liberal Party when they have taken a bit of a selfie picking up rubbish on Clean Up Australia Day and that is them doing their bit for the environment, or it is a bit like going out to the CEO Sleepout: ‘Oh, we care about homeless people’. It is just providing lip-service to these important issues—absolute lip-service to the important issues. But what I would say is: it is this government that has taken the strong action when it comes to our environment and when it comes to facilitating a circular economy in this state.

This bill builds on the Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021, which was passed last year. Specifically this bill will deliver a number of things, including introducing a thermal waste-to-energy scheme, which caps the processing of certain types of waste at facilities that process the waste using thermal waste-to-energy processes. It provides for the head of Recycling Victoria to license thermal waste-to-energy facilities in Victoria, and the head of Recycling Victoria cannot issue licences that collectively exceed an annual cap on permitted waste, expressed as 1 million tonnes per financial year.

The bill enables the head of Recycling Victoria to deliver a Victorian recycling infrastructure plan consolidating the existing multiplan framework into a single plan with a 30-year horizon to inform long-term strategic planning and support decision-making. The bill establishes a risk, consequence and contingency framework to ensure risks and consequences are identified and managed and contingency plans are implemented to minimise impacts of serious disruptions to waste, recycling and resource recovery service delivery, as we saw a few years ago in 2019. The bill also requires the head

of Recycling Victoria to prepare an annual market report and provides a function to prepare market strategies.

There are a number of other reforms in the bill, but I note that the member for Brighton referred to the new bureaucracy, Recycling Victoria, and also referred to a glossy brochure. I would submit that *Recycling Victoria: A New Economy* is much more than a glossy brochure because it sets four ambitious targets for improving our state's recycling system, which include, firstly, to divert 80 per cent of waste from landfill by 2030, with an interim target of 72 per cent by 2025. I note that at the beginning of the member for Brighton's contribution he referred to a coalition policy of a 60 per cent target by 2030. Sixty per cent by 2030 on that side, 80 per cent by 2030 on this side—a bit more than a glossy brochure. We also commit in that document to cutting total waste generation by 15 per cent per capita by 2030 and to halving the volume of organic material going to landfill between 2020 and 2030, with an interim target of a 20 per cent reduction by 2025. We are seeing councils take the lead on this already. In the City of Glen Eira, where I live, we have weekly collections of organic materials from people's homes. Of course it was a very challenging transition to begin with, but I can tell you the people of the City of Glen Eira have taken to it like ducks to water, because it is something that is very important and people do recognise the importance of this. Fourthly, we commit to ensuring every Victorian has access to food and garden organic waste recycling services or local composting by 2030.

While I am on the opposition, I did mention earlier a road to Damascus moment on issues of the environment. I think it is not quite a road to Damascus sort of situation, it is more the results of the last federal election. They were a long time coming, because who would ever have thought that all of those bayside seats, those former blue ribbon seats, would end up being held by less than a 1 per cent margin? And we saw the now teal MPs running on matters concerning the environment. I have sat in this chamber for eight years, so I can see through all of the rubbish from those opposite, because I was here, for instance, when they voted against our renewable energy targets. I was here when they gutted the original climate change act; I was here when they did that. But suddenly, here we are. Suddenly, they care about the environment. No, those opposite only care about themselves—and do not ever forget that. The member for Brighton has suddenly become an environmentalist. He is anything but. He is someone who is worried about the former blue ribbon seat of Brighton, and he should be worried, because we have got a fantastic candidate in Brighton, Louise Crawford. We wish her all the very best.

But let us not forget that at the last election those opposite took a policy to the election to build a 500-megawatt coal power station in the Latrobe Valley. This is now, supposedly, the party of tackling climate change. I am kicking myself because I did not bring the transcript with me of that car crash interview on Sky News with their former candidate for Frankston. The reality is only this government can be trusted to ensure that this state does its bit when it comes to tackling climate change; reducing emissions; facilitating a circular economy, which is what we are doing; boosting renewable energy; and meeting our renewable energy targets. Only this government can be trusted to do those things. Those opposite have had too many opportunities, and over the last eight years they have opposed every single effort by this government to protect this state's environment. We will ensure that the people in their ultramarginal seats never forget that, because it is far too late to have this road to Damascus situation.

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

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. On 8 March Jeanne from Melbourne's south came to Parliament to raise the issue about her elective surgery delay. She was here again today. Her details were sent to the minister on 24 June. Jeanne needs a knee replacement. She now cannot walk long distance, mostly relies on a walking frame and is also mostly housebound and totally reliant on her family to help. Four months on, Minister, I ask the government again: why are people like Jeanne still waiting months for vital surgery? Will Jeanne ever get her surgery, the surgery she needs, before she has a serious fall?

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:02): Could I begin by acknowledging Jeanne and the distress that she is obviously experiencing. Living with pain is difficult, but I do want to assure Jeanne and indeed all Victorians that our government is supporting our healthcare workers to get on and deliver planned surgeries, be they category 1, category 2 or category 3. And I make this point also—that every day in our hospitals our healthcare workers, our clinicians and our nurses are making decisions based on the available staff that they have about the surgeries that they can deliver. It is important to point out once again, and I do need to point it out because the opposition seem not to be able to understand, that the pandemic has had a significant impact on workforce, so on any given day we are seeing staff furloughed—and what that means is that our healthcare workers and our clinicians are working hard every day to actively manage the waiting list. Indeed this is an experience that is not exclusive to us here in Victoria; it is being experienced in New South Wales, in Queensland—all around the nation and indeed around the world. Again, I thank the member for raising the question. I can assure him that my department will follow through with Jeanne and understand exactly where she is and make sure that she is being actively managed because that is my expectation of how we are supporting everyone on the waitlist.

I will make a couple of other points. Last week the Premier and I made a very, very important announcement—and that was that we are purchasing the Bellbird Private Hospital and turning it into the Blackburn public surgery clinic, a clinic that will deliver an additional 5700 planned surgeries every year. And that is on top of an announcement made previously—that we will purchase Frankston Private Hospital to deliver an additional 9000 public surgeries every year. We have in place a \$1.5 billion COVID catch-up plan, and we are facing straight into the challenges that our system is experiencing when it comes to our planned surgery waitlist. I was pleased to see that the last quarter data suggested some stabilisation in those numbers. But we will not shy away from the fact that there is more work to do. I understand that at the heart of every decision our government make and all the support that we provide is a patient just like Jeanne, and that is what gets me up to work every day—to deliver the best care for all Victorians.

Mr GUY (Bulleen—Leader of the Opposition) (14:05): I thank the minister for her answer. One of Jeanne's last options to get her vital surgery is to simply abandon all hope of it ever being done in Victoria and get it done in India at a cost of \$25 000. How is it acceptable that Victorians desperate for elective surgery have to consider going overseas because the Andrews government has mismanaged elective surgery and left nearly 100 000 Victorians in pain and on a never-ending waiting list?

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:06): Can I make this point: across our health system we have hardworking clinicians, nurses, allied healthcare workers, cooks and cleaners all working hard every day to provide the care that Victorians need. We have a plan, a COVID catch-up plan—\$1.5 billion to ensure that we can deliver—

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Warrandyte is warned.

Ms THOMAS: planned surgery. Our plan is that we will build back better out of this pandemic. We are recruiting and training an additional 7000 staff. We are investing in hospitals, emergency departments and theatres, and we of course have purchased two private hospitals to turn them into public surgery clinics, which those on the other side oppose.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS: HEALTHCARE WORKERS

Mr ANDREWS (Mulgrave—Premier) (14:07): I am delighted to update the house on the amazing work that our healthcare professionals right across our public system are doing every hour of every shift. These last two years have been a very challenging time, a very difficult time, of course acknowledging as we must that every winter is a difficult time in our health system, but particularly when you have got COVID, RSV, flu and so many staff furloughed unavoidably.

On Sunday I was very pleased to be able to mark, as part of our \$12 billion pandemic repair plan, our comprehensive plan across our health system to deal with the damage that this global pandemic has done. To deal with the damage that COVID has done, we are recruiting 7000 healthcare workers. Fully 5000 of those are nurses and midwives.

Members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS: Yes, not sacking them, recruiting them. That is what we are doing. As part of that we recruit from an international workforce, and I was absolutely delighted, together with the Minister for Health, to welcome Kasuri, a nurse from Dublin; Hei, a nurse from Toronto in Canada; and—

Members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS: I am not sure who would laugh at the recruitment of nurses to a cancer hospital. To those opposite it is a matter of mirth, apparently. Eyal from Israel, Kasuri from Dublin in Ireland and of course Hei from Canada—we welcome them. We are not laughing at them, we are recruiting them. We welcome them because they are the backbone of our health system. They are part of the 680 workers who have come into Victoria's health system in the last 12 months, and there will be hundreds more, those trained here locally and those who travel the world to come and join our health system in our great state.

AMBULANCE SERVICES

Ms KEALY (Lowan) (14:09): My question is to the Minister for Ambulance Services. There have been multiple reports into Victoria's ambulance services and 000 dating back to 2016 with recommendations on how to fix the system. Today Victorians learned that an Ambulance Victoria report states that 18 Victorians have tragically died and, further, more than 350 have suffered cardiac arrest and will suffer long-term health issues as a result of Victoria's ambulance crisis. These people might still be alive today had the government acted on those reports. What is it going to take for the Andrews government to finally do something to stop Victorians dying?

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:10): Obviously I want to express my sympathy and condolences to those who have lost loved ones as a consequence of the global pandemic.

Mr Edbrooke interjected.

The SPEAKER: The member for Frankston is warned.

Ms THOMAS: Our ambulance services, our emergency services and our health services—none of them has been immune from the impact of the pandemic. The pandemic has had a real and significant impact on the capacity to deliver services. That is why the Minister for Emergency Services in the other place commissioned the Ashton review. It is why we have put \$333 million into our paramedic services. It is why we are focused on implementing the outcomes of the Ashton review. Our government has always had the backs of our paramedics, and we always will, because we know how critical they are to delivering the first-class healthcare system that we aim to deliver for all Victorians.

Ms KEALY (Lowan) (14:11): Will the government guarantee that this report will be released before the state election, or will this report join the long list of reports into other fatalities of Victorians hidden by the Andrews government?

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: I did not hear the second part of the question, member for Lowan.

Ms KEALY: Thank you very much, Speaker. Will the government guarantee that this report will be released before the state election, or will this report join the long list of reports into other fatalities of Victorians hidden by the Andrews government?

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:12): I make the point once again that this is a report that is under the purview of the Minister for Emergency Services, and my understanding is that it will be received and considered by that minister. I will make this point, though, also: it is the coroner who will determine the causes of death, and I will leave it to the coroner to make those decisions and not take advice from those on the other side.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS: HEALTH SYSTEM

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:13): I rise to update the house on how the Andrews Labor government is supporting our health system through the unprecedented impact that we are experiencing as a consequence of the COVID global pandemic. Unlike those on the other side, who have always sought to bury the data, this government transparently publishes health performance information every quarter. The latest data confirms that like every health system here in Australia, and indeed around the world, Victoria's health system is managing record demand. There were over 486 000 hospital emergency department presentations in the previous quarter, an increase of 5.1 per cent. This past quarter was also the busiest in Ambulance Victoria's history, the third consecutive quarter to break demand records. Indeed what we have seen is that code 1 call-outs peaked at over 97 000, an increase of 16 per cent from the same time last year.

Amidst this record demand the government is responding with record investments to support our system and all of our healthcare workers. Our \$12 billion pandemic repair plan is on track. We are committed to the long haul of repairing our health system after the undue pressure it has experienced as a consequence of the pandemic. Those on the other side remain in denial of these impacts, which is so frustrating for all of us and indeed for all Victorians. Of course, as already mentioned, with our \$1.5 billion COVID catch-up plan for planned surgery our investment in these private hospitals, making sure that we can deliver public surgeries for public patients, is just a real game changer. Those opposite have made it clear that they do not support public hospitals. They support the privatisation of public hospitals.

HEALTH SYSTEM

Mr GUY (Bulleen—Leader of the Opposition) (14:15): My question is to the Minister for Health. Alan, 65 years old, is under the care of the cardiology, haematology, diabetes, renal hypertension and liver clinics at the Austin Hospital. He has been on a waitlist for eight years for removal of a ganglion and now needs surgery for a shoulder injury and is progressively getting worse. He cannot use his arm to full capacity and requires regular pain relief. Alan has been trying to get an outpatient appointment and is one of tens of thousands of Victorians on the hidden waitlist—waiting for surgery but unable to get that first appointment due to extensive wait times. I ask: why has it got to this? Why are thousands of Victorians on a hidden waitlist, unable to get a first appointment so they can get the vital surgery that they so desperately need?

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:16): Can I express my best wishes for Alan at what is obviously a difficult time—but I would make the point that there are many opportunities that members of this house have to raise issues in relation to their constituents with the government, and indeed I receive much correspondence, including from my colleagues on my side of the house and indeed on the other as well. If the Leader of the Opposition is really serious and really concerned about Alan, if he wants to put patients before politics, then he would be well advised to write to me and give me the details so that I can follow up his situation. But once again I make the point that while our government has a plan to address the planned surgery waitlist, those on the other side have already come out deriding our plan. They do not believe in expanding public surgery, public hospitals and public access. It was all made clear by Ms Crozier in the other place when she somewhat hysterically suggested that this was socialism in action. All we are focused on, if you do not mind, Speaker, is delivering the very best health care for all Victorians.

Mr GUY (Bulleen—Leader of the Opposition) (14:18): I thank the minister for her response. When people like Alan do eventually manage to get a first appointment for an operation, they will then join the nearly 90 000 others waiting for vital surgery. How many more Alans are there in Victoria? How many more Victorians are waiting for vital surgery but cannot even get the first appointment to get them to the elective surgery waiting list, leaving them anxious and in pain?

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:18): I will make the point of course that every day our hardworking clinicians and nurses are making decisions about the planned surgery waitlist, and they are doing that based on patient acuity. These are clinical decisions made every day by clinicians. I would also make the point that we have a plan to deliver even more planned surgeries, but those on the other side just do not want to listen. They do not want to hear about all the work that we are doing to support our healthcare workers deliver the care that patients need and deserve. And frankly our healthcare system is made up of people—nurses, doctors, ambos, clerks, cleaners, cooks, allied healthcare professionals—who have gone above and beyond throughout the pandemic and yet get no recognition, and only get talked down by those on the other side.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS: SUBURBAN RAIL LOOP

Ms ALLAN (Bendigo East—Minister for Transport Infrastructure, Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop, Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery) (14:19): I am delighted to update the house on the terrific progress that is being made on the delivery of the Suburban Rail Loop. Last week I was delighted to join the member for Clarinda at the Monash Children's Hospital to announce that the independent environment effects statement process had given the Suburban Rail Loop east the green light to go ahead. This is a very significant milestone for this project—a project Victorians voted for, a project that will transform the way people move around our city and state, making it faster and easier for people to get to where they want to go for jobs and vital services. And there is almost no better example of this than the Monash Children's Hospital. Now, we have already removed the level crossing on Clayton Road as part of our level crossing removal program, meaning people wanting to get urgent care at the hospital are not stuck on the wrong side of the boom gates. And now we are getting on with delivering the Suburban Rail Loop, making it easier for Victorians to access world-class health care at Monash hospital and also for those who work at Monash hospital to be able to get more easily to the hospital for work.

Speaking of jobs, the construction of the Suburban Rail Loop will support 8000 jobs, and works are already underway. Also beyond our hospitals, it is going to connect to universities—Monash and Deakin—and Box Hill TAFE, slashing travel times to these precincts. I know that many members along the corridor are supportive: members for Box Hill, Burwood, Oakleigh and Clarinda. However, there are some who are not so supportive. Others have backed in some commitments to scrap the Suburban Rail Loop—just last week the member for Sandringham said it was:

... infrastructure that the community didn't ask for.

Those Victorians who voted for this project most certainly did ask for the Suburban Rail Loop, and only the Andrews Labor government will deliver the Suburban Rail Loop.

REGIONAL AND RURAL ROADS

Ms SHEED (Shepparton) (14:21): My question is for the Premier. Many of Victoria's rural and regional roads are in a poor condition. They have suffered significant damage and repairs are desperately needed. Even major highways such the Goulburn Valley Highway and the Hume Freeway between Shepparton and Melbourne have significant areas of road damage, with potholes not usually seen on roads of such national importance. We have seen how successful a major blitz such as the removal of level crossings in Melbourne over the past eight years has been and how welcome that has been for the communities that have benefited. Premier, my question is: if re-elected, would your government commit to a major rural and regional roads repair blitz?

Mr ANDREWS (Mulgrave—Premier) (14:22): I thank the member for Shepparton for her question and for her advocacy—

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: The member for Warrandyte is warned—second warning.

Mr ANDREWS: The member for Shepparton has asked a question, a very important question. The member for Warrandyte would desperately like to answer a question but we have all been spared that for a while, which is very, very good. He might know the youth unemployment rate by now, but in any event if the member for Warrandyte might—

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr ANDREWS: Well, we are well into question time. One wonders why the member for Warrandyte is still here. Normally he would have been ejected by now. The question is important, and if I can get past the member for Warrandyte's inane interjections, I will try and answer it.

Mr R Smith interjected.

The SPEAKER: The member for Warrandyte can leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

Member for Warrandyte withdrew from chamber.

Mr ANDREWS: Small victories. Road funding is very important, and that is why I can say to the member for Shepparton that we have made consistent road funding each year, every year across regional Victoria a priority. And that is exactly what we have delivered.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Eildon is warned.

Mr ANDREWS: To give you an example, \$780 million was invested in the 2022–23 Victorian budget for maintaining road assets in the coming financial year. So those who have lots of views—not the member for Shepparton but others who just make lots of noise—did not do much road work when they had the chance. Go and read the budget before you start offering up your wisdom, your pearls of wisdom, when it comes to road maintenance: \$780 million in the 2022–23 Victorian budget for road maintenance—that is of course in stark contrast to an average of less than \$500 million under the government we were happy to take over from; 1500 kilometres of repair works across the state as part of our seasonal and regional road maintenance blitz in June this year; signage; other maintenance programs; hundreds, indeed thousands, of staff; the Murchison-Tatura Road, to give you one example among many in the local community represented by the member for Shepparton. 1100 maintenance and renewal projects have been delivered on the state's regional roads since September last year. Now, there are many more that I could list and detail. The point that I will make, though, despite—

Members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS: The National Party—so lost now—did not do much when they were in government.

Members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS: Well, I am not so much focused on roads in Ukraine. I am focused on roads right here in Victoria. I fully concede there will be more to do, and we are the government to do it.

Ms SHEED (Shepparton) (14:25): Premier, having committed to the importance of the maintenance and repair of regional roads, will you actively seek a commitment from the new federal Labor government to partner with your government for the building of our major road project in my electorate, the Shepparton bypass?

Mr ANDREWS (Mulgrave—Premier) (14:26): It is a very important project. I was out with the Prime Minister yesterday in the south-eastern suburbs, and it is great to have a Prime Minister who—

Members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS: Well, you know, he has got one ministry and everyone knows who is in it. There is no secret minister for roads. There is a minister for roads and infrastructure, and they are getting on and doing things. And I would say to the member for Shepparton—

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: The member for South-West Coast is warned.

Mr ANDREWS: I would say to the member for Shepparton—she is a passionate advocate for Shepparton—we have delivered the hospital, rail upgrades, road upgrades and the school upgrade there, one of the most amazing educational precincts in our nation. We have done planning. We have done lots of work in partnership with the member for Shepparton on the bypass. I hope that she and I can advocate to the new commonwealth government, a commonwealth government that wants to get things done, for that project and maybe other projects. We are part of that project in the planning work. In fact every dollar that has been spent on that project has come from our government, not pretenders who just lost government in Canberra. Let us work with them to see if we can get things done.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS: ECONOMY

Mr PALLAS (Werribee—Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Trade) (14:27): It gives me great pleasure to update the house on the Andrews Labor government's efforts to grow the Victorian economy and the outstanding success that is our economic track record. Over the year to March, Victoria's state final demand grew by 6 per cent. That is faster than any other state. Unemployment has hit a record low of 3.2 per cent, the lowest in the nation. Since September 2020, the low point of the economic cycle, we have added 350 000 new jobs, easily the most of any state, while employment as a share of population is the highest ever on record. Business confidence is up; consumer confidence is the highest in the nation.

And how did we do this, I hear you ask? By growing the state's economic pie through smart, targeted investments in growth industries, building vital infrastructure that creates jobs now and into the long term and by supporting Victorians to get the skills that they need for the jobs that they want through programs like free TAFE. While the Leader of the Opposition seemed more focused on growing the bank balance of his former chief of staff, this government is growing economic opportunity for all Victorians. We have invested in and supported new and emerging industries, from rock lobster farming off the Victorian coast to our booming tech industries, so you can chow down on your favourite crustaceans while using the latest tech to delete your emails. Unlike others whose approach to improving economic fortunes is confined to their mates, we are doing it for all Victorians. The economic modus operandi of those opposite is rotten to the claw. Only a Labor government has and will continue to deliver jobs and— *(Time expired)*

HEALTH SYSTEM

Ms KEALY (Lowan) (14:29): My question is to the Minister for Health. With over 26 000 Victorians being removed from the public elective surgery waiting list without receiving surgery over the past calendar year, can the minister advise how many of these were removed because tragically they have died?

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:30): As I have already pointed out, our planned surgery lists are actively managed by health services at all times, by clinicians, and indeed what I have been told is that in fact other treatments become available or the condition can resolve itself. There are a range of reasons why people come off our planned surgery list. What is important in relation to this issue of planned surgeries is the work that we are doing to address the issue that has been caused as a direct result of the pandemic. I want to make this point, that at every step of the way throughout the COVID pandemic unfortunately—

Ms Kealy: On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, the question was specific to how many Victorians were removed from the elective surgery waitlist because they had died. It is a simple question. I ask for a straightforward response.

The SPEAKER: The minister was responding—I cannot direct the minister how to respond, but the minister was responding to the question.

Ms THOMAS: Thank you very much, Speaker. Once again, as I have said, there are many reasons why people are removed from the planned surgery waitlist. I make the point that there are a range of things that happen in people's lives which may have absolutely no reference back to their planned surgery needs. So I am not going to engage with that particular question because once again what we have seen from those on the other side is that they are actually not interested in patient outcomes.

Ms Staley: On a point of order, Speaker, the minister just said that she was not going to engage with that question. Those were her exact words. The sessional orders require her to engage with the question and to be direct, factual and succinct in answering it.

Ms Blandthorn: On the point of order, Speaker, the member for Ripon is putting words in the mouth of the minister. The minister said she was not engaging in the politics, not that she was not engaging with the question. She was seeking to be relevant to the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister was being relevant to the question that was asked. I cannot direct the minister how to answer the question.

Ms THOMAS: Thank you very much, Speaker. I welcome the opportunity to clarify that, frankly, I will not engage with the politics of those on the other side that is inherent in all of their questioning on this very issue. I am focused on putting patients at the centre of all that I do. We as a government are working to drive down the planned surgery waitlist. We are increasing the capacity in the system so that we can deliver even more planned surgeries.

What the member on the other side has done here in this question is make a whole range of inferences that have no basis in fact. I will repeat that there are a range of reasons why people may no longer be on the waitlist, and one of the most common ones is that the issue has resolved itself. Our clinicians are actively managing those waitlists every day, and they treat everyone according to their acuity. I might point out that when it comes to category 1 surgeries almost 100 per cent are delivered within the 30 days, which is the clinical guideline for those who are sickest and needing their surgery.

Ms Kealy: On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, this is a very narrow question. How many Victorians have died waiting for elective surgery in Victoria? Why won't the minister answer this question? Why is she hiding information from Victorians?

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for Lowan, a point of order is not an opportunity to re-ask the question. I have already said that the minister is being relevant to the question that was asked.

Ms KEALY (Lowan) (14:35): Can the minister advise how many Victorians over the past year have been forced to go interstate to complete their necessary elective surgery because Victoria's health system is in crisis?

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:35): I will make this point: health systems around our nation are experiencing exactly the same pressures, and I can tell you that my Liberal colleague in New South Wales is sharing the same experiences as we are here in Victoria. We are all working as health ministers together to address the issues and the concerns of our waitlist. We have a plan. We are implementing that plan. We are hiring the workers. We are building the hospitals. We are purchasing additional beds. Only our side of politics, our government, can be trusted to deliver the healthcare services, the healthcare workers and the health infrastructure that Victorians need and deserve.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS: POLITICAL DONATIONS

Mr PEARSON (Essendon—Assistant Treasurer, Minister for Regulatory Reform, Minister for Government Services, Minister for Housing) (14:36): I rise again to remind the house that Victoria's donation laws are the strictest in the nation. The reforms to the Electoral Act 2002 in 2018 made sweeping changes to the way people make and receive political donations in this state. For those in the house that may not know, the Victorian Electoral Commission is responsible for the administration of our donation laws. The Victorian Electoral Commission takes its oversight role incredibly seriously and will be closely monitoring for any desperate attempts to circumvent disclosure and reporting requirements in the lead-up to the state election. On the Victorian Electoral Commission's website there is comprehensive information for both donors and recipients about what is and what is not allowed. It is all there, spelt out in black and white for all to see—every Victorian law and regulation on political donations in simple, clear and concise language.

To be fair, some in this chamber may have difficulty comprehending these simple and clear laws, so let me remind the house what the Andrews Labor government have done. What did we do to foreign donations? We banned them. What did we do to anonymous donations of \$1080 and above? We banned them. Multiple donations from a single donor to a single recipient which add up to the donation cap of \$4320 in four years—we banned those too. As you have heard, the donation rules are very clear, but as the Minister for Government Services I think it is timely to remind the house about these nation-leading reforms.

You cannot change history. Those opposite voted against these reforms, and if they had their way, they would scrap our donation laws altogether. The Leader of the Opposition needs to answer this simple question: since the new laws came into effect in 2018 has anyone employed by the opposition been paid by an undeclared source? When asked the same question last week the member for Malvern answered 'No'. It is a simple yes or no, so why can't the current Leader of the Opposition do the same and answer this very simple question?

Ms Vallence: Speaker, I wish to raise a point of order for a number of adjournment matters that have not been answered within the allocated time: to the Minister for Housing, adjournment 6388 about housing affordability in the Yarra Ranges and the homelessness crisis that was asked on 26 May, 82 days ago; and adjournment matter 6414 to the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events, including sports shooting in the 2026 Commonwealth Games, asked on 8 June 2022, 69 days ago. I would appreciate some answers to those questions for my community.

The SPEAKER: The point of order will be followed through.

Constituency questions

RIPON ELECTORATE

Ms STALEY (Ripon) (14:39): (6466) My question is for the Minister for Health. Will the minister fund the \$75 million rebuild of the Daylesford hospital so my constituents in the Hepburn shire part of Ripon can access improved facilities? The Hepburn community has been agitating for a rebuild of the Daylesford hospital and they have been running a campaign to achieve that. They recently met with the Shadow Minister for Health. But I note that for the Minister for Health this is her electorate, and the people who attend this hospital in Daylesford are from her electorate and from my electorate.

Constituents in both our electorates would no doubt like this hospital done. Given that she is the Minister for Health, surely the Minister for Health can ensure that this project is completed. I am confused, in fact, as to why she has not been able to achieve it so far.

MELTON ELECTORATE

Mr McGHIE (Melton) (14:40): (6467) My constituency question is to the Minister for Mental Health. In June the previous minister announced that the 30 mental health and wellbeing hubs that opened in late 2021 in communities across Victoria will continue to provide care until mental health locals open across the state—until at least June 2023. The hubs were opened in October 2021 to support Victorians through the challenges of the pandemic and have been extraordinarily successful. Mental health and wellbeing hubs can help patients with a range of different issues, including lowered mood, anxiety, substance use or addiction, or any distress the patient may be facing. They are also able to support people to address life stresses such as homelessness, financial difficulties and social isolation. I had a fantastic opportunity to meet the team at the Melton mental health and wellbeing hub, located at Barries Road. Minister, can you please update my community on the delivery of mental health services for the Melton electorate as the Andrews Labor government delivers on the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System?

EUROA ELECTORATE

Ms RYAN (Euroa) (14:41): (6468) My question is to the Minister for Health, and I would like to know whether the new minister will actually acknowledge the vital role community-owned hospitals like both Euroa and Nagambie play in regional communities by creating for them a dedicated funding stream to ensure their ongoing survival. It is nothing short of outrageous that the Andrews government continues to refuse to acknowledge the very important role of these hospitals, which without dedicated state funding will be headed for closure. There are just five of them left across the state now. Two are in my electorate. The rest of them have now closed because the government continues to treat them as private hospitals, despite the fact that they are community owned. I have stood in this place many times over the years and called for dedicated funding for Euroa Health. Time is running out now, and I ask that the new minister look at this issue with a sense of urgency and fresh eyes.

TARNEIT ELECTORATE

Ms CONNOLLY (Tarneit) (14:42): (6469) My question is for the Minister for Energy and Minister for Environment and Climate Action. Like many of us, I have been absolutely gobsmacked by the community's reception to our government's \$250 power saving bonus. Since July just over 1 million Victorians have headed to the Victorian Energy Compare website and gone ahead and checked if switching providers will save them money, and quite often it does. We know it is working. We have found that seven out of 10 users can save money by simply switching energy offers, but here is the great thing: even if you do not switch providers, you can still claim the \$250 power saving bonus, so it is a win-win. This program builds upon the existing power savings program previously available to concession card holders, which has helped almost 400 000 Victorians pay their energy bills. In one week alone my office received over 100 calls from constituents asking how to apply, so my question for the minister is this: how many households in the Tarneit electorate have applied for this fantastic program?

BRIGHTON ELECTORATE

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (14:43): (6470) My constituency question is for the Minister for Planning, and I ask: can the minister advise whether the government intends to reject a recent heritage overlay application from Bayside City Council? For background, Bayside council recently completed a post-war modern residential heritage study. The study recommended the inclusion of certain properties into the heritage overlay, including 49 in Beaumaris, plus a further group of eight as a group listing; seven in Black Rock; 15 in Brighton; seven in Brighton East; four in Cheltenham; one in Hampton; and six in Sandringham. Council considered that report in July, removed almost 30 of the properties and resolved to apply to the minister seeking authorisation to commence the planning

scheme amendment on the remaining recommended properties. The single property recommended for inclusion in Hampton is at 27 Bolton Avenue. This recommendation has caused significant confusion and distress to its owners, as the heritage assessors only visited the property from the street. The recent council decision will have a significant impact, and the home owners are deeply concerned about the substance of the recommendation.

BAYSWATER ELECTORATE

Mr TAYLOR (Bayswater) (14:44): (6471) My constituency question is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. I rise to ask for the latest update on the major upgrade of the McMahons Road and Burwood Highway intersection in Ferntree Gully after the Andrews Labor government committed funds in this year's budget to get the job done. This one is a particularly important project for locals. Consistently I have heard from locals, since I announced that we were getting on with this, how excited they were that it is finally happening after years of empty promises by others and that we have finally ended the talkfest. This project will see this become a fully signalised intersection, making it safer and more efficient for road users and pedestrians as well as improving travel times. The upgrade will also ensure safer turns for motorists into and out of McMahons Road and Clyde Street and a safe crossing for pedestrians and cyclists as they move across Burwood Highway. I was pleased to have received a briefing on this from Major Road Projects Victoria in July to confirm planning is now well underway, but given the importance of this I want to again check in to see if there are any updates I can share with the community. I am stoked to have worked with the community to secure this funding in the budget, which is real investment for real solutions that will ensure locals get home safer and sooner. As your voice in the state government I will continue to get things done and deliver real investment for our community.

PRAHRAN ELECTORATE

Mr HIBBINS (Prahran) (14:45): (6472) My question is for the Minister for Training and Skills, and I ask: can the minister please provide an update on the acquisition of the Prahran TAFE site and the development of a master plan for the site? I was really pleased to hear some time ago that the government planned to acquire the site and develop a master plan. It is a really important step to realising the shared vision of the community, which is for a thriving arts and education precinct on the site. But that was some time ago, and there has been no further information or updates for the community. Prahran is well known to have a really diverse and vibrant creative industries community, and an arts and education precinct could revitalise the campus as well as the surrounding Chapel Street area. The campus tenants and the broader community need to be informed about what is happening next. When will the sale be finalised? What further plans for consultation are there? What is the time frame for the master plan to be developed? The Prahran community are very keen to be informed and to see this community vision realised.

ST ALBANS ELECTORATE

Ms SULEYMAN (St Albans) (14:46): (6473) My question is to the Minister for Early Childhood and Pre-Prep in the other place, and my question is: how will the new \$9 billion Best Start, Best Life program benefit my electorate of St Albans? I know how many working families in St Albans rely on kinder and child care to support and educate their young ones, and we know the value of education in the early stages of life. Childcare fees are really tough, with the average household spending above 20 per cent of their income on these costs. The announcement of universal free kinder built upon the rollout of three-year-old kinder in Victoria, which has been a game changer not only for my electorate but across Victoria, will ensure that all kids get the best start regardless of the postcode that they live in or the suburb. I look forward to the minister's response on this very important matter for my families across St Albans.

NARRACAN ELECTORATE

Mr BLACKWOOD (Narracan) (14:47): (6474) My question is to the Minister for Environment and Climate Action, and I ask: when will the minister finally end the crusade to destroy Victoria's native forest industry, which employs many of my constituents? This week the Supreme Court has partially wound back orders preventing harvesting in the Central Highlands, opening 50 hectares across three sites or around 2 per cent of the VicForests annual harvest area. Surveys following the original injunction have found no evidence of greater glider habitat, proving laws introduced by the Andrews government are not about protecting forests but rather allowing green activists to shut down legal timber operations through the courts system with little or no evidence needed. When will the minister finally admit that she and Labor are intent on destroying jobs to gain Greens preferences?

MOUNT WAVERLEY ELECTORATE

Mr FREGON (Mount Waverley) (14:48): (6475) My constituency question is for the Minister for Early Childhood and Pre-Prep in the other place, and I ask the minister: when will the Pinewood early years hub be open for children and parents in our district of Mount Waverley? Construction has commenced on this fantastic project—I know that; I drive past it all the time. It started this year after the Andrews Labor government committed \$2 million towards a new integrated children's centre in our patch. Pinewood early years hub is set to offer outstanding community services and a garden expansion, including 36 additional places for the state government funded three- and four-year-old kinder. Many of the constituents I have spoken to have expressed their excitement for the Best Start, Best Life program, the benefits it gives to working parents in our community and the financial relief it provides new families who are facing cost-of-living pressures. I look forward to the minister's response.

Bills**ENVIRONMENT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2022***Second reading***Debate resumed.**

Mr WALSH (Murray Plains) (14:49): I rise to join the debate on the Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other Matters) Bill 2022. In starting off my contribution I would like to correct for the record what the member for Bentleigh said in his contribution before we went to question time. It would pay for the member for Bentleigh to actually do his own research when he speaks on bills rather than just take the speaking points that are given to him by the government. He would see, if he went and did his own research, that the Liberal and National parties had embraced a number of the things that are covered in this bill for years before it was actually brought forward by the Andrews government, particularly the waste-to-energy technology. I personally and a number of our shadow ministers—and it goes back to when we were in government—have been on the journey with Australian Paper, which is now called Opal, down at Morwell. It has a facility that has been through all the environment effects statement process now and is starting to progress towards construction. That project is an example of what can be done right across Victoria in how we turn our waste, our red-bin rubbish, into energy, and the small amount of residual waste that comes out of that burning process, which if you look at the European example can actually go into road-making material. It is effectively whole of life; it does not go to landfill, it goes back and is used for something worthwhile. So on the fact that the member for Bentleigh and others are saying the Liberal-National parties have not been part of this debate, we have been part of this and led this debate well before the Andrews government decided to do something about it.

It is a pity that in this legislation there is going to be a cap put on the amount of waste that can go to energy. My assumption is that that cap is there to appease the Greens because the Greens are actually opposed to waste to energy, the whole concept. If you talk to the Greens, they say we should just reduce the waste that goes to landfill, not that we should do something with it. We can never have zero

waste; there has never been zero waste as long as man has walked on this earth. So there will be waste. We need to make sure it is managed appropriately, and having waste to energy takes that waste and turns it into baseload power.

In the case of Opal, the real advantage for Opal of a waste-to-energy plant is not only the electricity that is generated, it is actually also the steam that is generated that can go into their papermaking process—and then they go a step further. Opal has a third stage to this particular plant that they are building where they are going to use the warm water that comes out of this process to grow barramundi. The original concept, before the waste-to-energy plant they designed was halved in size because they could not get enough waste, was they were going to grow 10 000 tonnes a year of barramundi with the warm water coming out of this plant. That has been scaled down, so it is not going to be that large, but the capacity is there in the future to be growing 10 000 tonnes of barramundi out of that facility with the warm water that comes from the waste-to-energy plant. So not only do they get electricity and steam for their papermaking process, they also get the warm water to actually breed barramundi.

For those who have heard me talk about it in this place before, those barramundi are actually bred at Werribee. The facility there at Werribee breeds something like 50 per cent of the fingerlings that go all around the world to farm barramundi. So it is a great story for Victoria, where we have had the technology to breed barramundi developed and those barramundi are being exported, but in this case now there is a partnership formed with MainStream Aquaculture that will see those barramundi fingerlings go to the Latrobe Valley and be turned into fish. The Liberal-National parties have been passionate supporters of waste to energy for a long time, will continue to be that and do not believe there should be a cap on the amount of waste that can go to energy.

One of the things that was driving the Opal project was that if you look at the Hampton Park waste facility in the east that will be full in 2025. If that happens and there is not a facility to take that waste in the east of the state—which the Opal plant would have done—it will mean that all that landfill will have to go across the West Gate Bridge to Ravenhall, and that would see somewhere between 300 and 400 truckloads a day of waste from the eastern suburbs being taken across the bridge to Ravenhall, making that facility fill up even more quickly again. So we want to see more waste to energy, not less waste to energy, and do not want to see a cap on the amount of waste that goes to energy in the future.

There are two other parts I want to talk about in this legislation in my time for the contribution. One is the whole issue of container deposit in Victoria and making sure that our regional businesses actually have the opportunity to be part of a container deposit scheme in Victoria. A number of us have met with the regional waste businesses, and they are very concerned that when this whole process started the Andrews government and particularly the Minister for Energy and Minister for Environment and Climate Action was setting it up in such a way that it was only large multinationals that would be able to tender to be part of the container deposit scheme. You had to have a container deposit contract in Melbourne to qualify to have one in regional Victoria. There have been ongoing discussions—some fruitful, some not—but the regional waste management companies have come together to form a group that wants to make sure they and their communities have the opportunity to be part of a container deposit scheme. Someone in Shepparton, someone in Horsham and someone in Bairnsdale should have the opportunity to be part of that process with their business. You also then have the effect that volunteer groups, whether they be football clubs, netball clubs, scouting groups, guides groups, whatever, can be part of the collection of cans and bottles, which can be put through the system locally rather than having a major multinational take all that money out of those communities and not put any jobs back into them. I would urge the government to make sure that they have a process, as they set up the container deposit program, whereby regional businesses and regional community groups can benefit from that particular project into the future.

The last thing I wanted to touch on is the issue around the waste levy trust. As recently as last week I met with the Loddon Campaspe group of councils in Echuca. Every time I meet with a council or a group of councils one of the things they always raise is the amount of money that is sitting in that trust

account for the waste management levy that is charged. They all say they could do a better job of managing waste in their community if they could get some money out of that fund to actually do what it was originally set up for. When that levy was put in place years ago, it was to assist councils and those that manage waste to reduce waste going to landfill. It has evolved over time, where it is now just a pot of money for the Treasurer to hold onto to prop up the budget. If you look at the situation, the chronic situation, of the budget in Victoria, that money is in a pot to one side that the Treasurer is not letting out and is not letting go back to local government or those that manage waste in this state to do projects to reduce waste to landfill. It is very, very disappointing, and all those councils are very, very angry that they are collecting money from all their ratepayers, which is going into the Consolidated Fund, which is effectively quarantined by the Treasurer and cannot be spent on its original purpose—to reduce waste to landfill—because it props up the bottom line of the budget. If it was all spent, that would mean, technically, Victoria could go into deficit. We would like to see that money utilised for what it is supposed to be used for, and that is for it to go particularly to local government—they are the ones that collect it from their ratepayers—to make sure it does the job it is supposed to.

In the briefing that was given to the Shadow Minister for Environment and Climate Change a commitment was given that the change of that levy fund, with it being used to fund Recycling Victoria, would be within the current spending envelope. I must admit, I and probably most of the councils I meet with are rather cynical about that commitment. They are concerned that this is just a cash grab from ratepayers right across Victoria to put money into the budget by stealth and not return it to the community to reduce waste going to landfill into the future. We need to make sure, as was flagged by the shadow minister, that there is not a cap on waste going to energy and that that money out of the waste levy is used for what it was intended to do, and that is to help councils reduce waste going to landfill.

Ms COUZENS (Geelong) (14:59): Speaker, can I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your new role and being elevated to Speaker. It is certainly great to see you in that new position.

I am really pleased to rise to contribute to the Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other Matters) Bill 2022. I want to begin by firstly acknowledging and thanking the Minister for Environment and Climate Action for her nation-leading work. The work that she has done on this bill and across the climate change and environment portfolio has been exceptional, and I think we all owe her a huge vote of thanks for the work that she has done.

I know my community are very excited about it. They are very excited about this bill in particular because it is about generating jobs—meaningful jobs—that support the importance of addressing climate change and meeting our targets. My community have been very vocal about these issues. They are very concerned about climate change and the impacts of climate change in the Geelong region, so they do welcome this because it ensures we have a reliable recycling system in Victoria by introducing a four-bin system and a container deposit scheme.

Our communities expect us to take action on climate change. Many constituents, particularly children and young people, raise the issue of climate change with me fairly regularly, and I know other members in this place have the same experience—that particularly children and young people are concerned about it. Children are learning about climate change and are wanting not only their parents but our broader community to take action, and I know that this government is certainly doing that. Our communities do expect action on climate change. Many in my community welcome the action taken by the Andrews government, and the Geelong region's population growth is unprecedented at the moment. The City of Greater Geelong's population forecast for 2022 is almost 275 000 people. This is forecast to grow to around 400 000 people by 2041, so there are concerns about the impact of climate change. The community knows that our waste and recycling system plays a vital role in the functionality and livability of our cities and regions such as Geelong. It has been wonderful to see the election of a Labor federal government, who have taken climate change very seriously and are making enormous moves in addressing the impacts of climate change.

I have to say it has been interesting listening to the opposition and their take on this. I do not know whether they have suddenly decided to read the room or not, but they certainly have not supported addressing climate change in this place during my eight years here. This is the first I have heard from them that they have suddenly found that climate change is an important issue in our community. It was not that long ago that the Leader of the Opposition was in Geelong saying that the government had no role to play in addressing climate change and that it was up to the private sector to take that action. So it is very interesting, the sudden change now, and as I said, maybe they are reading the room and what is happening throughout the state of Victoria.

We do know that Victorians want action on climate change. They welcome our government leading the way on addressing climate change and ensuring that we protect the environment now and for the future, and that is what many families are looking at now. As I mentioned earlier, children and young people, their parents—everybody is concerned about climate change and really concerned that what we do will impact the future between now and when their children are older and become adults.

This bill is a once-in-a-generation reform of Victoria's waste and recycling sector and supports a transition to a circular economy. The bill delivers additional reforms to the Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021 as well as the Sustainability Victoria Act 2005 and the Environment Protection Act 2017 to support our state's transition to a circular economy. We have invested an unprecedented \$515 million to deliver this transition, which will support the creation of more than 3900 jobs, deliver on our climate change targets and ensure Victorians have a recycling system they can rely on. Most of us are aware of the failure of the recycling system back in 2018, I think it was, and the impact that had on our communities. I know it certainly impacted Geelong. People were horrified to find out we were sending our recycling over to China, that we were not actually addressing the issues as we are now through this bill and many other different areas of addressing climate change and protecting our environment.

This bill specifically deals with a waste-to-energy scheme, which is really important, and I know that there is a lot of excitement about this. I know the member for Lara, who is in the chamber now, and I have had lots of discussions with our community about this. Geelong Sustainability have been very active in talking about this. So we are really pleased that the waste-to-energy scheme is part of this bill.

The Victorian recycling infrastructure plan is another really important aspect to this bill. In my community—and I am sure right across this state—people are concerned about recycling, and I think the opportunities that we now have going forward with the recycling plan are really, really important. People are excited about what that will bring—not only the opportunities for protecting our environment but certainly some of the fundraising efforts that may come out of that. I know that lots in our community are now looking at that as an important way of moving forward to deal with our recycling. We talk about other states around this country which already have those plans implemented, but I think what we have done is looked at all of those and come up with the best possible model, which is why it has taken a bit of time. But I know in my community people have expressed their support for us taking our time and doing things properly, and that has been a really important focus.

The risk, consequence and contingency framework forms part of this bill, and the framework is to ensure risk and consequences are identified and managed and contingency plans are implemented to minimise the impacts of serious disruptions to waste, recycling and resource recovery service delivery. The bill also requires the head of Recycling Victoria to prepare an annual market report and provides a function to prepare market strategies. For compliance and enforcement, which are additional tools outlined in the bill, it provides for a new compliance tool on application by RV where courts may make monetary benefit orders to get illegal profits from non-compliance with waste and recycling laws. There are information-sharing reforms. The bill also amends the Sustainability Victoria Act 2005 and the Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021 to provide Sustainability Victoria with a new information-sharing regime, including to carry out its functions and to support its continuing close work with Recycling Victoria, Environment Protection Authority Victoria and local councils.

The bill will make amendments to the Environment Protection Act 2017 to improve its efficiency, including amendments to further equip the EPA and local government with powers to effectively undertake their regulatory functions under the Environment Protection Act 2017, such as enabling the EPA and councils to appoint third parties as authorised officers and amendments to mitigate the risks of liquidators avoiding clean-up costs. We know all about that. I am sure the member for Lara knows all about that and some of the work that had to be done.

This bill is really important. It is really important to my community of Geelong and certainly to all cities and regions across Victoria. It is a piece of work that I think this government should be very proud of. I know the opposition have got their point of view, but certainly that is new in coming; they have not really supported addressing climate change and recycling in this place in the past. I commend this bill to the house.

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) (15:09): The previous member just mentioned the fact that it has taken us a while to get to the point of having some action on the environment and climate change. Can I remind the government that back in 2018, five years ago, when we found out that we had a major, major problem with recycling materials, with waste, our first policy in this term was a container deposit scheme and a waste-to-energy program. That is what we did. That was the first thing that we did. And what did the government do? They did not come on board; they commissioned a report, a study. At that particular time we knew that there was an absolute problem in terms of collecting waste.

Mr Newbury: The market collapsed.

Mr SOUTHWICK: We saw, as the member for Brighton, our Shadow Minister for Environment and Climate Change, quite correctly pointed out, our market collapse. We had China refusing to take our waste. The fact is that we were exporting our waste to China because we could not manage it locally. The government, rather than responding with some real action on this, turned around and said, ‘You know what? We’ll kick it down the road. We’ll do a report. We won’t look at waste to energy; we’ll actually rule waste to energy out. We won’t bring a container deposit scheme on board. We’ll just leave it to the devices of councils, and we’ll do a review’.

Well, where are we now? Five years later we have more questions about when this is going to start, why it has taken so long and why there is a cap on a waste-to-energy program—more questions than answers—and we still do not have a start date of when we can actually tackle the problem that we have. Our landfills are full. Councils do not know what to do with it because the government is not giving them any answers. The only thing councils are now doing is providing more bins. Well, we are going to have more bins than we are going to have the ability to use because there is no ability to handle the recycling program properly, because the government have done nothing. They have sat on their hands.

You see other programs around the world that are working. In Victoria they are failing. I can recall as a boy going to the footy with my father and collecting the cans at Moorabbin through the scouts. There would be a collection point, you would get a couple of cents a can, you would make a few dollars and the aluminium cans would be recycled—a great program. Fast forward I do not know how many years later—I do not want to actually disclose, but a number of years later—and we have gone backwards. It is back to the future. I mean, seriously, the government have had so long to do something about it, and they have done nothing.

Now we are talking about the possibility of a container deposit scheme but have not worked out when, how or why. Seriously, how can this government be taken seriously when they have spent so much time talking about it and not acting? We know from our side the Liberal-Nationals are about empowering people to make decisions, empowering people to take action and putting targets in place like our 2030 climate change target of a 50 per cent reduction—real targets, legislated targets, so people can actually take action. We can empower people to take action with things like a container deposit scheme. What if the government, rather than having another review or another report, actually

said, 'Let's get it up and running, and let's empower scouts, others, the community, kids and schools to get the recycling program up and running'? Let us do it.

As for a waste-to-energy program, we have an energy shortage here in Victoria. The costs are skyrocketing. We have never seen energy prices so high, and yet the government turns around and says, 'Well, we're going to cap waste to energy. We're going to put a cap on it'. Why cap it if there is an opportunity to turn waste into energy, to reduce prices and to recycle so we do not end up with landfill that is overflowing and so we do not export overseas? Imagine the environmental cost of putting waste on a ship and sending it halfway around the world and what the cost of that would be. I mean, this is ridiculous. Seriously, we should be able to come up with better solutions to do this.

We talk a lot in this Parliament about innovation. Well, the government would not know innovation if they fell over it. This is a really good opportunity to embrace it, to get the private sector to come out with real solutions and to be able to say to them, 'You know what? If you can come up with waste to energy, go for it'. I had a meeting years ago with Australian Paper, big energy users—huge energy users—in the valley. A lot of the energy from the coal-fired power stations gets diverted into powering up for paper that we all use every day. They had a waste-to-energy program that they wanted the government to invest in years ago. Now, if the government had taken that up and taken up a lot of the cost of doing that—if the government had listened years ago—you could have diverted a lot of that power, you could have actually closed some of those power stations earlier and you could have had less impact on the environment. The government talk about this stuff; they do not do it. There was a plan there; the government could have been working with a big energy user and been able to divert some of that power. At the very least it could have lowered energy bills as well as reducing the impact on the environment from climate change.

These are real solutions. These are things that need to be done now. We cannot talk about it, we cannot keep saying we need another review, we cannot keep sending it to another committee for another report. That is just wasting time. When we go around—the member for Brighton and I share bordering electorates—and we talk to a number of residents every day, we talk to a number of locals every day, they ask, 'What are you going to do today, tomorrow, next week on climate change?'. It is no use having fluffy discussions about things without doing stuff now.

Our tree canopy program is about 2 million trees. It is \$20 million for 2 million trees. It is, again, to tackle climate change by planting them, getting young people planting them in many of our suburbs, to ensure we offset the carbon. That is a real solution. It is about our renewable program of solar but also batteries to give people choice. Solar for renters as well—I was talking to a number of people in rental properties at the weekend. They would love to get into solar, but they cannot because there is no ability to do that. Again, we do not want to lock people out. We want to give people choice, and that is what the Liberals are about—giving people choice. It is about a hydrogen program to look at alternative fuels. Again, green solutions—these are all green solutions. It is about investing in the research but also investing in the infrastructure. Both things are needed to be able to get it done, both things are needed to ensure that Victoria is a leader in this space and both things are needed to reduce emissions, lower costs and lower energy bills.

Over the last few days the *Herald Sun* has been and for the next week will be running full reports on the cost of living, each and every day, for families that are impacted. They cannot afford their energy bills. We saw a story just today about houses that are not insulated properly. People are shivering. People are having to wear jumpers, blankets—whatever they can—just to keep warm. They cannot afford to heat their homes and they cannot afford to insulate their homes, and the government are doing nothing. Again, another talkfest—we have got to be able to fix it. We have got to be able to support all Victorians, not pick and choose who we support. We have got to ensure that the vulnerable can insulate, can heat their homes, can put food on the table. The government is doing none of that.

Here is a great example of a government that is now legislating something that should have been done years ago. It has no targets, with no start date, with no workings. Let us roll out who is going to do

some of this stuff. What industry have they been talking to? Where are they? Where is the start date? What plants? What is going to be done on the waste program? Where is the energy going to go? What is it going to be offset against? Who is going to do the container deposit scheme? How is it set up?

If you look at councils at the moment that are sluggish costs, that are sluggish money, effectively none of them are being supported in terms of what they are doing. What is the government doing to support those councils to ensure there is a solution for that waste? I have been to many of the landfills. I have been out to Werribee and to some of the parts where we have our landfills, which are full—chockers—at the moment. There is no plan to divert that. There is no ability to work with many of the providers, and some of those, like Cleanaway and others, have offered up solutions when it comes to waste-to-energy programs as well. There are people there at the moment offering real solutions—private sector, councils. Ballarat and the west put a group together looking at waste to energy. There have been people talking about this for years. For five years now we have been talking about it, and for five years the Andrews Labor government have done nothing about it. If the Andrews Labor government were serious about the environment and climate change, they would have done something by now, not waited five years. Five years is a talkfest. Five years is too long, and five years is far too long for people in terms of dealing with energy costs, solutions on climate change and tackling the real problems. This has been nothing but a talkfest, and unfortunately it is too little, too late when it comes to waste, energy solutions and tackling issues around the environment.

Mr MAAS (Narre Warren South) (15:19): It gives me great pleasure to rise to make a contribution today to the debate on the Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other Matters) Bill 2022. We are making a suite of changes to the act in the bill, and this is one among many which are really great for the state. What we are seeing is a suite of legislation which has been passed, all of this working towards our waste and recycling, to be able to lower our emissions and to be able to reduce carbon in the economy. The bill delivers additional reforms to the Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021 as well as the Sustainability Victoria Act 2005 and the Environment Protection Act 2017 to support our state's transition to a circular economy. There has been investment in particular targeted areas. There has been some \$515 million to deliver the transition, and this will support the creation of some 3900 jobs, and that delivers on our climate change targets and ensures Victorians have a recycling system that they can rely upon as well.

There are key elements to the bill that I would like to speak to, and the first part of that is the waste-to-energy scheme. The bill introduces a thermal waste-to-energy scheme that caps the processing of certain types of permitted waste at facilities that process the waste using thermal waste-to-energy processes, and that is key. Part of this is to ensure that there is a cap, because it is about creating a balance, and we do not want to be like other jurisdictions around the world where they now have to keep importing waste from other countries to have those waste-to-fuel energy plants. So having that cap is really important, and this bill provides for that. It provides for the head of the recently formed Recycling Victoria to license thermal waste-to-energy facilities in Victoria, and the head of Recycling Victoria cannot just issue licences that collectively exceed an annual cap on permitted waste—and that is being expressed as 1 million tonnes per financial year.

Another key element of the bill is that it enables the head of Recycling Victoria to deliver a Victorian recycling infrastructure plan consolidating the existing multiplan framework into a single plan, and it does that across a 30-year horizon to inform long-term strategic planning and support decision-making as well. These are multimillion-dollar plants, and the contracts need to be done over that sort of time horizon. The great thing to look forward to is that we will be able to recycle much more than we are recycling today.

The third element is in terms of a risk, consequence and contingency framework. The bill establishes this to ensure the risks and consequences are identified and managed and that contingency plans are implemented to minimise impacts of serious disruptions to waste recycling and resource recovery service delivery.

There is a compliance and enforcement element to the bill providing for a new compliance tool on application by Recycling Victoria where courts may make monetary benefit orders to get the illegal profits made from non-compliance with the waste and recycling laws. There are also information-sharing reforms, amending the Sustainability Victoria Act and the circular economy act to provide Sustainability Victoria with a new information-sharing regime, including to carry out its functions and to support its continuing close work with Recycling Victoria, Environment Protection Authority Victoria and local councils as well. The bill, finally, makes amendments to the Environment Protection Act to improve efficacy, including amendments to further equip the EPA and local government with powers to effectively undertake their regulatory functions under the Environment Protection Act 2017, enabling the EPA and councils to appoint third parties as authorised officers and amendments to mitigate the risk of liquidators avoiding clean-up costs. So we are looking towards a new economy. *Recycling Victoria: A New Economy* is a 10-year plan to address the urgent challenges in the recycling sector and make fundamental changes to prevent those issues from occurring. Under the policy, the government has committed to overhauling our household recycling services—the much-talked-about four-bin system which is being introduced and a container deposit scheme as well to improve the value captured from the materials that we recycle.

The government has also committed to the establishment of a new government body, Recycling Victoria, which as I have already mentioned began on 1 July this year. The *Recycling Victoria: A New Economy* plan sets four ambitious targets for improving our state's recycling system. They are to divert 80 per cent of waste from landfill by 2030, with the target of 72 per cent by 2025; to cut total waste generation by 15 per cent per capita by 2030; to halve the volume of organic material going into landfill between 2020 and 2030, and that is with an interim target of a 20 per cent reduction by 2025; and also to ensure every Victorian household has access to food and garden organic waste recycling services or local composting by 2030. The plan also includes a commitment to address plastics pollution. In February 2021 the government announced a ban on specific single-use plastics as a show of our commitment as well.

Recycling of course is one of the primary ways most Victorians engage with sustainability policy. Everyone puts things in the bin, and when people put things in the recycling bin they want to do so having that confidence and just knowing that those materials will actually be re-used and repurposed as well. We know that an industry as large as the waste and recycling industry requires strong regulation, and up until 1 July this year there had not been one central body responsible for this regulation. Our government changed that by creating Recycling Victoria, a body responsible for overseeing and providing strategic leadership for the sector. The bill includes important reforms that will allow Recycling Victoria to provide that leadership and that guidance that is needed, and they will have the powers to oversee and anticipate, as well as mitigate, the risks to that as well.

In conclusion, the government remains committed to pursuing an ambitious waste and recycling agenda. The bill represents the continuation of the government's major transformational reform of the waste and recycling sector, built on community expectations as well as community and industry consultation over many, many years. The reforms deliver a further milestone in Victoria's transition to a circular economy and, given the scale of the reforms and the adjustments required by all participants in that transition, it is appropriate to keep building the functions and capabilities of the newly formed Recycling Victoria over time. The government will continue working alongside the community and all stakeholders as these reforms progress. It is a good bill, its timing is perfect and I commend the bill to the house.

Ms RYAN (Euroa) (15:29): I welcome the opportunity to contribute today to the Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other Matters) Bill 2022. May I, at the outset, Deputy Speaker, congratulate you on your elevation to your role. It is the first opportunity that I have had, and it is great to see two women in the chair as Speaker and Deputy Speaker. Please accept my congratulations on that.

The main provisions of this bill, as other people have outlined, are to establish Victoria's thermal waste-to-energy scheme and to put in place a statewide infrastructure planning framework around waste-to-energy and also a new risk, consequence and contingency planning framework. I understand that this in part arises out of a policy from the government in February 2020 which dealt with recycling.

I firstly want to make the point, as I think other speakers on our side of the house have done, that the Liberals and The Nationals really have led the way in this space in recent years. I do think that leadership from the government is well overdue. There were the issues of course around the collapse of SKM and the fact that Victorians discovered—I do think 'discovered' is the right word because I think many of us did not realise—that our waste was being shipped offshore to China to become their problem to deal with. But all of those issues happened some five years ago now, so Victorians have been waiting a long time for some leadership and some action in the energy-from-waste and the circular economy space.

We have championed the development of policy in this area. The Nationals, both at a state and a federal level, have been quite vocal in this space, particularly around the Opal plant in Gippsland at Maryvale, as the Leader of The Nationals referred to. The development of an energy-from-waste facility down there is something to really be applauded and supported. I know that Darren Chester, as the federal member for Gippsland, secured more than \$48 million to be invested in that facility to see it get off the ground. That proposal will see up to 325 000 tonnes of non-recyclable waste diverted from landfill to generate electricity. And it is not just electricity, it is baseload power as well, which we know is of critical importance as we transition to a greener mix of energy sources. It will also reduce greenhouse gas emissions by more than 270 000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent each year, so it is a very significant project and one that I would love to see the Victorian government strongly support.

But at a state level we have also very much been leading the way in this space, as the Shadow Minister for Environment and Climate Change said in his earlier contribution. Of course we did adopt the need for a container deposit scheme in Victoria ahead of the government, but we also did significant policy work in the energy-from-waste space, releasing our policy on zero waste to landfill by 2035 in 2020—some two years ahead of the legislation which is before us today. That policy, if we have the very good fortune of being elected in November and have the opportunity to implement it, will not just deliver baseload energy but ensure that we are responsible with our waste. I think that is incredibly important. As good global citizens we do need to find new ways of dealing with the products that we utilise and consume on a daily basis as a state. I do not think it is good enough for us to be simply shipping that offshore for another country to deal with. That highlights the problem of when perhaps relationships between countries deteriorate or export markets fall over. We are then left with a very, very significant problem. But that is our problem to address and a problem that we should, from the outset, be seeking to ameliorate rather than simply shoving it off for another nation to deal with.

Under the policy that we announced back in 2020, which a lot of good thinking went into, we would have seen a 100 per cent reduction of household waste going to landfill by 2035—incredibly significant. We would be investing \$120 million to establish a recycling futures stream and an energy-from-waste stream out of the Sustainability Fund, and we would be committing state government departments to working with industry to expedite approvals to get our waste management back on track. I just quickly want to touch on that issue around a recycling futures stream because I think there is a huge amount of work to be done in this space. There are a lot of innovative, very clever brains who have been working on things like crushing glass for road base and finding ways to actually recycle products to help deliver the things that we need on a day-to-day basis. But they do need support, and they do in many cases simply need the government to accept and use their ideas. Sometimes they are not seeking money; they are just seeking support from the government.

I know from previously working in the roads space that we have a very, very high level of conservatism within our roads bureaucracy. That sometimes means we are not as innovative or as adaptable as we could be, and I think this is one space where we should be actually seeking to marry together these two policy objectives of better roads whilst also dealing with a waste product. I also particularly want

to pay tribute to my colleague in the upper house Melina Bath for her work on the Environment and Planning Committee, and in particular a minority report that she did, through the renewable energy inquiry it did in the other place back in 2020, which really canvassed a lot of these issues and also reaffirmed our commitment to attain net zero emissions by 2050, and of course the shadow minister, who continues to do a power of work in this space also, the member for Brighton.

But a conversation in this space is not really complete without also touching on the fact that we do need more than just rhetoric from the government. I want to particularly reflect on a number of the cuts to climate change outputs that were made in this year's budget. Unfortunately we saw hundreds of millions of dollars slashed out of the environment and climate change portfolio, and particularly efforts around solar, in this year's budget. I have raised this in the house before. There was a 16 per cent reduction in funding for the climate change output in this year's budget, and a 36.5 per cent reduction to Solar Victoria's budget. They are very significant cuts. So I think we need to see more from the government than rhetoric and lovely words in this space. We actually need to see that backed up by tangible action.

In summary, we do need to see more support for those very innovative projects like at Opal, and with the policy commitments that we are taking to Victorians at this year's state election we will see that. We will see these very innovative ideas driven forward if the Liberals and The Nationals are given the good fortune of governing after this year's election. I think that is what Victorians are asking for. As I said earlier, many Victorians were horrified to discover that we were simply exporting our problems internationally. They are asking for strong leadership in this space and they want to see us as a state being responsible. The reality is that the collapse of SKM Recycling put huge pressure back on councils, and that put huge pressure back on ratepayers. It is the responsibility of the state to provide good and sound leadership in this space to ensure that such crises do not occur again and to ensure that we are providing not just good leadership for the state but good global leadership to ensure that as we go forward we are dealing with the issues that we are creating through our own consumerism as opposed to expecting other countries to deal with those problems.

We will not be opposing this legislation. We do have some concerns with it, which we will canvass more fully in the upper house. I am hopeful that we will have an opportunity after this year's state election to implement what I think is a very sound and well thought through policy agenda in this space.

Ms CRUGNALE (Bass) (15:39): I rise to speak to the Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other Matters) Bill 2022. I will firstly respond to the member for Caulfield and put on the record that we have announced the biggest household energy package in the country's history, helping 250 000 low-income households replace old gas, electric and wood heaters with highly efficient, reverse-cycle split systems; upgrading 35 000 social housing properties; and expanding the Victorian energy upgrades program. We are also helping to make sure people can meet the increased power costs brought about by international conflicts and outages across the country with our \$250 power saving bonus. We have set ambitious renewable energy targets of 50 per cent renewables by 2030 and 40 per cent by 2025, and we have already smashed our first target of 25 per cent by 2020, with more than 32 per cent of power coming from renewables last year. The Clean Energy Council's *Clean Energy at Work* report shows that Victoria has created more jobs in renewables than any other state, and with some massive offshore wind stuff happening off Bass Coast and South Gippsland that is only going to get better.

Back to the circular economy—well, it is all part of the circular economy—this bill, which forms a central part of the Andrews Labor government's once-in-a-generation reform of our waste and recycling system, ought to make it effective, accountable and consistent, and consistent with our community's expectations. This bill delivers additional reforms to the act, and it also provides Recycling Victoria with additional powers and functions. It reforms the Environment Protection Act 2017 to allow Recycling Victoria to be funded from the waste levy, and it also reforms the Sustainability Victoria Act 2005, all to support our state's transition to a circular economy. To deliver this transition our government has invested \$515 million, which supports more than 3900 jobs,

delivers of course on our climate change targets and makes sure that we Victorians have a recycling system that we can rely on.

If we go back, just for a bit of context, to 2019, we had terrible waste and recycling services. We had disruptions in those waste and recycling services. We saw the collapse of SKM Recycling, which left 33 councils without kerbside recycling services, leaving many with no choice but to send recyclable material to landfill. This coincided with the announcement of China's National Sword policy, which banned the import of most plastics and other materials for recycling. These disruptions and also changes in global markets exposed our waste and recycling system and exposed the effects on the ground in our local recycling service delivery. They also really highlighted that the waste and recycling industry, as large as it is, required strong regulation, and so forward we walked. At the time, our government provided a \$6.6 million relief package to assist councils impacted by these disruptions and worked in partnership with them as well as industry and the wider public to develop a policy which would address the issues in our waste and recycling sector.

We also saw a lack of consistency across the state's recycling system. Each council has a different bin system with different standards as to what can be placed in each bin, and as a government we lacked the power to direct councils when it came to these services. Following public consultation back in February 2020 our government released *Recycling Victoria: A New Economy*, our 10-year circular economy policy. We also committed to the establishment of a new government body, Recycling Victoria, which began operating just on 1 July this year. It is responsible for overseeing and providing that strategic leadership for the sector. This bill requires this new entity to prepare a single 30-year Victorian recycling infrastructure plan—and we love plans. Under this policy our government committed to overhauling our household recycling services, introducing that four-bin system where everyone has got the same-coloured lids and a container deposit scheme to improve the value captured from the materials we recycle. In all that, too, there are targets, and we also love targets—and ambitious ones at that. We have got four of them. The first one is to divert 80 per cent of waste from landfill by 2030, and there is an interim target as well of 72 per cent by 2025; to cut total waste generation by 15 per cent per capita by 2030; to halve the volume of organic material going to landfill—that is great—between 2020 and 2030; and to ensure that every Victorian has access to food and garden organic waste recycling services or local composting by 2030. We all put something in the bin, and when we put something in the recycling bin we want to have that confidence and assurance that it is going to be re-used and repurposed. Waste less, recycle more—and waste to landfill we know is a waste. Back in my council days—it feels like a lifetime ago and last century, but it was only 2016—I was very proud to be part of a council where we introduced as part of our waste management the food organics and garden organics bin, and we were the 12th local government area in the state to do that at the time. Since its introduction it has diverted 78 per cent of waste or more from landfill. Grantville, in the electorate of Bass also, is where the cells are—and they are not cheap. But it means less methane, reducing greenhouse gas emissions; it means the cells that are there last longer, which is good for economics; and it means the organics go up to the soil and organic recycling facility in Dutson Downs in Sale to be turned into compost and nutrients that go back into the land to improve agricultural and horticultural productivity, which is great. We are very happy about our organics, and it is great to see now Cardinia shire and Casey have introduced it as well, so it is a win-win circular economy. What is really interesting though is it has certainly confused a lot of holiday home owners that come down to the Bass Coast. It has taken a little while for everyone. They have a different bin system in the city or wherever else they live, and when they come down on holidays, you know, the recycling only gets picked up every fortnight and the green bin of course every week with the organics, so there was a bit of education that council had to do at the time. I think underlying it, it was like: 'We really value our environment in the Bass Coast, and we want everyone visiting to do the same'.

I just want to talk about glass bins, because also having a separate bin for glass actually vastly improves what we can do with the glass. We do not want to get it contaminated with other recyclables in the bin, because it breaks and becomes embedded in plastic and paper, making them harder to recycle and of a lower value. You would be interested to know on *Back Roads* just the other day on the ABC with

Heather Ewart she was on French Island, which is in the electorate of Hastings. It was great to see the community there. They have been living sustainably for years and years and off the grid, and they have banded together and got a community glass crusher instead of putting all their glass onto the barge to take over to the mainland. It becomes sand, and that does not cut you when you run your fingers through it, and it is used for building materials, driveways et cetera.

This scheme will definitely positively impact the types and volumes of waste that we put into our kerbside bins. We are constantly working with industry to promote investment and innovation when it comes to recycling, and this bill reflects those efforts. By 2030, as I said, all across Victoria no matter where they live, every household will have access to the four separate waste stream services: food and organics, glass, commingled recycling and residual waste. And you know what? Four bins is not that much. I was in Italy in 2018 in a little village—800 people. Over 14 days you would be putting bins out on 13 of those days—small bins, because you cannot have big trucks in those village streets—and everyone has got a handle on what to do. Italy actually had a national strategy for organics, given the Mediterranean and the risk of drought, which we are seeing now. So I call on our new federal government to also look at a national strategy around organics. Anyway, I will not go on about Italy. But for most households—

A member interjected.

Ms CRUGNALE: Do you want me to go on about Italy for a bit longer? Well, I have only got 38 seconds. But they had in the village of Alfedena in Abruzzo these ecological islands, so if you missed your bin day—which could happen for someone that was not across all the different systems—you could go to two stations in the village, and you had your organics, your glass, your metals and plastics and the other bins. So there is a lot we can do in this space. I think we need a national strategy.

This is an amazing bill. I am literally going to run out of time, but I want to thank the Minister for Environment and Climate Action and the department and all her team for the amazing amount of work that has gone into this bill. I commend it.

Dr READ (Brunswick) (15:49): I would have liked to have heard more from the member for Bass Coast about the Abruzzese waste management system. But here in Victoria our landfills are filling up. Every year our households and businesses generate millions of tonnes of waste, and truckload by truckload our landfills get closer to full. This is not an easy problem to solve. It involves major changes to the way we produce, consume and recycle products—in other words, a shift to a circular economy. A circular economy involves materials moving in a circle, from producers to consumers and back, in cycles of re-use and recycling. But waste companies have somehow slipped a very linear solution into the conversation: burn our rubbish, generate a little bit of energy, release toxic pollution into the atmosphere and bury the toxic waste left over in a hole in the ground. Labor have also slipped this very linear solution into their circular economy bill by making a large section of this bill about incineration.

Incinerators, or ‘thermal waste-to-energy projects’, as they are more politely called, claim to be an easy solution to our overflowing landfills. But is setting fire to our problems the best way to solve them? Incinerators undermine the circular economy—and not just by burning materials instead of re-using them. Large incinerators are so damn expensive to build that they need a dedicated waste supply for decades to come. We have seen this in the advanced waste proposal from the south-eastern councils, which brought together councils to contract a new advanced facility for their waste, very likely involving incineration. In order to be economically viable the project wanted councils to commit to guaranteeing a steady supply of rubbish for 25 years. I would like to think that we will be better at recycling in 25 years, in 2047, but when councils sign up to major waste-to-energy projects they need their residents to be putting just as much waste into their red-lid bins in 2047 as they do in 2022. They lose all incentive to get better at recycling. Many councils have pulled out of the advanced waste proposal, but the Labor government is yet to pull out of establishing an incineration sector. The Labor

government knows that incineration can cannibalise recycling—in fact the then Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change said so in her second-reading speech, that there is:

... clear evidence in parts of Europe that over-commitment of waste into thermal waste-to-energy facilities has undermined efforts to recycle materials.

The minister recognises the problem, and this bill attempts to address it by putting a cap on how much incinerators can burn in any one year. And then the bill undermines itself by setting the cap too high at 1 million tonnes and then exempting projects which could burn a further 600 000 tonnes. This bill could see 1.6 million tonnes of rubbish burnt in Victoria every year. Let us put that in perspective: that is more than all of the landfill waste collected from all of the household wheelie bins in Victoria in a year. And while incineration projects would also burn non-residential waste when they can get it, this cap could see all of our household waste burnt. It could see incinerator projects competing with each other to access our waste, pressuring governments to not reduce waste by getting better at recycling.

What could 2047 look like without major incineration projects? We should have food-waste collection across the state operational long before then, roughly halving how much we put in our landfill bins. Maybe by 2047 truly compostable packaging will be a common thing. Maybe we will have banned more single-use plastic, so things like disposable coffee cups and all those plastic trays and plastic wrap on our fruit and veg will not be in our bins in the first place. Maybe we will have finally got soft-plastics recycling sorted so that the bags and packaging currently in our landfill bins will have moved across to the recycling bin. Maybe the textile industry will be better regulated so we do not buy cheap clothes which are badly made by badly paid workers and end up in the bin because they fall apart. Maybe the clothing that does fall apart will be recycled into padding for furniture and insulation. Maybe we will have got smarter in how we do packaging so it is no longer a plastic packet inside a plastic packet padded with polystyrene inside a box. The Greens believe we can do this and a hell of a lot sooner than 2047. But why would you when you have got a contractual obligation to make sure we generate enough rubbish to burn? Besides undermining the circular economy, incinerator proposals usually face major campaigns from the local community. Who wants to live next to a source of toxic air pollution? In parts of Europe incinerators are the leading source of dioxins, pollutants which just do not go away but accumulate in the food chain. While we are told that Victoria's incinerators will manage their emissions, the reality is that Australia's existing air pollution standards are very low and just not enforced.

I also want to take this opportunity to ask the government to hold the line on excluding the burning of native forests from the definition of 'renewable energy' and to ensure that no public funds are going to biomass projects that will use native forest timber. There is growing pressure around Australia and the world to generate energy from biomass in waste-to-energy projects that will feed off Australia's and the world's forests. It was concerning to hear the Alinta Energy CEO say recently that he will be looking at biomass options to replace the brown coal burnt at Loy Yang B in the Latrobe Valley and visiting Europe to consider options. Unfortunately Europe still allows the burning of wood pellets made from forests logged around the world to count as renewable energy. Such a proposal here would be a disaster for forests around the world and increase pressure on future governments to continue the destruction of our beautiful native forests. It is clearly unnecessary as we can generate enough renewable energy from solar, wind and other resources not reliant on burning forests.

The Greens support other aspects of the Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other Matters) Bill 2022, but we will be moving a reasoned amendment to protect the circular economy in the title. I move:

That all the words after 'That' be omitted and replaced with the words 'this bill be withdrawn and redrafted to truly protect the circular economy by investigating reductions in waste such as banning large-scale incineration projects, and boosts to recycling'.

The Greens do not want the circular economy or our plastics to go up in smoke.

Mr FOWLES (Burwood) (15:57): Member for Brunswick, you are killing me, brother. It is an environmental bill. Is 20 minutes too much? I am delighted to follow the Greens in speaking on the Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other Matters) Bill 2022. I thought the Greens party might have acquitted the full 20 minutes on offer on this one, but it was not to be—a result of which, in any event, is that I cannot wait to find out what I am about to say.

There are a few preliminary matters I want to address—not so much what my friend the member for Brunswick put to the chamber in his short contribution but in fact what was put by members of the opposition. The first I have to confess some confusion around. I had to double-check the bill to make sure I understood it right. The member for Brighton, who is at the table, suggested more than once, I think, that this bill creates a start date for a bureaucracy. Now, I had another look at the bill, and the only bureaucracy I could see referenced there was Recycling Victoria. I remain confused because Recycling Victoria has already started. It started in 2021. It has been going for 13 months. So I am a bit perplexed as to why that was the key thesis of the member for Brighton's contribution.

In addition to that, the Leader of The Nationals said that there should be money for councils. We agree. That is why we have given \$129 million to assist councils in the transition not just to the new recycling standards but also to the all-important four-bin system. We appreciate that that, for some councils, is a significant transition. That is why significant state resources have been made available to them to assist with this transition.

Finally, the member for Caulfield suggested that somehow this bill, or the government perhaps, was not encouraging innovation. In fact nothing could be further from the truth. Sustainability Victoria has made available over \$100 million in grants, and that has unlocked \$314 million in both private sector and local council investment in projects that are all about innovation and development. Indeed when you look at the aggregate of that, nearly \$420 million, that is a very, very large amount of money targeted at innovation and development in this sector.

We know this is a sector that has undergone significant change. We know that frankly in, I suspect, all of our lifetimes, perhaps with the exception of the member for Nepean, we have probably started life with just a trash can that went to landfill, and over the course of all of our lives, again with the exception of the member for Nepean, we have seen the evolution of this space to introducing recycling and now green waste and the evolution again into food organics and green organics. And we expect we will see more of it. We expect we will see more people composting at home. We expect we will see councils having a really close look at their programs to make sure that people are strongly encouraged to first reduce, then re-use and then recycle, and only after that should waste to energy be contemplated. This innovation that we have funded has led to nearly 1 million tonnes of new waste and recovery capacity. That process will continue to develop. There will be more of that over time, and I think that frankly the government ought to be applauded for that, not, as it was in the member for Caulfield's submission, derided for not encouraging innovation. In fact nothing could be further from the truth.

To, I guess, my more substantive comments now, there was an establishment bill last year, enacting the Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021, which established Recycling Victoria, which, again, I think the member for Brighton thinks is established by this bill—and it is not. The establishment of Recycling Victoria was to ensure that we had a statewide entity that had purview over the totality of the stewardship, regulatory and market oversight functions and oversight, importantly, of Victoria's container deposit scheme. The history of some of these developments is reasonably problematic, including the collapse of SKM Recycling and then changes in Chinese policy to ban the import of most plastics and other recycling material. We were most definitely in a situation where we were kind of exporting our problems in relation to many of these things, but what the government has done is step up and make sure that we are building domestic capacity, domestic solutions, domestic innovation and domestic capabilities to make sure that we are addressing as many of these problems as can possibly be addressed here right at home. In Victoria I think we have the very proud record of continuing that cycle of innovation to make sure that we are providing nation-leading solutions to all the very many challenges that attach to waste, be it domestic, commercial or industrial.

The bill provides for new powers and functions for the head of Recycling Victoria, and they are very important. It gives that person the regulatory oversight of this thermal waste-to-energy scheme. I have heard what the member for Brunswick has said about this, but I think we are talking about a waste-to-energy scheme that is effectively a scheme of last resort. We understand—perhaps others on the member for Brunswick’s side of the chamber do not—that waste to energy is better than landfill but only just, and it ought to be the third consideration. We must always first seek to reduce, then seek to re-use, then to recycle and only then—then and only then—to contemplate waste-to-energy schemes.

In addition to waste to energy and monitoring the annual cap on that, the responsibilities of the head of Recycling Victoria will include preparing a new Victorian recycling infrastructure plan to take oversight of a risk, consequence and contingency planning framework—that is a very detailed analysis of the risks and consequences of waste, recycling and resource recovery—and preparing a new annual market report to provide an overview of what is happening in Victoria’s circular economy, including of course identifying any emerging issues. We know that this is a sector that has been prone to malpractice and profiteering. We know that it is a sector that warrants a dedicated regulator. We know that it is a sector that will benefit from the very significant investments the government is making in innovation but also in supporting local councils to diversify waste streams and to maximise the amount of reduction, re-use and recycling that is occurring out there in the marketplace.

There is a little tidy-up clause in this bill relating to diverted material. This is making sure that charity shops, op shops, tip shops and the like are correctly carved out. There is a bit of a tidy up here. There was an inconsistency of definitions; that is a more technical part of this bill. But really at the guts of the bill is this waste-to-energy scheme and there are definitions in the bill around permitted waste. We understand that waste to energy is an imperfect solution, that the other things that I have outlined ought always to be prioritised, and we are conscious too of the carbon emissions that attach to waste-to-energy programs. But to the extent that it can be managed safely and without the release of other pollutants, I think there is a place for waste to energy.

What we do not want to see, though, in Australia is a dramatic overinvestment that then relies on us importing waste from elsewhere to keep the waste-to-energy facilities rolling on. We saw a massive overcapitalisation in Norway. We do not want to see that replicated here, and that is why it is not a pure market mechanism. It is not purely market led because we have seen market failure in exactly this sector in other jurisdictions. What we hope is to see in this jurisdiction the establishment, yes, of a waste-to-energy space in the overall circular economy but not to see that becoming a massive feature of the circular economy and most importantly not to see it become a hungry beast that needs to continue to be fed in order to continue to operate. We want to make sure that the other three goals and priorities—reduction, re-use and recycling—are prioritised. We also will make sure that only truly residual waste is utilised for that waste to energy. We do not want to see other streams diverted into it for other reasons—of ease or of cost. I have strayed well wide of where I intended to go when I set out. Time is against me, but I do commend this bill to the house.

Ms CONNOLLY (Tarneit) (16:07): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise and speak on the Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other Matters) Bill 2022. It feels like just another sitting week in which we are here in this place debating a bill about the environment or about energy. I pay particular attention to this because I spent 13 years of my career in the energy sector, and it would have been for a good 11 or 12 of those years that almost on a daily basis the total inertia of a Liberal federal government was part of the conversation for people working in the energy sector about the lack of policy, the lack of having a framework and the lack of having a vision to take us forward and encourage investment across this country.

I thought it was a little bit like comedy hour, actually, listening to the member for Brighton talk about this bill and talk about this government needing a rocket put under it to start doing things when it comes to the environment and climate change. It was an absolutely hilarious comment from a man who has spent a lifetime being part of a party which has done everything possible not to take any action on climate change—to do absolutely nothing in this country when it comes to climate change and

protecting our environment. We have seen overwhelmingly in areas like the neighbourhood that he calls home people going to the polling booths and voting for action on climate change and doing something about the environment.

It was not too long ago that we were here in this place debating the Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Bill 2021. I have to say that the Minister for Environment and Climate Action should be absolutely commended for having an office that is hardworking and 200 per cent committed to drafting legislation and getting on with that legislative reform agenda that we need time and time again to move us forward when it comes to tackling climate change and making a positive impact on all Victorians and our environment. Since we debated the first circular economy bill, we have seen a major overhaul of the way that Victorians dispose of and recycle waste. I do not know about other members of this place, but I have taken the time to go and do a tour of a lot of recycling industries that are there in Laverton North in the Tarneit electorate. I have also gone and checked out and had a tour—a drive around—of Werribee tip. There is nothing quite like bringing someone back to reality by going to your local tip and seeing what happens and what would happen if we did not put mechanisms in place to encourage and incentivise folks to go ahead and recycle. The benefits of the way in which Victorians dispose of and recycle waste, the plan that we have, cannot be understated—\$6.7 billion of our state's economy by 2030, an additional 4000 jobs and diverting at least 80 per cent of our waste from landfill, all of which will be supported by this new body that we are talking about today as part of this bill.

When the previous bill was passed last year, we set up Recycling Victoria, the body that will, as the name sure does suggest, be overseeing recycling and waste management activities in Victoria. It merges several waste and resource recovery groups across Victoria into that one body that is going to facilitate the rollout of our circular economy, one where waste is disposed of appropriately and recycled back into re-usable materials. Now, I note that they started up and got running just last month, and this of course was precipitated by the challenges posed early on in this term of government with the collapse of SKM and China's National Sword policy implementation, which had major impacts on our capacity to dispose of waste. But with those challenges comes opportunity, and it is really important to have a government that will look at that opportunity, back it in and rise to the challenge.

In 2019 we announced that all Victorian councils would be supported towards phasing our rubbish collection to a four-bin system which will help Victorian households sort through their rubbish more efficiently, which makes it easier for waste disposal and recyclers to prevent much recyclable material from ending up in landfills. I have gone and visited a couple of these industries—Alex Fraser, to name one—and it is absolutely incredible to see how rubbish is unloaded onto what feels like a travelator, and the rubbish is picked through, sometimes manually, by workers and folks in my electorate. Quite often it can just be one piece of glass that can disrupt, for example, the recycling of paper. The glass has a dreadful impact on paper and being able to turn it into the paper that I have got my speech written on today. It is amazing to see what this looks like at the coalface and see it firsthand, because then you truly do realise it is so important. Recycling Victoria has an incredibly important role. What this bill will do is build upon the foundations set in the last bill and deliver the next tranche of reforms to make our circular economy a reality.

I have to say I thought it ridiculously hilarious when I heard the member for Brighton—and I have to say there was a pause in the member for Brighton's contribution earlier today because he paused to reflect on nine years of a federal Liberal government, the behaviour of their party and the lack of action that they took. I think he paused to reflect that putting forward the words and the contention that the opposition is leading when it comes to a recycling policy was absolutely ridiculous. I say this because the opposition's recycling policy is not actually a policy. While we have been working tirelessly on this side of the house to deliver real change to the recycling sector, those opposite simply want to bring in more incinerators all across our state. That is what they want to do—they want to burn everything. I bet where they would be setting up those incinerators would not be in the local streets and the local

neighbourhood that the member for Brighton calls home. But we get to expect that from the opposition and the Liberal Party. They tend to want to burn everything—an incinerator in every backyard.

Waste to energy does have a role to play when it comes to materials that cannot be recycled, but it is not the only solution. The government has put its money where its mouth is because it is not putting all of its eggs in one basket. We have seen what that looks like with countries like Denmark relying on waste from overseas to incinerate. Our system is one that is environmentally sustainable, and do you know what else? Our community benefits. I can certainly say mine has, as over 190 million recycled glass bottles were used for the \$1.8 billion western roads upgrade program that ran right through my electorate, which has directly benefited my community in the Tarneit electorate. Six major roads that run through the heart of my electorate were duplicated and resurfaced using state-of-the-art recycling technology just in our local backyard in Laverton North. In Laverton North we have a major glass recycler called Alex Fraser. I went there with the Minister for Environment and Climate Action in 2019, and they are doing amazing work re-using these materials to facilitate our Big Build in a way that is sustainable. This is something my community feel extremely proud of. They love knowing that the roads they are driving down are made from recycled products turned into re-usable materials to lay down western roads—the roads they are driving on.

This is a really important bill. It is absolutely appalling that those on the other side of the chamber would even try to say that their party has a policy that supersedes ours. They had nine years in that place called Canberra, nine years as a federal Liberal government, in which they did absolutely nothing. This is a great bill, and I commend it to the house.

Mr EDBROOKE (Frankston) (16:17): I am very excited to stand up in this house today and speak in regard to the Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other Matters) Bill 2022. We have previously heard from some very passionate speakers on the government side of the house. They have told us that this Victorian government is thoroughly committed to legislating a statewide circular economy, which we have been in no doubt about for many years now. There has been a huge consultation process on this as well. This system generates jobs and it meets climate change targets, which by their nature are quite aspirational, and we believe they are obviously reachable or else we would not have made them. But there are some people that would like to see us change those targets. There are some people that would like to see us change those targets to increase coal-fired production of energy, and there are others on the Greens side of the bench that would like to see us in a state of flux where when we turn the switch on there is no power. But of course this government has a plan to ensure that all Victorians have a reliable energy source and a reliable recycling system, because our recycling system plays a vital function and a vital role in the livability of our cities and regions.

I cannot help but stand here and have a bit of a chuckle at some of the things I have heard, especially from the member for Brighton. With respect, I would have to disagree on the record and the culture of the opposition when it comes to renewables, recycling or even the environment. It is a bit hard to stand here and hear some of this revisionist history which has never actually taken place. It is all about making a strategy for the election. I stand here having only just read an article stating that there will be a teal candidate, who has just come out in the local media, and she is going to be running in Caulfield this time around. No doubt we will see in this house the member for Caulfield and some other members come up with all manner of environmental policy on the run to ensure that they can safeguard themselves, or try to safeguard themselves, against a teal opponent that would be very much focused, if the federal election is anything to go by, on climate change, renewable energy and equality in politics and in life. So this could be very, very interesting.

To be here today and witness what we did with the opposition lead speaker says to me a couple of things. The first one is that the opposition have in no way taken into account a bloke I guess you could call the doyen of corporate culture. His name is Peter Drucker. He always said that culture eats strategy for breakfast. You can consider that this side of the house, the government side of the house, has always had a culture of reflecting what our community across Victoria needs. What they are saying to us in

regard to the environment, and that is a very, very strong message down on the peninsula, I can tell you, is that we need to make that transition to renewables. We need to embrace wind energy and solar energy, which this government has done, to the point where we are leading the nation on that.

But across the decks there they have got just a strategy, and that strategy has not changed since even 2014. Back then I was shocked as a candidate to see that we had no Liberal candidate even coming to the environmental forums that our community constructed and made for us. There were several times when I was standing up there alone with the Greens candidate, and it seemed like there was no care about these kinds of things and no thought given. In fact, as the member for Yan Yean said, the first time I did see some policy from the Liberal Party was with the Liberal candidate who ran for Frankston in 2018. This was a very interesting time. There was a lot of pressure I think at the pre-poll doors from people saying, 'Well, what is your policy? We know Labor's policy. They're leading the nation. We know the Greens policy, their aspirations. But what about you?'.

So it came to a time where we had a Sky News interview. I went up to the arts centre in Frankston and did my piece: 'Yes, we're going to set targets' or 'We've set targets to cut Victoria's emissions by up to 33 per cent by 2005 and up to 50 per cent by 2030 based on the 2005 levels'. It was with David Speers, a very, very calculated and proficient interviewer I would say, and afterwards I went back down to pre-poll. It was then that my phone just exploded with phone calls, and I was thinking, 'Oh, jeez, what have I said? I've put my foot in it here'. The members over there are smiling because they have all done it; they know that feeling. Unfortunately for the Liberal candidate—oof!—it did not go well. I am going to read out what actually happened because it does provide us some insight into the confusion on anything related to the environment, climate change or renewable energy with the opposition. It is a little bit incoherent, but just go with me on this. Michael Lamb was interviewed by David Speers, and it was on Sky News. Speers said:

... there'd be a new power station paid for by the ... state?

And Lamb said:

By the private sector, yep.

Speers said:

Oh, by the private sector ...

and he looked a bit puzzled. Then Lamb said:

We'll tender ... whatever the market decides, we'll tender out.

And Speers said:

They can do that already, can't they?

And Lamb said:

Who's that?

And David said:

The private sector can build a power station if they want ...

because David knows that the private sector were actually in front of the federal government in making that transition out of coal, because it was not feasible and there was too much risk involved. But Lamb, the candidate, said:

Well, they haven't been allowed to under this government.

And Speers, again in confusion, said:

Haven't been allowed to ...

Lamb said:

Build a ... power station.

Speers said:

Well, there are all sorts of renewables and wind power. What are you saying?

Lamb said:

Well, whatever is the most reliable and affordable—the market will determine that.

Speers said:

But that's what I'm saying. The market determines that every day, don't they? What are you saying you'd do differently?

And Lamb said:

Well, the tender process will be building a power station.

And Speers repeated:

A tender process for what? For the government?

And Lamb said:

For the lowest base power, yes.

And—bear with me here—Speers said:

So ... the taxpayer would fund ...

And Lamb said:

No, no, it's private industry.

Speers said:

But they can do that already.

Lamb repeated:

Well, they haven't ...

Speers said:

What would the government do?

Lamb said:

We'll allow them to do it.

Speers summed up with:

But with their own money?

Lamb said:

Yes.

It is what it is, I guess, and it is one of those interviews where I think they are probably using it, unfortunately, in media training and things like that—that if you do not know what you are talking about, you should probably shut up and appear stupid rather than speaking up and removing all doubt. Now, I am not making a personal reflection on Michael there, because I did get along with Michael on the pre-polls and everything, and I have the utmost respect for him, but certainly it shows the incoherent nature of the Liberal Party policy on anything environmental.

Our record, obviously across the last few years, is one that has ensured that Victoria is now leading the nation in renewables, in targets, and now in the circular economy. It is something that certainly in my part of the world, on the peninsula, is basically seen as the translation from what people are asking us, whether they be high school students, secondary college students or even primary school students in the Frankston area and on the peninsula. They are saying, 'This is the policy we need', and we are providing that policy and obviously asking the experts what they think should be done as well. But in

reality it is one and the same. We are being asked to make sure we do our bit with the environment, and this is part of doing it.

I will be proud to stand up in my community and say it is the Andrews Labor government that is getting on with ensuring that the circular economy is rolled out. It is something very, very important especially down in those beach areas. Obviously this comes with the precursor of the Climate Change Act 2017, which was also an Andrews Labor government initiative, and we have made it our goal to achieve those net zero emissions by 2050. We were one of the first jurisdictions to do that, so we are leading the nation in so many ways. We are leading the nation in the circular economy rollout as well, and I commend this bill to the house.

Mr ROWSWELL (Sandringham) (16:27): I also rise to address the Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other Matters) Bill 2022. As previous speakers on this side of the Parliament have pointed out the purpose of this bill is interrelated reforms to the circular economy. These reforms include infrastructure planning, risk and contingency planning and improved market reporting. The bill makes amendments to the Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021, the Environment Protection Act 2017 and the Sustainability Victoria Act 2005. The amendments to the circular economy act are as follows: to provide the legislative framework for Recycling Victoria's functions and establish a cap on thermal waste-to-energy capacity in Victoria. The amendments to the Environment Protection Act include providing funding for Recycling Victoria through the waste levy trust account and a number of administrative amendments as well. The amendments to the Sustainability Victoria Act include enabling information sharing by Sustainability Victoria to carry out its functions to work with Recycling Victoria and the Environment Protection Authority.

I note that the Greens member for Brunswick has moved a reasoned amendment, stating:

That all the words after 'That' be omitted and replaced with the words 'this bill be withdrawn and redrafted to truly protect the circular economy by investigating reductions in waste such as banning large-scale incineration projects, and boosts to recycling'.

Wowee. Righto. As a number of members have pointed out, the Greens—and I have a great personal regard for the member for Brunswick. Too bad he is a member of that particular party, representing their views in this place. That is just mad. That is absolute madness. By 'large-scale incineration projects' I assume that the member for Brunswick is referring to zero-to-landfill waste-to-energy projects that have been signalled by the Liberals. A short time ago when I served in the shadow cabinet in a different capacity I had a few people come to me suggesting that the waste-to-energy projects were actually bad for the environment and we could be doing better on a number of fronts. I went away and I did a bit of research on that. I am sorry to say I do not have the numbers in front of me now, but the options for waste in the future in Victoria are as follows. Our landfills are filling up. They are filling up quite rapidly. So as custodians of our community, as custodians of our environment, when you have got landfill filling up quite quickly, you are presented with a couple of choices: you either dig new holes in God's green earth and deal with your waste in that way; or you take responsibility for your waste and deal with it in other ways.

Again, I do not have the numbers in front of me, but there is a much greater environmental benefit from in fact treating waste through a waste-to-energy process than from leaving it to sit in stinking piles and in new holes that will need to be dug for it. So that is why the Liberals for some time have suggested that this waste-to-energy process is a good process. We committed \$120 million over four years from the state's Sustainability Fund to create that zero to landfill fund, and that fund would have a recycling futures stream to help upgrade recycling facilities and an energy-from-waste stream to deliver energy from waste projects in Victoria. Wouldn't it be marvellous, Acting Speaker Blackwood, if some of those energy-from-waste facilities were based in your part of the world, in the Latrobe Valley? It would make sense. There is established transmission infrastructure in your part of the world, Acting Speaker, which shortly, in the coming decades, will not have a use from traditional forms of energy creation, and it would be a shame for that infrastructure not to be used in an alternative way.

Of course thematically the purpose of this bill, as I understand from the government, is to better protect our environment and to leave the environment for the next generation in a better state than we currently have it. In my local community I am deeply committed to our local environment. I was born at the Sandringham Hospital some 36 years ago. I have lived in my community. I grew up in Beaumaris. I now live in Sandringham with my family. Our area is defined by the magnificent coastline, by the tree-lined streets and by the parks and nature reserves that we have. That is the neighbourhood character of our area, and I feel a happy obligation to do everything I can to preserve our natural environment locally for this generation and for the next.

One of the most magnificent parts of our area is the Ricketts Point Marine Sanctuary in Beaumaris. This beautiful part of Port Phillip Bay was declared a marine sanctuary some 20 years ago. This year is the 20th anniversary for that marine sanctuary being declared as such, and so just last Saturday it was wonderful to be there with my colleague the member for Brighton, the Shadow Minister for Environment and Climate Change, to announce that a future Liberal government would better protect our Ricketts Point Marine Sanctuary—preserve it and protect it for this generation and the next. There are a number of elements to the announcement of that commitment: to replace existing signage with new clearer signage at boat ramps and Ricketts Point to identify the boundaries of the marine sanctuary; to install surveillance cameras on the buoys that mark the marine sanctuary boundary; to improve education for fishers about the importance of marine sanctuaries through the licensing process; and to direct the Victorian Fisheries Authority to conduct more frequent patrols around the marine sanctuary boundary as well.

This work is essential. It is critical. I can remember as a young boy, together with my twin brother, growing up in Beaumaris and going down to the marine sanctuary to beautiful Port Phillip, exploring the rock pools and playing in the shallow waters down there. And now I have the great privilege and opportunity to do the same but with my own children. That is why this is so important to me. It is one thing to speak about the protection and the preservation of our environment, and I genuinely think that the vast majority of members in this place are deeply committed to doing that. But what I am trying to do as a local member, being a local champion for my community, is not just talk about that in the abstract, is not just talk about that through things that are not really tangible to members of my community. I want that demonstrated through tangible local environmental outcomes that I know will have the greatest impact on my community, and that is why I was thrilled to make that announcement for the better protection of our Ricketts Point Marine Sanctuary just on Saturday.

Of course there are a number of other things that I am working on locally in this space. I am deeply concerned by the loss of open space. The government has a stated intent to develop the vast majority of the gas and fuel land on Nepean Highway, Highett—6.3 hectares of land there—leaving only 11 per cent of that for open space. Couple that with the proposed Suburban Rail Loop development at the Sir William Fry Reserve—a beautiful open space as it currently is, a natural amphitheatre there for concerts, carols by candlelight and other community events—and under the government's plan for the Suburban Rail Loop more than 40 per cent of that open space will be removed. That comes with consequences. We are saying we want to increase our population locally through Cheltenham and through Highett, but you cannot increase your population in a community like mine if you do not maintain open space, parkland, recreation areas and sporting fields for the increased population. It just makes sense to do so.

Another commitment that I made on the weekend was the removal of the Highett Road and Wickham Road level crossing, because Bayside council only recently approved some 1100 dwellings just a stone's throw from that level crossing. So as our community changes I am not opposed to change, but it must be appropriate change together with genuine consultation with our community, and we must not consider these projects as separate, isolated projects but the effect that they cumulatively have on our community as a whole. I am grateful for the opportunity to address this bill. As I said, the stated intent of this bill is to do the best that we can for our environment. I know this side of the house is also committed to doing just that.

Mr TAYLOR (Bayswater) (16:37): It is a great pleasure and a privilege to rise to talk in support of the Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other Matters) Bill 2022 and of course a great privilege to not just be in this Parliament as a member of the Andrews Labor government but proactively support its agenda. I am very proud to be part of a government that leads the nation and indeed arguably the globe in terms of its progressive reform agenda when it comes to the environment, when it comes to its emissions reduction targets, when it comes to renewables and when it comes to its huge recycling reforms, whether they be technical or indeed the significant piece of legislation we are seeing here today to support that sector, create clean and green jobs and pave the way for Victoria and indeed for the rest of the nation. I am very happy for others to follow in our footsteps.

It has been fantastic to hear from members on that side/this side talking in support of this bill. I note the member for Frankston's comments, and one of the greatest learnings I got out of that—not that anyone is going to come and chat to me anytime soon from those particular areas—is not to talk to Sky News and to avoid David Speers, because he will get you, as some others learnt the very hard way in 2018. But it was fantastic to hear from the member for Frankston and his passion not just for this legislation but for his local environment and community.

I was listening to the member for Bentleigh's contribution today, and as part of my contribution a little bit later I want to go one of my favourite points he raised: some of those opposite—well, just to my right, adjacent, really, in my case; I have not been over there, so we will say adjacent, but for all intents and purposes those opposite—getting their selfie on World Environment Day yet voting down every significant piece of environmental legislation in the last 3½ years. It is great—no, actually it is quite sad. However, I will say that it is nice to see, even if it is somewhat perhaps being pushed. Some are perhaps more enthusiastic because of people like Zoe Daniels and of course the rest of the teal movement. They are now starting to talk a bit more. Maybe it will not just be a selfie; maybe it will be some real policy changes. However, we will wait and see. They still have not supported a significant piece of environmental legislation, but we will see. I wait with bated breath.

But of course we are here to talk about the environment legislation amendment bill 2022. We do know that this bill will amend Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021 to provide Recycling Victoria with additional powers and functions—critically important—will amend the Environment Protection Act 2017 to allow Recycling Victoria to be funded by the waste levy and make other improvements to better effect the act's intent and operation and will amend the Sustainability Victoria Act 2005 to support information sharing by Sustainability Victoria.

We know that the circular economy act 2021 forms a central part of this government's once-in-a-generation reform of Victoria's waste and recycling system to make it more effective, to make it more accountable and importantly to make it consistent with community expectations. This bill delivers additional reforms to the circular economy act as well as the Sustainability Victoria Act 2005 and the other one. I am just going to start saying 'the other acts'—there are so many of them. This is just game-changing stuff here. There are so many acts, so many pieces of legislation. We are getting on with it.

It will support our state's transition to a circular economy. We have invested an unprecedented \$515 million to deliver this transition, and it will support the creation of more than 3900 jobs—nearly 4000 jobs. It will deliver on our climate change targets and ensure Victorians have a recycling system they can rely on. This is a little Easter egg I was going to run through later, but I will run through it now. I am very proud to be part of a government that does not take a backwards step and is not on the back foot when it comes to our environment, when it comes to climate change and when it comes to recycling. This government at the last election said it would put over 700 000 solar panels on roofs. We are well underway with that landmark reform. In fact other states are copying. It is great to see—it is the best form of flattery—and that is putting money back into people's pockets. That is good for the environment. It is good for jobs.

That is making a significant difference right across this state and indeed in my electorate of Bayswater—a beautiful electorate. Of course now, with the redefined boundaries, it is entirely Knox.

We love Knox, the leafy green suburbs. I hear from others about open space and sport and the need to invest. It is like, 'Where have you been for the last 7½ years, brother? Where have you been?'. There has never been greater investment in our sports, in making sure we encourage and foster the growth of female participation in sports—backing in investment in open space. I mean, there are those fantastic sky rail projects down there. Look at the oodles of open space, the open space commitments for the North East Link and all of the open space commitments right across the state—not just metro, regional; in every single state seat it is happening. So when some say, 'Open space and sports', well, show me the money. This government has shown this state the money when it comes to investing in open space, investing in the local environment.

I tell you what, this government as well has done a great deal of work. We have enshrined a ban on fracking in our constitution. We are getting on with the container deposit scheme. We are committing hundreds of millions of dollars to invest and transform our recycling sector. Of course some of that conversation is in this debate. We are banning single-use plastics within Victoria. We are getting on with our job. We have unveiled an ambitious climate change strategy and interim targets. We have positioned Victoria as a leader in tackling climate change, that much is absolutely clear.

I did allude before to what the member for Bentleigh said about getting the selfies but perhaps there being not so much actual commitment to doing tangible things. As we know, in the last few years—let us have a look—the Liberals have voted against every one of the government's climate change bills, including the Climate Change Bill 2016, the Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Bill 2017, the Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Amendment Bill 2019, the Energy Legislation Amendment (Licence Conditions) Bill 2020 and the Energy Legislation Amendment (Energy Fairness) Bill 2021. So some in this place perhaps are now finding their feet and trying to convince their communities that the culture wars have ended on climate change and the environment and that: 'We've scrapped political ideology. This is not about the Liberals, this is not about Labor; this is about the environment'. Well, I say this is not just about showing me the money when it comes to open space and investing in sport—show me the policy, show me the commitment and show me the drive, and then we will let Victoria decide. We will let Victorians decide, and they can work out who was committed to tackling climate change, who was committed to investing in and transforming our recycling system, who was invested in and who was committed to creating the circular economy—not just empty platitudes. Let us get rid of the culture wars, let us get rid of all the political ideology, let us get on with tackling an issue that I think was well and truly decided at the most recent federal election.

One would perhaps think that maybe it is great that others and some in politics keep banging on about the same stuff because maybe that has an electoral benefit for others as well, but I think it is much more important than that. I really hope that those who are yet to be convinced are convinced, because the only planet we have really counts on them getting behind it. Whether it is Victoria, across the state or across the nation, we all have a role to play here, and this legislation is but one small part, one little cog in the wheel to make sure that we back in the environment and that we support the transition to clean energy, backing in and transforming our recycling system, moving to the circular economy. It is all critically important stuff.

Locally we announced the single biggest local environmental project in Knox's history, which will reimagine Blind Creek and Lewis Park and in turn create the green heart of Knox. It will span three suburbs, it is that big. The magnitude of what we have just announced very recently cannot be overstated. This project will restore 1.65 kilometres of a section of Blind Creek to the surface. It will return our waterways back to the community to connect with and enjoy, and it will improve the health of local waterways and create tons more local space—33 hectares, or in the Melbourne measurement, 17 MCGs. It will also mean the creation of three new wetlands, over 6 kilometres of new walking paths, nearly 700 000 new plants, improved waterway quality, more flood storage and harvesting lots of water for use. Nearly 2000 trees were planted, and there will be a boardwalk through the new wetlands system at Lewis Park, lots of community infrastructure to engage with and reimaged space, such as stepping stones and benches. And of course it is going to create lots of good jobs. This will

create hands down the most exciting and significant environmental space for tens of thousands of Knox residents to enjoy for years to come—Lewis Park, reimagining Blind Creek. It is all happening. I absolutely support this bill, and I encourage others to do so as well.

Ms SHEED (Shepparton) (16:48): Thank you for the opportunity to make a contribution on the Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other Matters) Bill 2022. While I cannot deign to speak with the passion of the member for Bayswater, I certainly support the notion of recycling, and I think we have all been on that pathway for a very long time. That whole concept of the circular economy just has such a fantastic sound to it in a way—that notion of everything going around rather than constantly going into landfill. While I am diverging from my speech, I have to tell you that on Sunday I had occasion to make a trip to our local transfer station in Shepparton to unload a trailer of rubbish, and it is truly shocking to go to a place like that and see the amount of rubbish that we are just disposing of and trying to dispose of in creative ways but not being successful enough at doing it.

I think it is important to look at the ways in which people and governments can deal with waste, and this bill introduces a thermal waste-to-energy scheme to ensure that waste that would otherwise go to landfill is used to create energy—and if that is not circular, I do not know what is. It is in addition to increasing the capacity for recycling in the state and recycling larger quantities of materials as we go forward. So the aim is for grand-scale recycling, and it is something that is desperately needed. As I said, that trip to the tip really made me consider just how important it is, because we cannot keep pouring it into other places. Dare I say, nor can we, as we used to do, send it to other countries. It is just simply untenable to think that we would export our waste to other countries, and often to Third World countries. I recall seeing a documentary where it was shown that waste was being sent to Indonesia, plastic waste, and that it was being burnt just in open fires and incinerators, and it was no doubt very toxic for the people who were engaged in that process. So it is incumbent on us as a community to find ways to deal with waste that do not create a burden first of all for those in other countries but also for generations to come. I think a bill like this really draws our attention to the capacity we truly have to put our minds to ways of dealing with it.

I just want to tell you a bit more about Shepparton besides the local tip. Shepparton is the second-largest dairy production region in Australia. We process almost a quarter of Australia's milk and almost half of Victoria's fruit. We are also one of the largest freight and logistics hubs in regional Australia and home to more than 25 per cent of Victoria's registered heavy vehicles. Our local industries need energy, and they are crying out for ways to be able to get access to the energy they need but also bring down the cost that is associated with it. Certainly thinking of some of the businesses that I know well that are relying on gas at the moment for energy, they are looking over the fence and thinking about other ways they might be able to harness waste within the community that is produced in our community—to actually harness that and produce energy, whether through biogas or some other thing. So we can use waste resources to create fuel for many of these industries and grow the workforce around this as we expand to produce more clean energy on a local level.

Certainly we have seen solar farms across our region—applications being approved and a number of solar farms developed. While we have had some concerns about that happening on high-value irrigated, productive land, there is nevertheless still a push to have a certain amount of solar farms within the region. But to be able to couple it with the opportunity to harness much of the waste we have and produce energy from that is really an exciting development. I think it is important to consider the work that people in our community have been doing on this. We have a group, a Goulburn Valley resilience group, that have been working hard to put together the thinking behind how on a local level in a highly agricultural community we might be able to do that. This group have been working hard with major industrial companies—including Bega, SPC, Pental, Gouge dry-cleaning—to understand what opportunity could look like for our region. Everyone wants a cleaner and greener community, and they believe that the shift to a circular economy will be good for our environment, and good for business as well, especially if it can bring down that cost of energy that people are now really facing

in a very significant way. So bringing that can-do approach to the whole question of getting a shift in the economy to a circular economy is certainly happening in our region. I think there is a push to now try and get some investment to investigate how best we might do that.

It is interesting to note that the amount of green waste in a community like ours is massive. The capacity to be able to harness a lot of that green waste and turn that into some form of biogas is there, but it does take a lot of work to get these things to fruition. No doubt this bill is really part of the story in terms of dealing with a lot of the waste that would otherwise go to landfill. But there is waste that exists that could otherwise be harnessed for energy. We really need to rethink how our economy works and look at the markets and the information that is available that might flow from being able to use our waste resources in a more creative way rather than just throwing it back onto the environment to find a way to deal with it. I believe that this legislation is a significant step forward in creating the structures and the information that is needed to reconfigure the sort of thinking that we have had in the past and how we might deal with it.

Just on a practical level, I did a lot on Sunday—I also visited a local shop, the GV Wardrobe, which is simply a young woman who has taken on board the collection of a whole lot of second-hand clothing for the purpose of getting it back out there and into the community. She hired the local hall and filled it up with all the clothes she had been given or purchased at a low cost, and everything was on sale for \$10. Well, I have got to tell you, there were a hell of a lot of people there going through the racks and looking for clothes. They were not your most upmarket, expensive brands—just ordinary, everyday clothes with men and women looking through them and looking at that notion of recycling. I think it is salutary to note that in Australia we buy 15 kilograms of clothing—56 new items on average—every year and that 10 kilograms of that ends up back in landfill. So the notion of being able to recycle and re-use in creative ways, whether you are this young woman doing it with clothing, whether you are doing it with all that green matter that might come from all the crops we grow across our region or whether it is other forms of waste, is really an exciting prospect for all of us and something that I think we all want to be able to develop so that we can hand on the notion of a cleaner, greener environment as we go forward.

In Shepparton we have three bins at the moment for kerbside collection, and the council has decided that we will shortly go to a fourth, which of course is the purple bin for glass collection. The way that people have changed their behaviour, have adapted to the recycling, the rubbish and the green waste—and will now to glass—is an example of how people can adapt, how communities can adapt and how society can adapt. It is a very salutary lesson to think that when people can adopt that sort of thing on that very basic level of household waste, we can then uplift that notion to something much bigger through government to deal with what is really massive waste in our community. To be able to then have the capacity to turn that into clean energy is truly remarkable, and this bill will help support that.

Ms HALL (Footscray) (16:58): I am very pleased to make a contribution on the Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other Matters) Bill 2022, and I am particularly pleased to follow the member for Shepparton. Recently we spoke about a very innovative program that really showcases what can be done in the circular economy at Footscray High School. I am very pleased that the member for Shepparton will be visiting me in Footscray in the near future and I will be able to show her firsthand some of the incredible work that is happening at Footscray High. I will talk in a bit more detail about what they have managed to achieve at that remarkable school, that local city high school with a farm as part of the school, which has been recognised in a number of ways as being a very innovative way for students to learn firsthand about the circular economy.

This bill continues the Andrews Labor government's once-in-a-generation reform of Victoria's waste and recycling sector and supports Victoria's transition to a circular economy. This government is taking meaningful action on climate change, and the Footscray electorate is proudly contributing to this action. The people of Footscray and Melbourne's inner west are proud of their industrial heritage, but they are also proud environmentalists. A cleaner, greener Footscray is a major priority of mine. To improve our tree canopy, to reduce waste, to tackle climate change and, importantly, to reduce our

urban heat island effect are major concerns of our community and major priorities of mine. To that end I would like to acknowledge the Minister for Environment and Climate Action and thank her for hosting a forum in my electorate of Footscray two weeks ago, a very well-attended online event where she fielded questions from the community about the action we are taking in the circular economy, real action on climate change and what we are doing locally to make a real difference in Footscray. That includes of course the wonderful initiative More Trees for a Cooler, Greener West—which is a very popular initiative in the western suburbs, especially in Footscray where we do have a worse urban heat island effect than other parts of Melbourne due to our industrial heritage—where we are putting in half a million trees. It was great on National Tree Day, I think a couple of weeks ago, to join with the community when we planted 3000 trees along the Maribyrnong River. That was a terrific effort.

In addition to the recent forum I had with the minister, I had a parliamentary intern, Emma Ward, who researched this topic for me—how we can improve the circular economy in Footscray. Emma, who attends Monash University like I did, compiled a report titled *A Green Future for Melbourne's Industrial Inner West*—and I would like to take a moment to acknowledge that this report was of such a high quality that she was jointly awarded this year's Presiding Officers Prize. Emma's report proposed a number of recommendations, including refurbishing the currently under-utilised open spaces in Footscray, greening Footscray's laneways and improving organic recycling options for businesses. I ran a survey on my website asking for local input, which helped inform Emma's report, and we had almost 200 responses, which blew me away, really. It just showed the interest and the passion in our local community about reducing the impact of climate change and improving organic waste recycling systems.

I know that locally there is much more we can do to protect the Maribyrnong River and our other natural assets. I remember a recent Clean Up Australia Day I spent in a kayak on the Maribyrnong River, and I was shocked that we collected over 300 kilograms of rubbish from the river. Most of that was single-use plastic like plastic bags. I know that the Footscray Riverside Action Group was not that surprised at the volume of rubbish, but that is exactly why I am proud to be part of a government that is taking decisive action to reduce single-use plastics. Of course I am thinking particularly of our sales ban on single-use plastic items, which will take place in a little over six months, on 1 February.

Our schools are also doing incredible work, as I noted before. Footscray High School's farm has everything from chickens to yabbies. They have permaculture; they have a tiny home that the students have built themselves, which they use for stargazing; they have beehives; and they collect organic waste from the playgrounds. All of the lunchtime scraps are collected up by student volunteers, and they use a \$64 000 closed-loop organic unit to turn that organic waste into fertiliser. The fertiliser is then returned to the farm, and on the farm they grow native grasses, which are then planted out into the local park, Footscray Park. It is just an incredible thing to see happening—the expertise in these young people in the circular economy and how they can use waste for good.

Previously the school was awarded the Community Leadership School of the Year at the ResourceSmart Schools Awards. Schools in the inner west have a great and proud history in that award program. Just this year Braybrook College down the road won School Volunteer of the Year. The winner in that category was another fantastic inner-west school, Wembley Primary School in Yarraville. Braybrook College were also a finalist in the Community Leadership School of the Year (Secondary) category, and their nomination was for their participation in the seeds in space program, where wattle-tree seeds are sent to the International Space Station where they are stored for a number of months before being returned to earth and compared to other seeds to measure their germination and growth. There are just incredible things happening in my local schools, but businesses too are embracing the importance of the circular economy. Green Collect, which has locations in Braybrook and Yarraville, is an absolute masterclass in recycling, upcycling and re-using. They are a not-for-profit certified social enterprise, and they provide social procurement opportunities as well. They take office equipment that would otherwise be thrown out, things like chairs, filing cabinets, highlighters,

pens, bulldog clips—everything—and they repair or repurpose them so they can be used again. I have been to their warehouse in Braybrook. It is truly an absolutely incredible space.

The concept of waste is central to this bill. The Andrews government's priority is to reduce, re-use and recycle waste first, and where that is not possible the goal will be to recover energy from waste, and to support this goal a waste-to-energy scheme is being implemented that will enable an annual cap on permitted waste. Waste-to-energy facilities play an important role in diverting waste from landfill and therefore are prioritised above landfill in the hierarchy of waste management options.

This bill I think—I have lots of notes, I perhaps spoke about Footscray High for too long—really is just another step forward in the Andrews Labor government's initiative to tackle climate change and create a circular economy in Victoria, one that we can contribute to from the high school level through our organic waste bins that we now have in the City of Maribyrnong to our businesses as well, who are all doing their bit to improve our local environment. I commend this bill to the house.

Mr CHEESEMAM (South Barwon) (17:07): It is with some pleasure that I rise this afternoon to speak on the Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other Matters) Bill 2022. I must say in my electorate of South Barwon when I have gone out and about and engaged with my community, whether it be down at the local supermarket or down at the local shops or when I bump into people who know me down at the local train station, people over the last few years have engaged and discussed with me contemporary issues that they are reading about in the paper. For a period over the last few years we have seen exposed through the media a litany of public policy failures with respect to the waste management sector. I think most Victorians were shocked to find that a large percentage of our waste, which in good faith had been appropriately put into our recycling bins at home, was being exported overseas. I am very pleased to see that because of the exposure of those issues we have put in place through this legislation and other public policy responses a suite of reforms that will see in good faith those challenges and the response by the community being recognised. People actually do want to see their efforts at the kerb recognised appropriately. Of course we have before us today this circular economy legislation which I think will very much drive the uptake of re-used products into a whole raft of different aspects of our economy. The utilisation of glass for road-making materials is one that comes to mind. It is a very fit and a very good use of glass, but I would also like to see more glass recycled and re-used as glass.

The waste management sector has had a long journey to get to this point. I have actually taken a real interest in this part of the economy for a long time. When I was a young councillor with the City of Ballarat way back in 1999, 2000 and 2001, I had the opportunity to become the chair of the Central Highlands waste management group which, on behalf of a cluster of councils in and around Ballarat, had the responsibility of putting in place the then Bracks government's reforms which saw the introduction of an additional bin to all households in that area—but probably across the state if my memory serves me correctly—where as a community we started our journey to recycling. I remember at that time that, whilst it was a popular reform, it was not universally liked. We had to work closely with our councils in that region and indeed, I am sure, EcoRecycle Victoria, which was the agency with all councils and all waste management groups, including the private sector, to make sure that that reform was put in place. From that moment in time we started a pretty profound journey and, as I say, whilst it was not universally liked at that point in time, I think the community very much has come on board.

In my part of the world—the Geelong region—the Surf Coast shire in the last two years was a very early mover to introduce a fourth bin, the little caddy that you would have on your bench where you would put your vegetable clippings and scraps from the kitchen, particularly anything that was vegetables and the like. I wondered, when the council went on that reform, whether that would be universally supported. I must say the feedback that I received, whilst I was not directly involved in its implementation, was very positive, and I commend the Surf Coast shire for that. They did it without any support from the state government—they did not seek it. I just wish to take the opportunity to acknowledge their leadership and the fact that they did that on behalf of their community with the full

support of the community. Again, I reflected on my earlier experience and wondered whether it would be universally supported, but it was, and I think that is a good thing.

What we have seen really over the last few years is a lot of community buy-in to having a strong public policy solution. I certainly know that in my part of the world, the southern growth corridor of Geelong and the Surf Coast, we live in a very special environment. We have got the Barwon River that runs through the middle of Geelong. We have got the beautiful Corio Bay. We have got the beautiful beaches of the Bellarine. We have got the Surf Coast. All of our discarded waste, when it is not dealt with appropriately, effectively ends up on our beaches. It ends up in the Barwon River, it ends up in the Connewarre wetlands and it ends up effectively at Ocean Grove and Barwon Heads and all of those beautiful areas. So I think our community is very conscious of what happens when people illegally or inappropriately dump waste and what it actually means for our coastline.

I might take the opportunity to also acknowledge the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority and their hard work for as long as I have been associated with them—more than 20 years. They have not only taken the opportunity to educate our local community about what happens when waste is thrown out of a car window or whatever and where it might end up but also, I think thoughtfully, over the years invested in litter traps to make sure that litter is caught before it enters into our waterways wherever possible. Of course these litter traps are designed to capture a certain amount, and they need to be regularly cleaned out. So again I acknowledge the hard work of the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority, because they are more often than not dealing with the consequences of illegal activity, of literally tens of thousands of people in many instances, and collecting that waste and appropriately disposing of it.

This reform, I think, is very important, and I certainly commend the Minister for Environment and Climate Action on her hard work. I look forward to seeing new products brought to market, where we do recycle our waste. I know and I certainly note that right now we have huge costs in the construction sector with materials, and I think the circular economy provides a solution.

Mr BRAYNE (Nepean) (17:18): I also rise today to speak on the Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other Matters) Bill 2022. Obviously the Victorian government is committed to reforming Victoria's waste and recycling system in order to transition the state to a circular economy.

The need to move to this type of waste management stems from a few recent events. First, a few years ago, as many people are aware, China decided to refuse our waste recycling product, deeming it mostly spoiled, and put into almost immediate effect a ban. Governments right across the country and the world were immediately put on the back foot, having to find solutions to deal with a huge amount of waste that was not being offshored. On a personal note, I remain completely perplexed about why national governments of all political stripes allowed a situation to transpire where we were effectively reliant on another country to take our waste product. I just do not see how that was ever not going to result in tears.

Second, the sheer quantity of waste that we as Victorians and Australians produce each year is unsustainable—unsustainable in its production and unsustainable in its eventual output. It is not appropriate to continue to treat our earth, our planet, as a waste bin. It is critical we move to an economy where products can be re-used, remade and redeveloped. As we transition to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 as part of our climate change strategy it is important that we transition to a circular economy where we re-use our resources, reduce waste to landfill and promote sustainable practices that all Victorians can follow. That is why transforming our recycling system is so important. For many Victorians, for many Mornington Peninsula folks, recycling is one of the main ways in which they engage with sustainability policy. Everyone puts things in the bin, and when people intentionally put things in the recycling bin, they want to do so with the confidence that those materials will be re-used or repurposed.

As discussed, recent events exposed just how vulnerable the state of Victoria's waste and recycling system was due to these forced changes. I mentioned the effects on governments worldwide, but in Victoria the collapse of SKM Recycling left 33 councils without kerbside recycling services, leaving many with no choice but to send recycling material to landfill. The disruption from China's change demonstrated how vulnerable Victoria's waste and recycling system was to changes in the global markets and the effects those changes can have on local recycling service delivery.

Victorians want to do their part to help make sure our state is climate resilient, but they want to be able to follow sustainable practices with the confidence that their recyclable materials will be re-used. We know that an industry as large as the waste and recycling industry requires strong regulation, and up until 1 July this year there had not been one central body responsible for this regulation. This government changed that by passing the Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Bill 2021 and creating Recycling Victoria, a body responsible for overseeing and providing strategic leadership for that sector.

That bill also oversaw the beginning of Victoria's container deposit scheme. This is an exciting development for the state: an opportunity to allow residents to make a bit of extra cash by recycling their products or by donating their money to chosen charities. When in Queensland last, I decided to try their container deposit scheme by taking a few bottles to one of their locations. When I arrived, however, I was met by a long line of people—a long line of people—who had trolleys full of plastic and glass bottles ready to be recycled. I just decided to hand my bottles over to one of them. It also reminded me of that episode of *Seinfeld* where Kramer and Newman cross borders to try and recycle product in a get-rich-quick scheme. So I hope we are ready for that when we do introduce our container deposit scheme. I hope we are ready for people coming. Clearly there will be a lot of people excited for the container deposit scheme when it rolls out in Victoria.

Transitioning to a circular economy is so important for the environmental future of our state. A circular economy continually seeks to reduce the environmental impacts of production and consumption while growing the economy through the productive use of our natural resources. It allows us to reduce waste, promote more environmentally friendly business models and foster innovation and productivity as we move towards a climate-resilient Victoria. I know that preserving the local environment and implementing sustainable practices are important to many people in my electorate of Nepean, and I am proud of the way that my community has consistently come together to fight for action on climate change. I am a member of an environmentally conscious electorate; I know that any changes that make us more sustainable will be welcomed by my community. Indeed since passing the circular economy bill this government has continued to develop reforms including enhanced statewide infrastructure planning and a cap on thermal waste-to-energy processing in Victoria. However, in order to be implemented, these reforms require further legislative change, and this bill delivers just that.

I will now turn to the specifics of this actual legislation. This bill delivers additional reforms to the circular economy act as well as to the Sustainability Victoria Act 2005 and the Environment Protection Act 2017 to support our state's transition to a circular economy. Specifically this bill will deliver a waste-to-energy scheme which caps the processing of certain types of waste at facilities that process the waste using thermal waste-to-energy processes. This will provide for Recycling Victoria to license thermal waste-to-energy facilities in Victoria. The bill also enables Recycling Victoria to deliver a Victorian recycling infrastructure plan. This plan will consolidate the existing multiplan framework into a single plan, with a 30-year horizon to inform long-term strategic planning and support decision-making.

This bill also establishes a risk, consequence and contingency framework to ensure risks and consequences are identified and managed and contingency plans are implemented. This will help to minimise the impacts of serious disruptions to waste, recycling and resource recovery service delivery. The bill also provides for a new compliance tool on application by Recycling Victoria where courts may make monetary benefit orders in order to get illegal profits made from non-compliance with the waste and recycling laws. The bill also amends the Sustainability Victoria act and the circular economy act to provide Sustainability Victoria with a new information-sharing regime, including to carry out

its functions and to support its continuing close work with Recycling Victoria, Environment Protection Authority Victoria and local councils.

The bill will also make amendments to the Environment Protection Act 2017 to improve its efficacy, including amendments to further equip the EPA and local governments with powers to effectively undertake their regulatory functions. Finally, the bill will also amend the Environment Protection Act to allow Recycling Victoria to receive funding from the waste levy collected under that act.

The combination of these reforms will see Victoria take the next step towards transitioning to a circular economy, with all these changes underpinning the transformational reforms that were implemented in last year's circular economy act. This government has invested an unprecedented half a billion dollars to deliver this transition to a circular economy. This investment will support the creation of more than 3900 jobs, deliver on our state's climate change targets and ensure Victorians have a recycling system they can rely on. Ultimately the reforms in this bill build upon the important reforms this government has already achieved, including changes to kerbside waste collection. By 2030 every household in Victoria will have access to four separate waste stream services—food and organics, glass, commingled recycling and residual waste. For most households this will come in the form of the four bins. Each bin will be a standard colour and the rules about what can and cannot go in each bin will be standard across the state. So when Victorians come down to the southern peninsula for their holiday, which of course I highly recommend, they know they can recycle all the same products as they can at home with confidence. This will help all Victorians to do their part to make our state greener, cleaner and more sustainable.

This four-bin system will make a huge difference to our environment. Giving Victorians access to a combined food and garden waste service will divert up to 650 000 tonnes of organic waste from landfill each year. This will in turn significantly reduce our state's greenhouse gas emissions. Delivering these waste reforms is a key part of this government's ambitious climate change strategy, a strategy that stands side by side with global leaders on climate change. The separate glass bin that will be introduced as part of these reforms means that the quality of our recyclable materials will be vastly improved. That is why a strong circular economy is so important for a sustainable Victoria. A circular economy keeps materials out of landfills. It cuts down on greenhouse gas emissions. It reduces air, water and soil pollution. It creates jobs—jobs that are directly linked to making Victoria more innovative, more sustainable and more climate resilient. That is the future this government is committed to. That is the future this government is delivering as part of this bill.

The combination of the circular economy act and this bill constitutes a once-in-a-generation reform of Victoria's waste and recycling system, reform that will make these systems more effective, accountable and consistent with community expectations—my community's expectations. Ultimately this bill makes several contributions to our transition to a circular economy. These reforms are just the latest example of this government's commitment to tackling climate change and preserving our environment, and I am proud to say that I support this legislation. I commend this bill to the house.

Ms HALFPENNY (Thomastown) (17:28): I also rise to make a contribution to the Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other Matters) Bill 2022. I will just give a brief summary of the bill because previous speakers have gone through a lot of the bill in detail. I have to commend the member for Nepean for giving a really good explanation of the legislation as well as what the changes will do in fact for his electorate down on the peninsula. In essence this bill is looking to amend three bills within the environment, circular economy, waste and recycling areas. That includes the Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021. It provides the body in there, Recycling Victoria, with additional powers and functions. There is also amendment to the Environment Protection Act 2017 to allow Recycling Victoria to be funded from the waste levy, and other improvements to better effect the act's intent and operation. The third act that this legislation will amend is the Sustainability Victoria Act 2005, to support information sharing by Sustainability Victoria throughout the other organisations and entities.

The purpose of the bill is to continue to build on the Victorian government's once-in-a-generation reform to Victoria's waste and recycling sector, and it is also about making yet another contribution to mitigating the effects of climate change and bringing the Victorian economy and our society generally and the way we do things to becoming a more sustainable society, one that reduces waste and re-uses waste as much as possible.

Of course the circular economy is all about recognising that whatever we make, whatever we grow and whatever we manufacture contributes to climate change or has consequences for the environment. So the more we can recycle and re-use what has already been made, grown or manufactured, the more we reduce the amount of waste or damage which is created by manufacturing or making that product on the environment.

I think people have already gone into a bit of the context and history, but I want to do so as well. From 2019 there were a number of disruptions to the waste and recycling services in Victoria and indeed across the country and across the globe. First in Victoria, because of global circumstances, there was the collapse of SKM Recycling, and that left 33 councils without kerbside recycling services, leaving many of those with no choice but to send recyclable matter to landfill. This also really coincided with the announcement of China's National Sword policy, which banned the import of most plastics and other materials for recycling. Again, it really highlighted the risks involved for a country or a state in Australia in relying on other countries to take their rubbish and waste. Really, I think it also goes to the expectation that countries ought to deal with their own waste rather than send it offshore for others to do things with, because in this case there was no guaranteed reliability. These disruptions demonstrated how exposed Victoria's waste and recycling system was to changes in global markets and the effects those changes could have on local recycling delivery, because there was not really the infrastructure or the organisational set-up in Victoria to rapidly transition away from waste being taken overseas. There was not the infrastructure and ability in Victoria to deal with that additional waste, which was no longer able to be exported for disposal.

So in February 2020 the Andrews Labor government released *Recycling Victoria: A New Economy*, our 10-year circular economy policy, and in 2021 the Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021 was passed, which provided the legislative framework for achieving many of the commitments outlined in that policy, including establishing the entity of Recycling Victoria, setting out the standards of our four-bin system and also providing the policy framework for the container deposit scheme that others have spoken about.

We know that an industry as large as the waste and recycling industry requires strong regulation, and up until 1 July this year there had not really been one central body responsible for this regulation in order to ensure that it was looked at as a whole and in a more seamless and organised way. But our government also changed that. We created Recycling Victoria. This body now is responsible for overseeing and providing strategic leadership for the entire sector and all the components in it rather than hiding behind different sets of legislation and authorities and organisations, and it is also allowing it to be a little bit more streamlined and consistent. To put it simply, the circular economy is the ability to recapture waste to produce new materials, as I have said. Recycling is one of the primary ways most Victorians engage with sustainability policy. Everyone puts things in bins, and of course this is probably the best way or the way that really all of us in some capacity can contribute. We can all pick up waste, put it in a bin, select what sort of bin and where it is going to go and also contribute and have an effect on whether that material is used for recycling or whether it goes directly into landfill.

I think in the Thomastown electorate there is a lot of talk at the moment around waste and recycling, as for some reason there seems—and I believe this might have happened in other places as well—that there have been a lot of people disposing of waste in the wrong way. There has been a lot of litter and a lot of industrial waste left in some of the newer estates, on vacant blocks, in our parks and on soccer fields. It has really been something that is in the residents of Thomastown's minds as they see this rubbish thrown around. One, it is not being put in bins, but then it is leading to the next step, which is,

‘Well, where actually is it going, even once it has gone into that bin?’, when we also see waste along some of the creeks and water estuaries that are also in the electorate.

It is really good to see a lot of young people that have moved into the area or are growing up in the area being so conscious and thinking about what happens to the stuff that they use and where that waste should and should not be going. There has been a lot of effort put into things such as Clean Up Australia Day. I know that there is a group, the Northern Youth Council, that has been established in the area and that is looking at clean-up days. They are making stickers to put on bins just to highlight the responsibility of all of us to ensure that our rubbish is disposed of in a responsible way and that we all make sure that we care for the environment.

In getting back to the more industrial level of the circular economy, there are a number of large waste names that do reside in the Thomastown electorate. There is Suez that is in Cooper Street. There is also Repurpose It, which I have spoken about in this chamber previously. This is an organisation, a company, that really does a lot in terms of the circular economy. It takes in construction waste and repurposes that into things such as combining it into the asphalt for roads. The concrete glass is then repurposed into other materials that are used, for example, in roads. I know that they have done a lot of work with Major Road Projects Victoria and VicRoads with their product.

Another really exciting project that is happening at the moment—again, in terms of roads—is the Childs Road duplication and the duplication of the bridge, which has been a major source of traffic congestion. That is now near completion. It is fantastic to see the partnership with an organisation called Reground, which is a business that goes around and collects the coffee grounds from cafes and the hospitality sector and will use that as fertiliser for plantings in all the great open space that is going to be around that Childs Road project, which includes of course lots of lovely walkways, recognition of the Indigenous heritage of the area and also some incredible bike paths.

The circular economy is being well and truly thought of within the Thomastown electorate. It is so important to have legislation that makes it easier, well-regulated and supportive to ensure that this type of industry can continue.

Mr RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) (17:38): It is a pleasure to rise and speak on the Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other Matters) Bill 2022 and follow some of the speakers on these important legislative changes and reforms to environmental legislation and talk about the significance of this industry. I want to cover off on a few points: the importance of this from an economic standpoint and environmental standpoint and then some of the challenges that my community has faced for decades with the landfills that are decommissioned and are being phased out across the City of Kingston and the south-eastern suburbs.

We know that cutting our waste is such a significant priority. We have heard in this chamber during this debate about the challenges that we had a few years ago, which were leading all the media coverage at that time—the significant challenges we were facing in the recycling industry; the exporting of our recycling goods to China, mainly; the exposure on up to 33 municipalities; and the impact that that was having on our communities. Victorians, rightly, were concerned about the future longevity of the recycling industry and what we needed to do to futureproof it and, interestingly as well, to maximise the jobs creation and opportunity that come from the recycling sector. There are over nine jobs equivalent for waste that is diverted as opposed to the equivalent number of 2.8 in landfill.

Across the City of Kingston we have decades-old landfills that have been decommissioned over time. If you go down through the south-eastern suburbs and the Kingston green wedge, you will see open spaces that are being rehabilitated over a long period of time. It is contaminated land that is in the Kingston green wedge which cannot be used for community open space for many years to come. It is a legacy of the land space that we had and the significant impact that we had on the environment and landscape. That stands as a legacy of the practices of the past and the work that we need to do in the future to maintain our environmental outcomes and spaces and to protect our communities. That is

why it makes so much sense to divert 80 per cent of landfill by the next decade. It makes perfect sense because of the impact on environments and how much of an impact that has on land usage into the future. The City of Kingston is about two-thirds privately owned, and the impacts that has on some of those landfills—some require up to 30 years of rehabilitation. With the methane gas impacts and the emissions that come from that as well it will take a lot of time for it to even be able to be accessed by communities in the future.

When you look at the work that has been done on the circular economy and recycling, it has been substantial. One particular project that we were really passionate and excited about was the Mordialloc Freeway. A significant project promised for a long time and talked about for decades, it took an Andrews Labor government to deliver the Mordialloc Freeway. But it was not just a road infrastructure project; there was so much more to it. The diversion of household waste in this project was substantial. Five hundred tonnes of plastic waste from landfill was diverted into recycled noise panels, really leading the nation. The panels are made from a mix of kerbside recycled plastics, including milk bottles, juice bottles and shampoo bottles, and soft plastics such as bread bags, food wrappers and bubble wrap, the equivalent of the amount of plastic waste collected from 25 000 Victorian homes in one year. But for the work of the Major Road Projects Victoria team these could have been steel noise walls, just like on the Dingley bypass, but it was that innovation to ask, 'How can we do something different?'. I know the member for Carrum will know the organisation Packed Group in Carrum Downs. More than 70 staff were retained to make the 32 000 square metres of panels required for the project to meet the needs of the environment effects statement in mid-2019. That was a substantial undertaking. The Deputy Premier and I had the opportunity to meet with those workers who were installing those noise walls, and it is a great example of what can be achieved on a range of different projects. The diverting of all that waste was really innovative as well.

The City of Kingston have been leaders in recycling in our community for some time, and we have the great title of having the environmental school of the decade in Aspendale. St Louis de Montfort's Primary School took out that title with Sustainability Victoria. They were the winner of the ResourceSmart School of the Decade Award, and they were a 5-star school. I have visited St Louis a number of times, and I am amazed how recycling, the circular economy and all the work that goes into those initiatives and the environmental outcomes at this school are embedded in all of the work that they do in their curriculum, the impact that that has on students, who see beyond their school community—even though that is so important—to the impact that they have in the City of Kingston and across Victoria and how they are acting as a school community on a global measure as well. That is a really important element of this. It is about education. It is about training and developing the next generation to understand the work that we need to do to educate our communities on why this matters and why it is so very important.

There is an education frame and there is an employment frame through the jobs that are created, and I know that the Minister for Environment and Climate Action has done a power of work talking about the economics and the jobs that are created in this space as well. Thousands of people will be employed because of the Andrews Labor government's action and work in developing the circular economy and the work that has been done through *Recycling Victoria*. It is a really exciting policy space, and to see some of the transformation that has happened to date is truly extraordinary. Some members have touched on the long-term certainty for the business and community sectors as well into the future with the 30-year infrastructure plan on the horizon. That gives investment certainty in an industry where in 2019 we were exporting a lot of that waste. The impact that had was that the expectations Victorians had were not being met. A lot of people were surprised to learn of those challenges and some of the issues that we were facing as well.

I did enjoy the member for Brighton's contribution about the coalition's policy in this space. In his lead speech he talked a lot about the climate targets that they have—and obviously landfill contributes to about 3 per cent of emissions. The former leader of the Liberal Party had a plan to burn all the waste: just put it into an incinerator and off you go, a bit like trying to find some emails in the archives—just

off they go into the incinerator, off into Netherspace. But the incineration of waste was where it really ended. Then obviously the former Leader of the Opposition did not have the opportunity to continue his work, but we really have not heard much since.

We had a confusion about when the Recycling Victoria authority started. The member for Bentleigh pulled the member for Brighton up on that. Then we had a bit of misleading information about their climate change targets as well, which have important interaction with some of the landfill discussion and the substantial impact that landfills have on emissions as well. We see that out in the south-eastern suburbs that I talked about before. He was talking about 50 per cent targets, but there is not universal support for that, is there, in the coalition? We have got the member for Kew, who opposes that quite vehemently, and I know there is not solidarity on their climate targets or their recycling targets. They have a bet each way, and they can speak out on various policies, but I think there is a lot of division around what that target is.

There is quite consistent certainty on this side of the chamber. The Andrews Labor government has been consistent in its climate change targets. The federal government claimed a lot of the credit for state and territory impact on climate change action and mitigation of emissions. It was not anything the feds did. It was the states and territories—a lot of their hard work—that contributed to those targets. We heard the member for Brighton as the lead speaker talking about the 50 per cent targets, but there is not universal support for that in the coalition, and it is important that they clarify what they actually stand for in this space, not just come to it at the last minute because a few teals have rocked up and given them a bit of a shake. Tell us what you stand for. It should be a bipartisan target and commitment, not flip-flopping on those and not having 50 different varieties of views depending on which opinion piece you are putting forward. As much as members are entitled to do that, that is the uncertainty and lack of consistency. We see that in recycling policy. We see that in climate change policy. And Victorians want to know that there is a long-term certain plan in the recycling sector, in lowering our emissions and transitioning into the future.

So those targets to divert 80 per cent of waste from landfill by 2030—if only years ago we had had a policy like that in the City of Kingston, given the impacts on our communities from landfills that we rehabilitate to this very day as we hand back open space and land in the south-east chain of parks and the sandbelt chain of parks—are really, really critical as well. This is great nation-leading policy. It is exciting to think of where this industry will be in years to come. This is a really important piece of legislation, and I commend the bill to the house.

Ms VALLENCE (Evelyn) (17:48): It is really interesting to hear the member for Mordialloc say that this is nation leading, because it is anything but. I will get to that in a moment. I am speaking today on the Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other Matters) Bill 2022, and it is absolutely like groundhog day—another Andrews Labor government bill on the circular economy, waste and recycling, but no real action and no real solutions. This bill has plans to consult and draft regulations but is very scant on the detail when it comes to any real action. It is an embarrassing display really by the Andrews Labor government, a tired government trying to play catch-up.

This bill provides for amending the Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021. I spoke to that bill when it was before the chamber just about one year ago. In the Minister for Environment and Climate Action's second-reading speech for today's bill, she states this amendment will:

... reform ... Victoria's waste and recycling system, making it more transparent, accountable and reliable.

Now, this is a comical statement by the minister in her speech. The government will need to make up a significant amount of ground to have any credibility in this space. With only a few short months before the state election in November they have absolutely nothing to show when it comes to making our waste and recycling system more transparent and reliable and accountable.

The Premier and his Labor government have been floundering when it comes to the circular economy and waste and recycling after eight long years in power. Victoria has been in a waste crisis for years.

I note a number of the Labor members in their contributions alluded to the waste crisis, a waste crisis that has happened on the watch of this Labor government. This Labor government for eight long years in power has allowed our landfills to be a dumping ground, with hundreds of thousands of tonnes of recyclable materials being dumped in landfills on their watch, landfills nearly at capacity, limited local industry development and an over-reliance over the years on offshoring waste to other countries via large foreign-owned corporates.

It was very interesting to hear the member for South Barwon lament that hundreds of thousands of tonnes of recyclable material was being dumped in landfill, and it was interesting because this happened under the watch of the government that he is a part of, this Andrews Labor government. It was only the work of the Liberals on the Parliament's Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, PAEC, which exposed that under this Labor government 180 000 tonnes of recyclables ended up dumped in landfill at the collapse of the business SKM. This demonstrated a complete and utter failure of this Labor government to support diversification and development of Victoria's waste industry, having all its eggs in one basket, and further, a complete and utter missed opportunity to ensure these recyclable materials were in fact recycled.

This bill is only attempting catch-up, and an embarrassing attempt at that, after having been dismally slow to act on the situation of China and other Asian markets closing their doors to Victoria dumping its waste there. In the minister's second-reading speech she tried to pull the wool over Victorians' eyes by stating that they have a 'comprehensive response to major disruptions caused by the China National Sword policy'. This statement here in 2022 is an absolute joke. Let us reflect on that. The China National Sword policy was launched in 2017, well over a year before the last election, so over the course of this Andrews Labor government's two terms they failed to act.

Industry was aware that China was preparing to close its doors to being a dumping ground for waste in around 2015, when this Labor government was in power, and I know this because I worked at that time in the tyre industry and was part of creating Tyre Stewardship Australia to provide a positive and industry-led way to deal with waste tyres. We were striving to transition from offshoring tyres to recycling tyres into rubber crumb for road base, recovering the synthetics and the metals for repurposing, and even investigating plans to extract oil via pyrolysis. As a private sector organisation we started taking action in 2016–17 because we knew that exporting waste was no longer going to be permitted, nor was it the right thing to do.

It absolutely begs the question of what the Andrews Labor government has been doing for the past seven years. Why does it keep saying that it is a leader in this space? Labor is anything but. Under the watch of the Andrews Labor government in these past few years we have had a troubling stockpiling of waste across Melbourne, with catastrophic consequences, and I think it was just the previous Labor member in their contribution who referred to that even in their own community. We have had warehouses imploding in the northern and western suburbs and waste fires that have burned in these suburban communities for weeks on end, causing pollution and being damaging to the environment and human health. People suffered from inhaling toxic smoke and were told to stay inside by a Labor government that had failed to act.

It demonstrated that the Andrews government's environment regulator, the EPA, was hopelessly inadequate and not up to the job of regulating the disposal of waste in Victoria, such that they needed to spend millions of taxpayers dollars trying to bring the EPA into the modern era. Yet still Victorians today have no confidence that the Andrews government's EPA is actually regulating the industry and keeping Victorians safe. Indeed this bill creates a new regulator, via Recycling Victoria, but what is really concerning about this is the complete and utter lack, in this bill before the house today, of detail when it comes to the rules and regulations on which Recycling Victoria will rely. Despite the bill referring to regulations there is absolutely no detail on what will be contained in these. To think that the Andrews Labor government that for the entirety of this term has failed to take sufficient action on waste and recycling crisis and has failed to consult adequately with industry and the community is putting forward this bill with no detail only weeks before the parliamentary term draws to a close really

tells you everything about Labor's failure to act and really calls into question how serious Labor is about fixing the waste and recycling crisis under the watch of its government.

By contrast the Victorian Liberals and Nationals have demonstrated how serious we are when it comes to the circular economy and reforming waste and recycling. This bill, we know, provides for container deposit and waste-to-energy schemes. These are great ideas, and do you know why? They are great ideas because these were the ideas in announced policies by the Victorian Liberals and Nationals years ago—over three years ago. The first policies we released in this term, in 2019, were a policy to introduce a container deposit scheme that benefited local, community and voluntary organisations and a zero-to-landfill waste-to-energy policy with a plan to stop household waste being dumped in landfill and instead offer a real solution for diverting waste from landfill to plants that produce low-emissions energy and support contributing to lower energy costs for Victorians.

Suddenly this government has realised that (a) it has got an energy crisis, (b) it has got a waste crisis and (c) Victorians are massively in support of the Victorian Liberals for their zero-to-landfill waste-to-energy plan. Unfortunately, however, this bill states that there will be a cap on waste that can be used for waste-to-energy facilities in Victoria. Why? I think Victorians need to know the answer. Is it that the government wants an unnatural protection of its corporate mates that have already been permitted to generate energy from waste in safe Labor seats? Labor wants to ban energy from gas, and now it wants to ban energy from waste, all at the same time as we have a cost-of-living crisis under this Andrews Labor government and the highest energy prices in the country. It makes absolutely no sense. There should be no cap on feedstock to low-emissions energy production from waste. Indeed the intention of the Victorian Liberals and Nationals is to remove this requirement of a cap via amendment in the Legislative Council, which I fully support.

Furthermore, I note that the government indicates its reason for a cap is to ensure recyclable materials cannot be used for waste-to-energy facilities. That is all very well and good but only if the recycling industry is so well developed that it has markets for recycled and repurposed products, which we know is not the case in Victoria. Recycling capability needs a serious uplift in Victoria, indeed in Australia, and that will take investment and years of recycling businesses to develop production capability. Unfortunately the Andrews Labor government has completely failed industry, it has failed the community and it really needs to take serious action because the Victorian Liberals and Nationals will.

Ms WARD (Eltham) (17:58): That was pretty astonishing—pretty astonishing that you can spend 10 minutes talking and actually not be terribly accurate. I suppose this gives me the opportunity to talk about energy costs in the first instance and talk about our \$250 power saving bonus, which I know many members here have been actively encouraging people in our electorates to participate in. I recognise that a number of federal Liberal MPs have been doing the same thing—in fact they have been advertising. I have got a constituent who has actually saved \$1200 on their bill. They were gobsmacked. They could not believe that using the Victorian Energy Compare website would give them such a good deal on their energy costs. In fact they were a bit embarrassed that they had let their energy costs climb so high before they queried how expensive they really were.

It is not true to say that we have the most expensive energy costs in this country; it is not true at all. We know that in New South Wales and Queensland, for example, they are more expensive than energy costs are in this state. So I would urge those opposite to actually be accurate when they stand in this place. While they might be reading from their notes quite diligently, it would be useful to ensure that those notes are actually accurate and reflect the reality of what is happening in this state, and what is happening in this state is that we are leading the nation when it comes to addressing clean energy and the challenges of climate change. We saw that in the last federal election, when the federal Labor Party adopted a number of our policies and people voted to support those, and we have seen federal voters actually reject the coalition's attempt to ignore the realities of climate change.

With your indulgence I will also refute a few other things that were just said. Sustainability Victoria has awarded almost \$102 million in grants to improve the waste and recycling sector, leveraging a

further \$314 million investment from the private sector and other levels of government. These grants are all about encouraging innovation and development in this sector. This funding has resulted in 957 000 tonnes of waste and resource recovery capacity—957 000. It is anticipated a further 933 000 tonnes of processing capacity will be developed by 2025, all thanks to the funding by this government. This is the kind of work we have been doing in the last eight years.

We have introduced a single-use plastics ban, with the government leading by example. Already every Victorian government agency is single-use plastic free. I do not have to tell you, Acting Speaker—you would have the same experience when you go to the supermarket—everybody is turning up with their bags. Everybody is reducing the plastics that they use, and they are doing it because we have created opportunities for them to do so. We have changed legislation and we have changed behaviours, and we are seeing less rubbish as a result.

On average in this country we produce around about 500 kilograms of residential and commercial waste each year. That is nearly 500 kilograms per person. The member for Sandringham showed how much of a one-trick pony the opposition are when their only policy really in this space is to go to waste to energy as a solution for what we can do with our rubbish. Where is their clean energy policy? Where are their policies? They are full of inaccuracies, they are full of contradictions, but where are their policies? We are, what, just over 100 days out from polling day. Where are their policies that show Victorians that they are actually serious about addressing the need for a clean energy economy and addressing the challenges of climate change?

One of the things that the opposition have raised has been the waste to energy that we see in a number of countries, including Denmark. Now, I will give you a quote from Jens Peter Mortensen, who is a waste expert at the Danish Society for Nature Conservation. He said that:

The process of burning trash is inherently polluting—you can put state-of-the-art pollution controls on an incinerator, but that doesn't make the facility clean ...

You may remember the days when everybody had an incinerator in their backyard. I know we did. We had incinerators at school. In fact I have still got a small scar here on my arm from when I was the monitor at primary school and got to throw crap in the incinerator. A bit of ash fell on my arm. We all threw everything in the incinerator. No matter what it was, in it went, and I can only imagine the damage that that caused to our atmosphere. But considering that since the 1970s our population has increased tenfold, the amount of pollution that would come from us using incinerators in our backyards would be extraordinary. It would absolutely be extraordinary.

The other challenge with waste to energy is that you need a lot of rubbish. You do not recycle. You actually need a lot of rubbish. We are seeing countries like Denmark and Sweden import rubbish into their country. They are actually buying rubbish from other countries so that they can have their incinerators at full capacity, because they are not actually energy efficient unless they are at full capacity; that is how they work. So what happens when you start to run out of rubbish? What happens when you have people who are not buying stuff that they cannot recycle? Well, Denmark has got a problem, because they do not have enough rubbish. In fact they are actually starting to close some of their incinerators because they cannot meet their recycling measures and they are running out of recycling. But let us not again let the facts get in the way of reality. We know those opposite tend to dwell on and go down the path of unreality rather than actually dealing with the facts. In 2018 Denmark imported nearly 1 million tonnes of rubbish from the UK and Germany among other countries to ensure that their incinerators were full. That was four years ago; things are harder now. What seemed like a good idea, what seemed like a clever way to deal with energy pollution, is not so much.

In the short time that I have got left I want to talk about our Big Build, and I want to talk about our exciting Recycled First policy. This is embedded in our Big Build, and it means that we are working hard to recycle materials such as aggregates, glass, plastic, timber, steel, ballast, crushed brick, crumb rubber and reclaimed asphalt pavement. And under our Recycled First policy, companies who want to bid on our infrastructure projects must detail how they will optimise the use of recycled and re-used

materials that meet existing standards and specifications. It is embedded in the way we do things, this opportunity for recycling and this opportunity to create new economies. So the program will incorporate recycled and re-used materials that meet existing standards for road and rail projects. As examples, the M80 ring-road, Monash Freeway and South Gippsland Highway upgrades will have all used more than 200 000 tonnes of recycled materials. Now, 190 million glass bottles have been used in surfaces on the \$1.8 billion western roads upgrade.

A member: That is a lot of green bottles.

Ms WARD: It is absolutely a lot. Recycled demolition material was also used to build extra lanes along 24 kilometres of the Tullamarine Freeway as well as the Monash Freeway and the M80 ring-road. We are also re-using materials created by our own projects, with 14 000 tonnes of soil excavated from the Metro Tunnel site in Parkville now being used in pavement layers in Point Cook. This material weighs as much as 226 E-class Melbourne trams and would otherwise have gone to landfill.

Almost 56 million tyres are discarded nationally every year, but just 10 per cent are recycled. So researchers have started trialling the use of crumbed tyre rubber on busy metropolitan roads, with asphalt being tested on a 1½-kilometre section of East Boundary Road in East Bentleigh, which has used around about 1600 recycled tyres.

The previous speaker said this government has done nothing. That is just a short shopping list of stuff that is coming out of our Big Build to show how seriously we take recycling and the work that we are doing to ensure that that cyclical economy keeps on going. There is so much that we can do, and this government knows it. Through Recycle Victoria, which began on 1 July—which is another mistake in what other speakers over there have spoken about, because they have got this idea that it starts with this legislation—we have already started it. The whole program that we have got, our recycling, will create nearly 3500 or 4000 jobs, whereas when you throw things into landfill you would be lucky to get two per tonne. We are creating real job opportunities, we are creating a green economy and we are creating a city and a state that are cleaner and greener than they have ever been before.

In the last few seconds I want to talk about Banyule council, which has finally gone ahead with creating extra bins. They have now got a green recycling bin, which is terrific. We have had them in Nillumbik for close to 20 years. They are easy to do. Get chooks, feed your chooks, put it in your own compost—put it in your green bin. We can reduce our green waste. I commend this legislation.

Mr J BULL (Sunbury) (18:08): I am absolutely delighted to contribute to this piece of legislation this evening and of course follow on from the terrific member for Eltham, who knows and understands within her local community the importance of not just this bill but also the government's broad agenda, our ambitious plan, to make sure that we are at each and every opportunity supporting those measures and investing in those technologies to improve our environment and make sure that we are not just at the forefront of the nation but global leaders in this space.

As I said, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to contribute to this bill, the Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other Matters) Bill 2022. This is of course a government that cares deeply for our environment, and the member for Eltham just spoke at length about the values that underpin this piece of legislation, with all of those initiatives that have been referenced by members on this side of the house. We know and understand the importance of caring for the environment and finding solutions to those complex problems, and we also know and understand that people within local communities, within the Victorian community, care deeply for our natural environment and are committed to its protection and making the very best of it. It is why we have made such huge investments, significant investments, in renewable energy with the Victorian Renewable Energy Target, the VRET—through a very important piece of legislation which goes to the heart of renewable energy in this state—and significant investments around solar, wind and new technologies for better and cleaner power.

We know and understand and have worked with local communities, with business and with industry to develop these targets but also legislation such as this bill before the house this evening that goes to investing in technologies that deal with the challenges that confront all of us. There has been a lot of work, which other members in the debate this evening have referenced, that has gone into the *Recycling Victoria: A New Economy* initiative. I do want to commend not just those in my local community and my electorate but those right across the state who are genuinely committed. Acting Speaker Crugnale, as I am sure you know about your local community, whether you are visiting schools, neighbourhood houses or community groups, people within our communities genuinely care about this space. There is a commitment to keeping local communities clean. There is a commitment to making sure that we are recycling when and where we can. The government is committed to doing that not just through this strategy but through ensuring that it is driving down the cost of living, making sure, as cost-of-living pressures are inevitably within the community, that it does not impose additional burdens on those within our community. This is a significant piece of legislation.

The *Recycling Victoria: A New Economy* strategy is a plan for waste and recycling. *Recycling Victoria* is of course the government's 10-year policy, the action plan for waste and recycling. We know that those key initiatives, those key pieces of work that were done within the strategy, are centred around kerbside reform, stronger recycling oversight, new rules to cut waste, waste to energy, high-risk and hazardous waste management, reducing business waste, investing in priority infrastructure and providing support for local communities and councils. I know that other members have spoken about the role of councils within this space. It is a very important role, and I know that you, Acting Speaker, and many members in the house know and understand that relationship between the management of local councils and the work that they do and the work that many of our businesses and local communities do each and every day within this important space. The other element contained in the initiative is the behavioural change component—having information, having tools and having education and awareness programs around making sure that from the very earliest of ages we are educating all of those within our community about the importance of doing the right thing when it comes to waste management and making sure that, as I mentioned earlier, we are doing it in an effective and cost-efficient way.

The transition to the circular economy—and this was also contained within the initiative—has the potential to boost the Victorian economy by up to \$6.7 billion. It will help to create more than 3900 new jobs, help businesses grow in new ways and create new sectors and new modes of employment, produce cost savings for households, improve social inclusion, abate greenhouse gas emissions, drive greater resource recovery and also establish a system that Victorians can rely on. This is, of course, incredibly important right across the goals that were mentioned within the initiative: making sure of those improvements to business productivity and reducing waste; supporting local communities; addressing plastic pollution, which I know was mentioned by an honourable member just before; supporting the re-use economy; reforming the way households recycle; having fit-for-purpose landfill levies, governance and regulation; increasing the use of recycled materials; encouraging waste-to-energy investment; and supporting those areas where we know there are higher risks within hazardous waste management, making sure that that is also an important area that we focus on.

We know that the circular economy has that ability to create jobs, very similar to the way that the VRET and the monumental, large-scale, significant investment in renewables have the ability to create jobs, particularly for those in country Victoria and those in rural and regional Victoria. Making sure that there are job opportunities along the way is of course critically important to all of us as local members and right across government.

The legislation before the house will amend the Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021 to provide Recycling Victoria with additional powers and functions, amend the Environment Protection Act 2017 to allow RV to be funded from the waste levy and make other improvements to better effect the act's intent and operation, and amend the Sustainability Victoria Act 2005 to support information sharing by Sustainability Victoria. We know that recycling is one of the primary ways

that Victorians engage with sustainability and with sustainability policy more generally. We know that waste is generated each and every day. People should have the opportunity to participate in a recycling system whereby they have confidence and whereby they know and understand that it is the system that supports the re-use of waste through the circular economy. We must make sure that we are a government that works hard on not just the process, the framework and initiatives that I referenced earlier within my contribution, but also the education piece. Whether it is this government's significant investment within early childhood education, within kinder—that \$9 billion to make sure that we are giving our tiniest Victorians the very best opportunity and the very best start in life—or many of the initiatives that are contained within our sustainability legislation and the VRET, ensuring that education is at the forefront of most of our policies, if not all of our policies, should be at the forefront of much of what this government does.

This is an important piece of legislation because it goes to making sure that the work that was done in 2020 and the work that was done in 2021 and the amendments contained within the legislation today continue to ensure that Victorians have the opportunity to play their part. We know through analysis that Australia's recycling sector right across the country creates 9.2 jobs for every 10 000 tonnes of waste managed, whereas sending the material to landfill creates only 2.8—so just from maths on the fly, a factor of around three. Ensuring that those jobs, as I mentioned earlier, are a critical component of the work that is done, of the initiative or of the framework is incredibly important. This government's waste and recycling reform measures will create those more than 3900 jobs, a significant piece of work.

It is all about a better environment, a cleaner state and a smarter state that can deal with the challenges of consumption and of energy needs whilst combating the cost of living. That is what the Andrews government stands for. We will of course continue to invest in and work with local households, with businesses and with small-, medium- and large-scale industry to ensure that this work continues. It is an important piece of legislation, and I commend it to the house.

Mr HAMER (Box Hill) (18:18): Can I thank the member for Sunbury—a fantastic contribution from a fantastic, passionate advocate for his community, the community of Sunbury. I too rise to make a contribution on the Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other Matters) Bill 2022. It is a very significant bill, and it is always a pleasure to get up and talk about bills that are there to improve our environment. We have introduced in the Andrews government, both during this term and in the previous term, many pieces of legislation. Often we have been on our own in terms of introducing that legislation. It has been rare to get support across the aisle on key pieces of environment legislation, despite some people trying to rewrite the record books through what positions might be currently being taken.

This particular legislation is really about enhancing and strengthening the *Recycling Victoria: A New Economy* recycling framework that was announced in 2020 and legislated for in 2021. A particular component of this piece of legislation is to introduce a thermal waste-to-energy scheme, which will cap the processing of certain types of waste at facilities that process the waste using thermal waste-to-energy processes. It provides for the head of Recycling Victoria to license thermal waste-to-energy facilities, but they will not be able to issue licences that collectively exceed an annual cap on the permitted waste, which will be expressed as 1 million tonnes per financial year. I understand that this has been an issue in some countries that have pursued waste-to-energy plants quite vigorously, where the demand for waste has outstripped the supply for waste within those particular jurisdictions. They now need to be importing waste just to keep some of those plants running, which is obviously a large disincentive, because we are not trying to increase waste, even if we are moving it to energy. The key in any recycling is to re-use, recycle and repurpose in the very first instance, and the waste-to-energy solution should always be—I would not call it the last resort, but what you would be targeting are those remnant wastes that cannot be re-used, recycled or repurposed.

As has been addressed by a number of other speakers, the Andrews government, through the *Recycling Victoria* plan and framework, has invested millions in improving the re-usability of materials, the recyclability of materials and the repurposing of materials. We have heard a lot about the breakdown

and use of glass, particularly in road base, and the use of rubber and rubber tyres in terms of various materials and equipment that you might see also in the road system. This is exactly where the investment needs to be. It needs to be focused on this re-use.

I know the member for Sunbury also touched on the education component, and I see this particularly in our schools and amongst the younger members of our community not only at schools but also amongst the Scouting movement. They are really driving this waste management change and looking to have a cleaner environment, and it is really being led from the ground up. You see it across a lot of my local schools, and a number of our local Scouting organisations have really taken it upon themselves to recycle and pick up waste that they see around their local area and try and repurpose it and use it for other means.

I know that even in my own life, particularly at our office, we recently made the purchase of a worm farm. We are doing some more recycling and waste management at home and separating our food and organic waste, and we have got some very hungry worms that have now taken their rightful place in the Box Hill office. I have also discovered that one of the ways to help feed the worms is to make sure they get a mix—not only do they like the food scraps but they also like the shredded paper, so if there are a few documents there that need to go through the shredder, they go through the shredder and they are devoured by the worms. I have found a new use for chopsticks as well, because apparently you have to be very careful when you are tossing and turning the worms in their worm farm to make sure that the nutrients and the right balance of nitrogen and carbon are mixed into the soil.

I see this as all part of the greater plan for recycling, waste management and reducing the amount of waste that is going to landfill. I think I have a statistic here about the amount of waste that was going to landfill. The target is to divert 80 per cent of waste from landfill by 2030, which is what is set out in the *Recycling Victoria: A New Economy* program. Part of that is also ensuring that every Victorian has access to food and garden organic waste recycling services or local composting by 2030. I do know that Whitehorse council has just introduced that over the last few months. I have had a few residents complain that their caddy bin is not quite large enough for the food waste that they generate, but I must say I think it is an education process and you learn over time. I found, having this bin now in place for a year and a half in the Boroondara part of my electorate, how quickly you adapt, adjust and reduce your food waste that is going into the bins, and now obviously it is going straight into the food and organic bin. Initially when it was introduced the council announced that they were only going to have waste-to-landfill collection once a fortnight. I said, ‘How is that going to work? How are we going to manage going from weekly to fortnightly?’. I would say now that when we have our fortnightly bin collection the bin is only half full. We have been able to get almost all of our food and organics into the food and organics bin. We have removed all of our plastic packaging. The amount of plastic packaging that comes with all manner of food and toys and games—you name it, it comes with plastic packaging, particularly that soft plastic packaging. I try and do a drop-off at the supermarket every two or three weeks and it is probably up to my head, carrying 10 or 11 bags. It is a really important step to furthering our *Recycling Victoria* program. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr McGHIE (Melton) (18:28): I rise today to contribute to the Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other Matters) Bill 2022. Firstly, I want to thank the Minister for Environment and Climate Action and her staff for this important piece of reform. It is always a pleasure to follow the member for Box Hill and hear his contributions, in particular in regard to recycling and the reduction of waste. I know in our circumstances at home, with the change to the recycling bins, we certainly have reduced what we throw out as waste nowadays, which is fantastic.

The Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021 formed a central part of the Andrews Labor government’s once-in-a-generation reform of Victoria’s waste and recycling system to make it even more effective, accountable and consistent with community expectations. This bill delivers additional reforms to the circular economy act as well as the Sustainability Victoria Act 2005 and of course the Environment Protection Act 2017 to support our state’s transition to a circular economy. The Andrews Labor government has invested an unprecedented amount of \$515 million to deliver this

transition, and this will support the creation of more than 3900 jobs, deliver on our climate change targets and ensure Victoria has a recycling system that we can rely upon. That is what this government does: it invests in jobs, it invests in our environment and it certainly invests in our climate. It is always important to realise that as we transition to a new paradigm we need to take people with us and we need to create good jobs and invest in people as much as we invest in infrastructure and in policies.

This bill reminds me of the excellent work of Outlook at the Melton recycling facility, and I was delighted to represent the minister when the Andrews Labor government contributed \$490 000 to upgrading this innovative recycling facility through the \$26.1 million Resource Recovery Infrastructure Fund and the \$50 million e-waste infrastructure support program. Of course the upgrades have boosted the processing capacity of the facility by 25 per cent. That is a further 7250 tonnes of waste being kept out of landfill, and it created two new jobs at that time. So in total Melton recycling facility has the capacity to divert more than 45 000 tonnes of waste from landfill each year. That is amazing, and that is in the area of Melton alone. The jobs created at Melton mean that more locals are working where they live or close to where they live, either at this facility or in the shop that sells goods that get a renewed lease of life rather than ending up as landfill. What they have set up at this facility is a shop that sells off recycled clothing, equipment, toys, bikes and things like that, so it is a fantastic innovation.

There have been some exciting things happening in Melton, like when I represented the Minister for Water at Greater Western Water's Melton treatment plant. I was there to celebrate a waste transformation innovation: biosolids to biochar technology. It was quite amazing to see what was happening here at this Greater Western Water treatment plant. This innovative technology, developed by RMIT University, makes biosolids management more environmentally sustainable and cost effective, also helping to reduce carbon emissions for both the water and agriculture industries. By creating a safer product with a steady supply stream, it also provides our farmers and the wider agriculture industry with a product which is completely natural and can improve soil health and fertility. It is programs like these all across the Andrews Labor government's portfolios that show we take our environment and climate seriously, whether it be energy capturing at Greater Western Water; the solar arrays; the energy-efficient upgrades in Melton South at Heather Westaway's home, which is one of the Healthy Homes projects; or the commitment that the new Melton hospital will be fully electric. This government gets on and delivers climate and environmental action whilst creating jobs.

The bill introduces a thermal waste-to-energy scheme, which caps the processing of certain types of waste at facilities that process the waste using thermal waste-to-energy processes. It provides for the head of Recycling Victoria to license thermal waste-to-energy facilities in Victoria. Recycling Victoria cannot issue licences that collectively exceed an annual cap on permitted waste, expressed as 1 million tonnes per financial year. The bill also enables the head of Recycling Victoria to deliver a Victorian recycling infrastructure plan, consolidating the existing multiplan framework into a single plan, with a 30-year horizon to inform long-term strategic planning and support decision-making. This bill also establishes a risk, consequence and contingency framework to ensure risks and consequences are identified and managed and contingency plans are implemented to minimise impacts of any serious disruptions to waste, recycling and resource recovery service delivery. The bill also requires the head of Recycling Victoria to prepare an annual market report and provides a function to prepare market strategies.

The bill provides for a new compliance tool on application by Recycling Victoria where courts may make monetary benefit orders to get the illegal profits made from non-compliance with the waste and recycling laws. This bill makes amendments to the Environment Protection Act 2017 to improve its efficacy, including amendments to further equip the EPA and local government with powers to effectively undertake their regulatory functions under the Environment Protection Act 2017, such as enabling the EPA and councils to appoint third parties as authorised officers, and amendments to mitigate the risk of liquidators avoiding clean-up costs.

The *Recycling Victoria: A New Economy* plan sets four ambitious targets for improving our state's recycling system, and they are to divert 80 per cent of waste from landfill by 2030 with an interim

target of 72 per cent by 2025, to cut total waste generation by 15 per cent per capita by 2030, to halve the volume of organic material going to landfill between 2020 and 2030 and to ensure every Victorian has access to food and garden organic waste recycling services or local composting by 2030.

Recycling is one of the primary ways most Victorians engage with sustainability policy. Everyone puts things in the bin. When people put things in the recycling bin, they want to do so with the confidence that those materials will actually be re-used or repurposed. We know that an industry as large as the waste and recycling industry requires strong regulation. Up until 1 July of this year there had not been one central body responsible for this regulation, and our government changed that by creating Recycling Victoria, a body responsible for overseeing and providing strategic leadership for the sector. This bill includes important reforms that will allow Recycling Victoria to provide that leadership and guidance.

The reforms in this bill build upon the important reforms this government has already achieved, including our reforms to kerbside waste collection, and by 2030 all across Victoria, no matter where you live, every household will have access to four separate waste stream services: food and organics, glass, commingled recycling and residual waste. For most households this will come in the form of four bins.

Before I finish I should say that a lot of our major constructions, such as the M80 ring-road, are done with recycled materials. In fact, in a world first, some of the noise walls along the Mordialloc Freeway were made with 75 per cent recycled plastic. It would be great if the Melton City Council investigated this to reduce the cost of the sound wall they promised constituents at the Silverdale estate. They had committed \$2 million and put out a tender but now have taken the money away, leaving residents frustrated and angry that they do not have their sound wall. Maybe they could do some research into the Mordialloc Freeway and try to reduce the cost and deliver on the promise of a sound wall for those residents. This bill is another example of the Andrews Labor government delivering for our environment and our climate alongside delivering jobs and improving our economy. Obviously if you are re-using materials, they can go into the construction of roads and other great infrastructure. I support this legislation. I once again congratulate the minister and her staff, and I commend the bill to the house.

Mr FREGON (Mount Waverley) (18:38): I also rise to speak on the Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other Matters) Bill 2022 and thank the Minister for Environment and Climate Action for her ongoing sensational work in this area. We really have come on in leaps and bounds in even just the last three and a half-odd years that I have been in the house.

I just want to start by commenting on a couple of our colleagues. The member for Eltham made a good point about energy prices and the \$250 power saving bonus, because that was raised by someone opposite. It really is part of a package of works in the energy sector that the minister has been working on, with the added bonus obviously of assisting with cost-of-living pressures that are coming to everyone in our state. The member for Eltham talked about many people calling in to her office to get some assistance, especially our seniors, who might find it a bit more difficult with computers. My office is no different; I think there are about 600 or something that we have helped. Most people we bump into now on the streets are saying, 'Yep, I've already done it'. It is good to know that every one of those people have gone through that compare process to check their energy, and I know when I did it last I saved about \$300 or \$400 a year myself. So that is a really important measure. The member for Box Hill was talking about measures in regard to multiple bins in Whitehorse, and I would like to come back to that because my own council at Monash has recently changed over their bins to a two-week schedule on general rubbish, so certainly that is a matter of poignant note at the moment for Monash residents.

A circular economy continually seeks to reduce the environmental impacts of production and consumption while enabling economic growth through more productive use of natural resources. It allows us to avoid waste with good design and effective recovery of materials, and having that as a

basis of policy, of targets to reduce waste to, I guess, that perfect world where we do not need any new resources, we just use the ones that are already sitting around—obviously we probably will not reach that, but having that drive to minimise that waste is so important. It promotes more efficient business models and encourages intense and efficient product use, such as sharing products between multiple users or supplying a product as a service that includes maintenance, repair and disposal.

I think about my grandfather's shed back in the day. He would have had tools, devices, power tools that had probably lasted 30, 40, 50, 60 years, whereas now we seem to have moved in the last 20 or 30 years to an economy where everything is disposable, everything is built with a life span. Something like an iPhone, for instance, is designed effectively to last a few years, and then you need a new one. That is part of the business model. I think we need to move away from that, and having a driving policy framework to lead us to a circular economy hopefully works against some of those throwaway business models. I do not necessarily think we will go back to the days when we built something to last for 60 or 70 years, but the chisels that I got from my grandfather's house in my garage are quite fine, and they are probably about 80 years old now. So it is a good thing if we can do it.

The value that people obtain from the resources used to create these goods and services will increase by making sure that we get more use out of them. It can transform our linear economy mindset, that take and throw away, as I mentioned, and foster innovation and productivity, invigorate existing businesses and create new ones, delivering more jobs and more growth for local, regional, state and global economies. We do not necessarily know what the next new thing is. If you go back 20 years, we all thought we would live on our iPhones—hang on, 20 years? Let us say 30 years, and I think my phone was about this big. I felt pretty clever having one of those back in the NEC days. I thought I was pretty good at the age of 20-odd. I have gotten over that, obviously.

The bill amends the Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021 to continue the Victorian government's delivery of this once-in-a-generation reform to Victoria's waste and recycling system, making it more transparent, accountable, effective and reliable. We have invested an unprecedented \$515 million to deliver this transition—so that is delivered—which will support the creation of more than 3900 jobs and, delivering on our climate change targets, ensure Victorians have a recycling system they can rely on. This goes to other work that the minister has done: our commitment to offshore wind, for instance; commitments for the Victorian renewable energy targets; and our Victorian default offer to make our power cheaper than in the other states, as one of my colleagues mentioned before. Victoria's electricity prices are vastly cheaper than those in both New South Wales and Queensland. It is a mix of everything new.

So transitioning to a circular economy has a multitude of benefits and can boost Victoria's economy by up to \$6.7 billion by improving material efficiency and recycling and help to create more than 3900 jobs. It will help business grow in new ways and create new sectors and drive businesses to think of what that next new thing is. The bill also introduces a thermal waste-to-energy scheme which caps the processing of certain types of waste. The member for Eltham talked about examples from other parts of the world and the Scandinavian countries, where they are now importing waste. I think that does not sound like a great idea. We also realised a few years ago—for me it was a surprise—that we were exporting so many of our recycled goods to other countries. I presume for many of us it was a surprise that that seemed to be the business model. When that stopped, as we have heard before, over 30 councils had big problems because they did not have a recycling model that was going to work anymore. Luckily for us in the district of Mount Waverley, Monash council were not affected by that. Their contracts—they used Visy for theirs—were not affected. That was a good thing. Unfortunately, because of when they signed their contracts we do not have a purple bin for glass, and I do not think they are in a hurry to put that in, so we will not get to see the Teletubby bins in front of my house anytime soon, which is a bit of a shame.

I am running out of time and there is so much to talk about on this fantastic bill, but I just want to make a couple of references to some wonderful young people in the Mount Waverley district. The Glendal Primary School waste warriors a couple of years ago, when Monash council were putting in efforts to

do the food organic and garden organic—the food into the green bin—processes, had a great presentation about the benefits of that. They were very inspiring young people at the primary school. A year later I went to Brentwood Secondary College, who are a certified five-star resource-smart school and from memory won the Premier's Sustainability Award last year, I think it was, for that. Sustainability is embedded across that school facility, community and curriculum. Venkata Kalva down there runs the green team, and he should be very, very proud of all of the work that he has done, and obviously principal John Ballagh as well. When I was there it was a year after I had been to Glendal. I bumped into a young woman—I think she was in year 7—it will make sense in a second. She had a stall running, and she was trying to tell everyone about the food waste and how this will benefit our environment and sustainability. That young woman that I spoke to then the year before had been in the Glendal waste warriors. Our young Victorians have worked this out maybe quicker than some of us older Victorians. This government will make these changes, which will benefit not only them but all Victorians. I commend the bill to the house.

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) (18:48): I take great pleasure in joining the debate on this important bill, which really goes to the heart of what we need to be doing to minimise climate change but also to minimise costs to businesses, to households and to our environment. I very rarely disagree with the member for Mount Waverley. In his contribution he talked about the waste warriors in his community. He rightly said that they understand what needs to be done, they are focused on what needs to be done and they are coming up with solutions. But it is actually not older Victorians, I think, or previous generations; it is probably those somewhere in between that need to make the change.

The Green family have lived in this state—not the Greens party, the Green family—on my dad's side, in central Victoria, since the 1850s. It was quite isolated. My grandmother Eva Mary Green nee Dawson passed away—I cannot remember what date—in 1997 in her 98th year, having been born on 27 June 1900, and she was the best recycler that I ever met. The second-best recycler that I ever met was Eileen Minnie May Plozza nee Brady, who was born in north-east Victoria, was part of a farming community and moved down to the Western District to Nullawarre. Those women in particular, especially early doors, did not necessarily have drivers licences. My grandmother Eileen certainly got one and she got herself around. But my grandmother Eva was born in Dunolly and then when she married moved to Greens Lane, Llanelly, and spent the greater amount of her life there. Throughout two wars and with no shops nearby, she recycled everything—absolutely everything.

I have been doing a bit of family history recently and I found this most magnificent photo of my dad and his brothers. I lost my dad when I was only 19. But there was this gorgeous photo of five of the six Green boys with Dad being the baby at the time, a little toddler. My grandmother was a seamstress, and she had made every single part of what they were wearing—their little ties, their little shirts, their shorts or suits, depending on how old they were. She had recycled that from my grandfather, my great-grandfather or my great-uncle's clothing, and those boys just looked absolutely schmick.

The member for South-West Coast and I both went to St Ann's College in Warnambool and learned sewing. I have always been—

Ms Britnell interjected.

Ms GREEN: The member for South-West Coast says she was not any good at it. But I actually was not bad; I had good teachers but also came from a family of people that sewed. We were always repurposing things. My kids think I am a bit quirky, but I love making a pair of jeans into a bag or whatever, and I have just always had this thing of 'You just don't throw anything out'. It really came from my farming ancestors, because they knew that whatever they generated on the farm they had to dispose of, and whatever—

Ms Britnell interjected.

Ms GREEN: Yes, well, there is the op shop as well, as the member for South-West Coast said.

Representing the electorate of Yan Yean and living in the municipality of Nillumbik—they have been pretty forward leading. They are probably not at the cutting edge now, but they really were when they introduced the three-bin system. It was red, amber and green. They won awards for actually explaining to people which things went in what bin. I certainly was a figure of fun in my family with my children because there were cameras on the truck, and being a member of Parliament I was absolutely paranoid that one day someone was going to put something in the wrong bin and I would be in the newspaper. I was not worried about it just from that point of view; I actually am passionate about the environment, but especially being passionate about recyclable goods I did not want to be the one that was going to be in a newspaper or on the council's website. And so my children just called me the bin fascist because I would get home from Parliament on a Thursday night and I would be straight to the bins, because that was bin night, in a mad panic of who had put what in the wrong bin. But hopefully that means that when they have gone on to their own households they have learned that these things are actually important.

Now, as the member for South-West Coast knows, I have a holiday house in Warnambool, where we both grew up, and they have the fourth bin there—as the member for Mount Waverley discussed, the 'Wiggles bins'. I call them the 'Driveway Daleks'. We put two bins out one week and two bins out the other—we are not always there, so we have to rely on the neighbour to do it—but I know the minister at the table would really get how we work out which bins go out at what time. It is red and green one week and purple and yellow another, so one week it is Storm and the other week it is—

Ms Britnell interjected.

Ms GREEN: No, no. It is Storm. The other week it is Rabbitohs. So that is how we have worked it out, but that is our household.

Many others have talked in detail about the bill, but I really wanted to pay credit in particular to a fantastic business in the northern suburbs called Betta Stone. It is these sorts of businesses that are going to flourish within the Recycling Victoria framework and in our new economy. What Betta Stone are doing is not just about repurposing glass. We know that there has been a real problem with commingling of glass with tins and paper, so we have not had the best recycling of glass. What Betta Stone, based in Broadmeadows, does—and they employ primarily Indigenous labour, and I really want to pay tribute to Robert and Roshni Thompson for establishing this great groundbreaking business—is take powdered glass and turn it into aggregate benchtops.

Not only does this use recycled product, it also addresses one of the most serious threats to worker health and safety. Having had a stepfather that died of asbestosis it is something that I am really passionate about. Now we have the successor to that chronic and terrible workplace disease in silicosis. So with the Betta Stone product, having pressed glass powder into aggregate means that it can be cut on site and is a minimal risk to those who are working with it. So I really wanted to pay tribute to Betta Stone. I am looking forward to visiting Betta Stone in Broadmeadows next Thursday with the candidate for Broadmeadows, Kathleen Matthews-Ward, and the member for Thomastown, the Parliamentary Secretary for Workplace Safety. I commend the minister for her work, her staff and the department and I really commend this bill to the house.

Mr KENNEDY (Hawthorn) (18:57): In just a couple of minutes I will give you the gems of what I was going to say in these 10 minutes. What about if I just mention the government's commitment to climate action and the many day-to-day ways in which we create a more sustainable Victoria. I am really admiring of that. I am of an age and stage—I think I am the eldest in both houses—where the environment and doing what you can in this field was not terribly strong as I grew up and grew older, but I really have a great admiration for governments and for others who take the trouble of specifying different coloured bins, of looking at policies and so on that will protect the environment and develop good policies for our children and our grandchildren. This Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other Matters) Bill 2022 I think represents in some ways a maturing of

attitudes. Rather than saying it is all one thing, that idea of the circular economy is important, and this represents a good chapter in that development.

It is a policy that makes a lot of sense. I congratulate those in that department for their work. We are a government who puts our money where our mouth is on sustainability. It is more than the Climate Change Act 2017 and the over \$2 billion invested in climate action; it extends to other sectors, to our massive investment in public transport and, as seen with this bill, to recycling. I am proud to be part of a government that is yet again doing the hard yards on environmental protection, this time through our recycling sector. I commend the bill to the house.

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

Adjournment

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

PORTLAND DISTRICT HEALTH

Ms BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (19:00): (6476) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Health, and the action I seek is for the minister to travel to Portland and meet the residents who have been adversely impacted by the closure of services at Portland District Health. The former health minister paid a fly-in, fly-out visit to Portland in late March for a carefully managed tour of the hospital and media op. Sadly he refused to meet the community members who were concerned about the loss of several services at the hospital. Birthing services at Portland District Health were suspended on 16 March. PDH announced that the service would return this week—finally, some positive news for expectant mums and their families. It is also terrific news for the wonderful midwives, so let us hope the service can now stay open. Ophthalmologist Robert Harvey left PDH in March. He has not been replaced. In April the hospital was left without overnight urgent-care doctors for more than a week, with only a nursing team on site and telehealth services available. General anaesthetist training at PDH has also been scrapped and moved to Hamilton.

If the loss of those services was not a cause for concern, and clearly it should be, then the resignation of board member Michael Bartos recently has the alarm bells ringing loudly. Associate Professor Bartos worked for the World Health Organization for many years. Clearly he has expertise in public health issues. Importantly he was one of the few locals left on the PDH board. In public comments describing why he had resigned, Associate Professor Bartos told the *Portland Observer* that the PDH board favoured accountability to the health department over its duty as a health service. He said the board had failed to establish its future vision in a positive way and there had been little progress in implementing the rural generalist workforce model as recommended by the Hillis report. Professor Bartos's public comments were damning yet very important to note. He told the *Observer*:

The community is not a stakeholder to be managed or quieted down.

The community is an asset. It's fundamental to the future of PDH. It's impossible to imagine a successful PDH without the backing of its community.

Not surprisingly Associate Professor Bartos also contradicted the Premier's claims made in this place that services at PDH had not been scaled back, telling the *Observer*:

... in terms of the services which PDH provides, the record has been that they've diminished over the last year, they haven't increased.

Associate Professor Bartos's comments show the Portland community has lost confidence in the PDH board, and concerns remain around the future direction of healthcare delivery. I urge the new Minister for Health to engage with the Portland community to outline what positive steps are being taken to fix the problems plaguing Portland District Health, outline when services will return and guarantee no further services will be cut.

KAMBRYA COLLEGE

Mr MAAS (Narre Warren South) (19:03): (6477) The adjournment matter that I wish to raise is for the attention of the Minister for Education and concerns Kambrya College. The action I seek is that the minister join me in my electorate to visit Kambrya College's site for their upcoming new facilities. The Andrews Labor government announced \$18.94 million in the state budget towards the school's modernisation. This investment will see the school upgraded to provide an additional 400 spaces in permanent facilities to meet the growing demand. Principal Keith Perry has been a very strong advocate for investment in the school and has started talking to the Victorian School Building Authority about Kambrya's current and future needs. The project is already in the planning phase, including initial completion of the asset management plan, leading to the master planning phase.

This school is just one of the 1850 school upgrades which have occurred over the last eight years. This investment builds on funding in recent state budgets in my electorate, including schools such as Hampton Park Secondary College, Strathaird Primary School, Narre Warren South P-12 College and Hampton Park Primary School. Education is the base for any child's future, and the Andrews Labor government understands the importance of providing our students with the best possible teachers, staff and facilities. It would be fantastic if the minister could join me in visiting Kambrya College to see firsthand the current school campus before the works start to deliver an upgrade that will meet the needs of the local school community. I am sure that the minister will be warmly welcomed.

GIPPSLAND EAST ELECTORATE BUSHFIRE RECOVERY INITIATIVES

Mr T BULL (Gippsland East) (19:05): (6478) My adjournment tonight is to the Minister for Environment and Climate Action, who oversees Parks Victoria. The information that I am seeking from the minister is to provide the Orbost and Marlo communities with an update on what is a debacle of works at Cape Conran, destroyed over 2½ years ago by fire and still not repaired. It gives me no pleasure to have to stand here and raise this issue yet again in the chamber.

Let us first of all go to the Cape Conran cabins. In mid-2020 Orbost chamber of commerce asked for these cabins, knowing their economic importance to the region, to be finished by Christmas 2020—over two years ago. Then in August 2020 the state government released a statement that was published in the *Snowy River Mail* that said the coastal park would be visitor-ready soon—in mid-2020, 'visitor-ready soon'. The minister at the table, the Minister for Police, is having a bit of a chuckle there, but he might be able to tell me what the definition of 'soon' is, 2½ years later when it is not in place. What is worse is that we are now told that these cabins will not be ready until late 2023 or potentially 2024—three or four years later.

The second area is the East Cape Boardwalk. The local paper recently ran a picture of the East Cape Boardwalk six months ago and last week, and there is no change in the picture. This is a project where the minister answered a question that I raised in mid-2020 again, saying that the boardwalk would be finished by that summer. It was not. It was not even started. Then Parks Victoria said in the *Snowy River Mail* in mid-2021 that it would be completed by December. It was not. Now here we are heading towards December 2022, two years after the minister said it would be finished, and it is at a standstill.

This is the government that said after the fires, 'We are going to walk through the recovery with you, and we will expedite the bushfire recovery'. Well, you are moving at the speed of a glacier. You have not helped; you have not supported these communities. I ask the minister to confirm both a specific and accurate time frame for the Cape Conran cabins and the Cape Conran boardwalk and any reasons for the hold-up so that the communities in that area can be made aware. We do not want any more airy-fairy answers. We want specific time frames and the truth behind these enormous delays.

BASS ELECTORATE SOCIAL HOUSING

Ms CRUGNALE (Bass) (19:08): (6479) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Housing. The action I seek is an update on the Big Housing Build and for the minister of course to visit Bass to join me in meeting with local community advocates and service representatives. Our government

recognises that homelessness comes in a myriad of forms for a myriad of reasons, and to begin to address this our government's landmark \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build investment is delivering 12 000 new homes right across the state. This program is changing lives. In the Casey area, part of my electorate, we are seeing 42 homes, worth \$14.1 million in government funding, creating 183 jobs, happening at the moment. In Cardinia a \$14 million investment has come into the shire, delivering 29 new social housing homes, and this is in partnership with the Haven Foundation and Centacare housing services.

Housing availability, however, continues to be a major challenge right across my electorate but also in the Bass Coast shire, where we have committed a minimum of \$25 million towards addressing this. There are currently six projects progressing, with two sites purchased and \$3 million in funding so far. However, in Wonthaggi, Phillip Island and surrounds there are still a significant number of vulnerable people on the waiting list for social housing, and this is having a profound impact on my community. When we have people, families and children amongst us that are struggling, doing it tough and not travelling so well, then we are not well as a community or society.

Can I ask the minister to provide an update on the social housing projects in my electorate and the supports the government is delivering in the Bass electorate and Bass Coast and to take up the offer to meet with local residents and representatives to discuss these important investments. Everyone deserves the security and stability of a home. I look forward to the update from the minister.

POLWARTH ELECTORATE POWER POLES

Mr RIORDAN (Polwarth) (19:10): (6480) The adjournment debate I have tonight is for the Minister for Energy, and the action I seek is to receive an update on the promised rollout of power pole replacements that the government trumpeted back in December last year. In December last year we were promised across our region 7000 new power poles would be wheeled out and replace an ageing stock that is very, very problematic and a great cause of bushfire. Many of my constituents will recall the St Patrick's Day fires; they will remember Black Saturday—all caused by failing power poles. The problem is the government said, 'Every year for the next five years we're going to replace 7000 poles in your district', and no-one knows how many poles have been replaced because based on that we should have about 4200 done by now, and my great suspicion is that we are not even close to that at this stage. But more importantly, the Colac to Camperdown main power line, the 66-kV and the 22-kV power line, again last week caught on fire. That is two years in a row—a major power pole fault and fire. Both fires have occurred in the middle of winter when the risk to property, the risk to life and the risk to agriculture are greatly minimised. We all remember what happened on St Patrick's Day—a pole fire, a catastrophic event, burnt out and destroyed lives and communities, and they are still trying to get over that from 2017. Of course no-one needs to remember the devastation caused in 2009 by the Black Saturday fires, once again caused by this same power line. This power line has demonstrated the danger it causes when the infrastructure is not kept up to speed. Last year in the middle of winter the pole just snapped and fell over and caused a fire. This year it was a brand new pole, a pole put in only when a road was widened at Weerite. It was a relatively brand new pole—within two years old—and it caused a major structural fire only two weeks ago. This government has claimed to have spent nearly \$1 billion—\$1 billion—on electrical safety installations on our main power connections, and yet it is still failing to keep people in my community safe. It is failing to give the confidence that the community needs that they can actually live surrounded by such a critical infrastructure that is just proving to fail and cause fire. So we need desperately for the minister to provide to the community an update on where the pole replacements are, where their commitment to the 7000 per year for the next five years is at, and have they met their target to have their own claim of 4200 by August this year? I await urgently the minister's response.

HAWTHORN ELECTORATE SOLAR HOMES

Mr KENNEDY (Hawthorn) (19:13): (6481) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Solar Homes. The action I seek is for the minister to join me and visit a home in Hawthorn with solar panels funded through the Solar Homes program. We all know of the ambitious climate strategy of this government, including the Climate Change Act 2017 and over \$2 billion invested in the clean energy economy. The Solar Homes program is a vital component of this overarching strategy. In its first year alone over 33 000 households took up this program and installed solar PV and solar hot water systems. Over 10 years this program will allow solar panels, solar hot water systems or batteries to be installed on over 770 000 homes across Victoria. This will generate an eighth of Victoria's 40 per cent target for renewable energy by 2025. It is difficult to underscore just how significant this is. Climate change is the great challenge of our time, and this has been reflected in my constituents voting out high-profile conservative members in successive state and federal elections. Hawthorn is a part of this city in which people are embracing not just solar panels but the science on climate change. I am proud of my community and I am proud of my government for reflecting its values through programs like this. This program alone is creating thousands of jobs and exhibits how we as government can work to alleviate the consequence of climate change. Whether it is correspondence sent to my office, conversations out on the hustings or chats on the tram, time and time again climate action has been brought up as a priority.

Now that we have been joined by an actual partner on climate action in Canberra, I am looking forward to our federal colleagues joining us in enacting real and substantive measures to fight climate change. Reaching these goals starts at the household level, with ordinary people adopting solar panels, supported by our government, and slashing their power bills in the process. If any of you go for a stroll through Hawthorn's leafy streets, you will find that many of us have already taken up this challenge. I look forward to the minister's visit.

ST KILDA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mr HIBBINS (Pahran) (19:15): (6482) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Education, and the action I seek is that St Kilda Primary School are given the funding required to build their community hub. St Kilda Primary are a terrific local school with a thriving community and a dedicated team of staff. However, they are in great need of a large indoor space where they can run full physical education programs and hold assemblies and other all-school events during bad weather. The school has completed a master plan for this community hub—a multipurpose building that would offer facilities and space for students, parents, staff and community members to use.

When I visited the school recently, students, staff and parents informed me of the difficulties they face. Currently the school cannot congregate for assemblies or performances in the rain or the heat. PE has to be run in an overused, ineffective space when the weather is bad. School performances and plays must be held offsite. With the funds to build the community hub St Kilda Primary would have the perfect location for all of these activities and more. The community hub would also be an important asset for the wider community. The school is keen to offer this space out of hours to sporting, dance and other community organisations. It can provide additional indoor basketball and netball facilities in the area and provide sufficient space for the school's out-of-school-hours care program.

A number of organisations have already lent their support to this proposal and are keen for the community hub to become a reality. The school stands ready for this hub to be built. They have a vision and the plans to proceed. The students of St Kilda Primary and the wider community would all benefit greatly from this new building. I call for the funding to be provided.

GP RESPIRATORY CLINICS

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) (19:17): (6483) My adjournment request is to the Minister for Health. The action I seek is an update on the rollout of the landmark GP respiratory clinics program in the state district of Broadmeadows. The Victorian budget is investing more than \$12 billion to make

patients priority one after the global pandemic placed health systems under unprecedented pressure. The pandemic repair plan will deliver more staff and better hospitals, and I am delighted that Broadmeadows Hospital will become one of eight rapid-access hubs across the state, streamlining equipment and staff and increasing the number of surgeries that can be performed each day. This is vital and important.

The Andrews government will deliver \$60 million for the new Broadmeadows Health Service and the centre of excellence, and this is the first stage of revitalising Kangan Institute's campus in Broadmeadows, training local people for local jobs and, really significantly, making sure that we have nurses and allied health workers from the communities who are most vulnerable—so we get the daughters and the sons of the migrants and the refugees right through from Melbourne's north and west. This is where we need it most. Go to the epicentre of the pandemic outbreaks and address the causes—the social determinants of life, not just health—and drive that home. That is what must be done now.

The Andrews government is giving Victorians more ways to get help when they need it most, delivering 26 new GP respiratory clinics right across the state. There are two in the state district of Broadmeadows. The investment is to see a total of 53 respiratory clinics across the state, including commonwealth-funded clinics. I want to make sure that this is brought home to where it is needed most. Here is how we can develop the Broadmeadows Hospital to what it should have been. The people of Broadmeadows raised more than \$3 million in the 1970s. Think about that commitment from the poorest community to getting a hospital. What we have seen continually is the triumph of politics over rational decision-making as a former Liberal government gave money to the Essendon hospital within 15 minutes of the inner-city ring of major teaching hospitals. I did the story on this myself, the *Yes Minister* hospital. It opened with no patients and with plastic wrappers on all of the equipment. The money should have gone to Broadmeadows first, so it is time to go back into the heartlands, to deliver the services where they are needed most and to get the workforce for the future where they can take care of the vulnerable communities and families—the people who are the making of the Labor Party and the truest believers.

HIGHETT LEVEL CROSSINGS

Mr ROWSWELL (Sandringham) (19:20): (6484) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Transport Infrastructure. The action that I seek is for the Andrews Labor government to do the right thing by the people and the community of Highett by matching my commitment to remove both of the Highett Road and Wickham Road level crossings in Highett. On Sunday I was joined by the Shadow Minister for Transport Infrastructure, Matthew Bach, a Liberal member in the other place, to announce that a future Liberal government would indeed respond to the needs of the community by committing to remove the Highett Road and Wickham Road level crossings.

Those in this place know full well that this has been a major point of advocacy for me on behalf of my community, not only as the elected local member but as the community champion of my local area fighting for both of these level crossings to be removed since I was elected. I was joined at that announcement by the deputy mayor of the City of Kingston, Cr Jenna Davey-Burns, and the deputy mayor of the Bayside City Council, Cr Hanna El Moullem. I was also joined by members of the Highett Community Bank, and I have since spoken to and heard from members of the Highett Neighbourhood Community House and the Highett Youth Club as well. At the announcement itself on Sunday there were some 35 to 40 community members there. We also live streamed the announcement, so there are many people who have seen this, who would know of this commitment and who understand just how transformational this commitment, when delivered, will be for the Highett community.

You see, Deputy Speaker, I do not think that the Andrews Labor government actually understands the Highett community very well at all. Their plan is to remove more than 40 per cent of the Sir William Fry Reserve with the construction of the Suburban Rail Loop, removing open space and removing parkland, whilst at the same time wanting to increase the population in Highett. They want to develop the vast majority of the Highett gas and fuel land on the Nepean Highway in Highett, some 6.3 hectares

of land, with high-density, high-rise accommodation, and they have no plan to remove the Highett Road and Wickham Road level crossings. And at the same time, just a stone's throw from there, the Bayside council has approved a development of more than 1 100 dwellings on Graham Road in Highett.

My commitment to my community delivers for Highett. It demonstrates that I not only know the needs of Highett but understand them, and I am not just talking about it but wanting to do something about it as well. I implore the Andrews Labor government, through the Minister for Transport Infrastructure, to do what they can to listen to the needs of Highett and to act. It is only through the commitment of the Andrews Labor government, together with my commitment, that this community will have the certainty that it deserves.

COMMONWEALTH GAMES

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) (19:23): (6485) My adjournment matter this evening is for the attention of the Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery, and I am really pleased that I have been with the minister and all the other Spring Street Bombers tonight upstairs in the Federation Room, particularly the member for Broadmeadows, the member for Eltham, the member for Mordialloc and so many others. We even got the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events to wear an Essendon scarf. We are looking forward so much to the launch and the first match of the Essendon AFLW team this weekend. But I digress, Deputy Speaker, and I know you are particularly interested in matters Essendon.

The action that I seek from the Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery is for her to advise the many small communities that are situated between the fabulous regional cities of the Deputy Premier's own Bendigo and Ballarat as to how they can participate in and engage with the opportunities presented by the 2026 Commonwealth Games. Labor's candidate for Ripon, Martha Haylett, and I have visited many clubs, schools and local governments, especially in the Central Goldfields and Loddon shires, and we have heard how much they really want to be involved. They see the opportunities that the Commonwealth Games in these regional cities really present. We know that in the lead-up to the Commonwealth Games there will be the need for many training facilities and for teams to have local homes, and we expect that the teams will come out well before the initiation of the games in March 2026. There will also be lead-up events in a variety of sports, and I am really pleased to see that so many of these communities, particularly in the Central Goldfields and Loddon shires, are absolutely positioned and wanting to participate in the sporting program across all abilities—we know that it is particularly important that people with disability are athletes in the Commonwealth Games—but also in the cultural program. That is such an important part, and we have seen at the Birmingham Commonwealth Games closing ceremony how our Indigenous people played such a role in that. So there are amazing opportunities for the Dja Dja Wurrung and other Indigenous groups across the Ripon electorate, particularly Central Goldfields and Loddon, and I urge the minister to meet with these stakeholders and give them her views.

RESPONSES

Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe—Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Racing) (19:26): There are several matters for action for ministers. Firstly, the member for South-West Coast had a matter for the Minister for Health, to visit and meet with Portland District Health. The member for Narre Warren South sought a visit from the Minister for Education to Kambrya College, where there have been some very big budget investments. The member for Gippsland East, who is no longer with us this evening, raised a matter for the Minister for Environment and Climate Action, and that relates to infrastructure matters in the Orbost and Marlo communities around Cape Conran and repairs there.

The member for Bass raised a matter for the Minister for Housing around updates and would like a visit to the Bass electorate for updates on the Big Housing Build—some 12 000 and more new homes across the state. The member for Polwarth, who is also no longer with us, also raised a matter for the Minister

for Energy, and he is keen on action and advice on power pole replacements—some 7000 new power pole replacements—and what is happening across the Polwarth electorate and those targets.

The honourable member for Hawthorn raised a matter for the Minister for Solar Homes. He would like the minister to visit the Hawthorn electorate and a particular residence where there has been funding through the Solar Homes program. The member for Prahran, who is also no longer with us this evening, raised a matter for the Minister for Education with regard to the St Kilda Primary School and funding that they are keen to get to build their community hub. The member for Broadmeadows—

Mr McGuire: We're here for you, Carbs.

Mr CARBINES: Absolutely; no denying that—has raised a matter for action for the Minister for Health regarding the GP clinics across Broadmeadows and the \$60 million government investment in local health services. The member for Sandringham, who is certainly with us this evening, raised a matter for the Minister for Transport Infrastructure about level crossings across the Highett area.

The member for Yan Yean raised a matter for the Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery, and that relates to the opportunities across Ballarat and Bendigo, in particular through the Central Goldfields and the areas local to there, around the work that can be done to support opportunities for Commonwealth Games involvement for both volunteers and broadly around employment and other supports for our sporting codes and organisations in her very close work with our very hardworking candidate for Ripon, Martha Haylett. I commend all of those matters for action to the relevant ministers, and I will ensure they are forwarded to them directly.

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

House adjourned 7.29 pm.